



Australian
National
University

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1 August 2024

Stephen Proust

Via Email: 11613-d3d60535@righttoknow.org.au

Freedom of Information Request 202400095

Dear Stephen Proust,

On 3 July 2024, the Australian National University received your request seeking access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act).

I, Megan Easton, am an officer authorised under section 23(1) of the FOI Act to make decisions in relation to FOI requests.

I am satisfied, for the reasons outlined below, that your request in its current form creates an unreasonable diversion of this agency's resources. On this basis I intend to refuse access to the documents you have requested. This is called a 'practical refusal reason' (section 24AA of the FOI Act).

However, before I make a final decision to do this, you have an opportunity to revise your request. This is called a 'request consultation process' as set out under section 24AB of the FOI Act. You have 14 days to respond to this notice in one of the ways set out below under the heading 'what you need to do'.

Why I intend to refuse your request

Your request received on 3 July 2024 is as follows:

'In a quote to RiotAct yesterday, your spokesperson referred to: In the last 12 months alone, the university has completed 244 corrective or reactive maintenance work orders at

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Canberra 2600, ACT Australia

a cost of almost \$1 million across the four heritage buildings where the childcare centres are based.

(See <https://the-riotact.com/anu-under-federa...>). I request access to both any document, list or database that lists those corrective or reactive maintenance work orders, including the dates and value of that maintenance work'

On receipt of your request, the University undertook preliminary searches for documents within scope of the request. As a result of those searches, in excess of 244 documents were identified as potentially relevant to your request for one point of your request alone.

I have decided that a practical refusal reason exists. Under section 24AA(2) the agency or Minister must have regard to the resources that would be used for identifying, locating or collating the documents within the filing system of the agency. In relation to this, I advise the following:

- The ANU has identified at least 244 documents that appear to fall within the parameters of your request. The 244 documents relate to mainly work orders, which will likely require third party consultation;
- Using a conservative estimate, it would take a minimum of 82 hours to assess the documents to determine if they are relevant to your request (based on a baseline estimate that the documents are brief and can be reviewed in about 5 minutes each);
- After all documents within scope have been identified, internal consultation is required to assess whether any exemptions may apply to the documents, adding further time to the estimated figure stated above and potentially impacting the work of those areas;
- On initial assessment of the number and type of documents generated regarding this request, it is likely that a number of third party consultations may also be required, adding further time to the estimate; and
- A significant amount of time would then be required to assess, process any consultation responses, create a schedule and apply any redactions required under the FOI Act.

Charges

The Freedom of Information Act allows for the application of processing charges for matters that are not of a personal nature.

Although, the ANU is advising you that processing of your request is currently considered to be an unreasonable diversion of resources of the agency, the processing of a request of this nature would attract a processing charge. The processing of a request of this nature would attract a significant charge that would likely be in excess of 1400 dollars, not including any additional charges for any third party consultation that may need to be undertaken.

Please see the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) guidance on charges for providing access: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/freedom-of-information-guidance-for-government-agencies/foi-guidelines/part-4-charges-for-providing-access>

Request consultation process

You now have an opportunity to revise your request to enable it to proceed.

If you wish to revise your request, you may consider the following options to remove the practical refusal reason:

Specify documents: By providing specific information about exactly what documents you are seeking, our agency will be able to pinpoint the documents and/or business areas you are interested in and avoid using excessive resources to locate and process documents that you are not interested in.

Increase precision: The more precise you can be with your request, the easier it is to locate documents and process them. If you are aware of a specific document or documents you want access to, provide as much information about that document as possible to assist with searches. Broad information leads to broad searches, which leads to increased processing times to work through the larger number of documents obtained.

What you need to do

Before the end of the consultation period, you must do one of the following, in writing, in accordance with section 24AB(6) of the Act:

- Make a revised request – according to the advice above or in another way; or

- Tell us that you do not wish to revise the request; or
- Withdraw the request.

The consultation period runs for 14 days and starts on the day after you receive this notice.

If you revise your request in a way that adequately addresses the practical refusal grounds outlined above, we will recommence processing it. (Please note that the time taken to consult you regarding the scope of your request is *not* taken into account for the purposes of the 30-day time limit for processing your request.)

If you do not do one of the three things listed above during the consultation period, your request will be taken to have been withdrawn.

Contact officer

If you would like to discuss revising your request or have any questions, please contact our office via email in the first instance via foi@anu.edu.au quoting **FOI 202400095** as your reference number in the subject line.

Yours sincerely



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