



12 September 2024

Keith (Right to Know)

**BY EMAIL:** [foi+request-11862-9fde4ae5@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-11862-9fde4ae5@righttoknow.org.au)

**In reply please quote:**

FOI Request: FA 24/08/00694

File Number: FA24/08/00694

Dear Keith (Right to Know)

**Freedom of Information (FOI) request – Decision**

On 9 August 2024, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) received a request for access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act).

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a decision on your request for access under the FOI Act.

**1 Scope of request**

You have requested access to the following documents:

*I wish to have access to the documents in relation to VACCU's operation. Specifically, how many staff they are hiring and how many cases they complete per person, for the previous financial year (2023-2024).*

**2 Authority to make decision**

I am an officer authorised under section 23 of the FOI Act to make decisions in respect of requests to access documents or to amend or annotate records.

**3 Relevant material**

In reaching my decision I referred to the following:

- the terms of your request
- the documents relevant to the request
- the FOI Act
- Guidelines published by the Office of the Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the FOI Guidelines)
- advice from Departmental officers with responsibility for matters relating to the documents to which you sought access

## **4 Documents in scope of request**

The Department has undertaken reasonable searches for documents within the scope of your request. The Immigration Compliance Group have advised that they do not hold any documents or reports that is relevant to the scope of your request. However, they have provided the following information:

- In the 2023-2024 financial year, the Visa Applicant Character Consideration Unit (VACCU) were funded for 29.5 Full Time Employee's (FTE). The FTE includes staff at the APS4, APS5, APS6, EL1 and EL2 levels.
- In the 2023-2024 financial year VACCU finalised 1649 assessments.
- VACCU are unable to provide a further breakdown of finalisations per case officer.

Having regard to your request and the types of documents that may fall within the scope of your request I am satisfied that the searches conducted were extremely thorough and all reasonable steps have been taken to locate any document/s relevant to your request.

I am therefore satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate any documents relevant to your request, and that the Department does not hold existing discrete documents that contain the information you are seeking.

## **5 Decision**

Section 24A of the FOI Act provides that the Department may refuse a request for access to a document if all reasonable steps have been taken to find the document and the Department is satisfied that the document does not exist.

I am satisfied that the Department has undertaken reasonable searches in relation to your request and that no documents were in the possession of the Department on 9 August 2024 when your FOI request was received. As such, I am refusing your request based on the application of section 24A of the FOI Act.

## **6 Legislation**

A copy of the FOI Act is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562>. If you are unable to access the legislation through this website, please contact our office for a copy.

## **7 Your Review Rights**

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to apply for either an internal review or an Information Commissioner review of the decision.

### ***Internal Review***

If you want the Department to review this decision, you must make your internal review request within 30 days of being notified of this decision.

When making your internal review request, please provide the Department with the reasons why you consider this decision should be changed.

You can send your internal review request to:

**Email:** [foi.reviews@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:foi.reviews@homeaffairs.gov.au)

Or

**Postal mail:**

Freedom of Information  
Department of Home Affairs  
GPO Box 241 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

The internal review will be carried out by an officer who is more senior than the original decision maker. The Department must make its decision on the review within 30 days of receiving your request for internal review.

***Information Commissioner Review***

If you want the Australian Information Commissioner to review this decision, you must make your request to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) within 60 days of being notified of this decision.

You can apply for an Information Commissioner review using the [Information Commissioner review application form on the OAIC website](#).

You can find more information about Information Commissioner reviews [on the OAIC website](#).

**8 Making a complaint**

You may make a complaint to the Australian Information Commissioner if you have concerns about how the Department has handled your request under the FOI Act. This is a separate process to the process of requesting a review of the decision as indicated above.

You can make an FOI complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) at: [FOI Complaint Form on the OAIC website](#).

**9 Contacting the FOI Section**

Should you wish to discuss this decision, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Section at [foi@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:foi@homeaffairs.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



T Malone  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Character and Cancellation Branch  
Character Cancellation and Case Resolution Division