



Bob Buckley

Via email: foi+request-12034-38b75251@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

Freedom of Information Request 51699 – Notice of intention to refuse

I refer to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)* request made to the Department of Social Services (**the Department**) on 16 September 2024. The request seeks access to:

all briefs and communications with SES officers sent or received since 1 January 2020 (including attachments) that relate to the implementation and delivery of the Carer Allowance program.

Post acknowledgement of the request you advised that the scope as written above was intended to be wider, and that it should also capture all communication related to *policy development, review and outcomes*.

I am authorised to make decisions in respect of FOI requests under subsection 23(1) of the FOI Act.

Practical refusal reason

This request seeks all communication with SES officers over the past 4 years that has a passing reference to the implementation, delivery, policy development, review and outcomes of the Carer Allowance program. This would include every email sent or received over this timeframe.

We have confirmed with the relevant SES that there is likely to be in excess of a thousand documents within the scope of the request. This is not a surprising result, given the broad scope.

I consider that the Department has limited capacity to process a request of this size. For this reason the work involved in processing the request would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the Department from its other operations.

In accordance with s 24(1) of the FOI Act, I consider that a practical refusal reason exists in relation to the request for access to documents.

Request consultation process

Under section 24(1)(b) of the FOI Act, the Department is required to provide you with the opportunity to revise the scope of your request so that a 'practical refusal reason' no longer exists. One way you could achieve this is to refine the scope of your request, for example by limiting it to the specific information you are interested in, the types of documents that you would like to access and providing a smaller timeframe in which it was generated. We also recommend not using terms like "*relate to*" in the request as it can increase its size significantly.

Please note that refining the scope of the request may remove the practical refusal reason, but does not necessarily mean that any documents subject to the request will be released in part or in full.

Next steps

Should you wish to revise the request, you must do so **within 14 days** after the day you are sent this notice. The 14 day deadline ends at **11:59pm on 7 October 2024** by which time you are required to take one of the below actions. If you are unable to meet this deadline and require an extension of time to discuss ways to revise the scope of your request, please contact the FOI Section by email at foi@dss.gov.au.

In accordance with subsection 24AB(6) of the FOI Act, you must, before the end of the 14-day consultation period, do one of the following by written notice to the department:

- a) withdraw the request;
- b) make a revised request; or
- c) indicate that you do not wish to revise the request.

Please note that under subsection 24AB(7), the request is taken to have been withdrawn at the end of the 14 day consultation period if:

- a) the applicant does not consult the contact person during the consultation period in accordance with this notice; or
- b) the applicant does not do one of the things mentioned in subsection(6) before the end of the consultation period.

In accordance with subsection 24AB(8) of the FOI Act, the 14-day consultation period is to be disregarded in calculating the processing period for the request.

Yours sincerely



Sarah B
Authorised FOI Decision Maker
23 September 2024