

Name: Nosey

e-mail: [foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au)

Dear Nosey,

**RE: YOUR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST [FOI202425/25]**

I refer to your request received by the ABS on 14 December 2024, and revised scope received on 07 January 2025, in which you seek:

*“Memoranda of understanding (MOUs), agreements, or similar documents that govern the sharing of personal information between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) over the last ten years.*

*Policies, procedures, or guidelines that outline how the ABS requests, receives, handles, stores, or uses client information originating from the DVA.*

*Reports, summaries, or reviews conducted by the ABS that evaluate or discuss the sharing of personal information between the ABS and the DVA.*

*Additional Clarifications*

*I am seeking documents that specifically pertain to DVA-collected client information shared with the ABS.*

*Please limit the search to documents held by Senior Executive Service (SES) or project management staff.*

*I consent to the exclusion of names and contact details of non-Senior Executive staff, mobile numbers, duplicate documents, and draft versions.”*

A copy of your full request can be found in **Attachment A**.

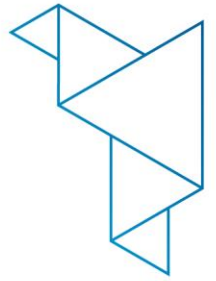
**Response to Your Request**

I am an authorised decision maker under section 23 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). I am satisfied that the ABS has taken all reasonable steps to locate documents relevant to your request as required by s.24A(1)(a) of the FOI Act. I am also satisfied that the ABS does not hold any documents that fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I am refusing your request for access under s.24A(1)(b)(ii) of the FOI Act, on the grounds that the documents are not in the possession of the ABS.

**Decision and Reasons for Decision**

I have taken the following into account in making my decision:

- Email correspondence between yourself and the FOI team.
- Your revised scope received on 07 January 2025.
- The relevant provisions of the FOI Act, specifically section 24A.
- The guidelines issued by the Australian Information Commissioner under S93A of the FOI Act.



## Charges

There are no charges for this request.

## Internal Review of the Decision

Section 54 of the FOI Act gives you the right to apply for an internal review of the decision by the ABS. Additionally, you may request a review of this decision by the Information Commissioner. Details of both procedures involved in an application to review a decision are set out at **Attachment B**.

If you have any queries on this matter please contact the ABS FOI Contact Officer at [freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au](mailto:freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,


Deborah Wallace  
A/g Program Manager  
Planning, Compliance & Risk Branch  
Australian Bureau of Statistics

13 January 2025

## Basics

**Policy & Legislation Section WDB**  
Sent by Kristina Chan

02/01/2025 12:23 PM

<b>Send</b>	<p>To foirequest-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au</p> <p>cc angalea.turnbull@abs.gov.au@M365, lucinda.brown@abs.gov.au@M365, kristina.chan@abs.gov.au@M365</p> <p>bcc</p>
<b>Subject</b>	<p>Re: FW: Acknowledgement of your FOI request ABS reference : [FOI202425/25] [SEC=OFFICIAL]</p> 
<b>Protective Mark</b>	<b>OFFICIAL</b>
<b>Information management markers</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Personal privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Legal privilege <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative secrecy <b>Caveat</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>Categories</b>	Freedom of Information\Requests\Valid\2024/25

Good afternoon Nosey,

Thank you for your response. We are currently searching for documents and identifying any agreements that may relate to your request. Your request is very broad, however we believe the agreements will provide the information you are seeking.

We note your request for a waiver/reduction of charges on public interest grounds and will notify you of the decision as we progress your request.

Kind regards  
**Kristina Chan**  
*Policy and Legal Officer*

Policy and Legislation Section | Planning, Compliance and Risk Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**  
**(E)** [freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au](mailto:freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au) **(W)** [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"Angalea Turnbull"

"Angalea Turnbull" <Angalea.Turnbull@abs.go...

01/01/2025 09:27:27 AM

Basics

"Angalea Turnbull"

01/01/2025 09:27 AM

<Angalea.Turnbull@abs.gov.au>

<b>Send</b>	To "Policy & Legislation Section WDB" <policy.and.legislation.section.wdb@abs.gov.au> cc
<b>Subject</b>	FW: Acknowledgement of your FOI request ABS reference : [FOI202425/25] [SEC=OFFICIAL] 📎
<b>Protective Mark</b>	<b>OFFICIAL</b>
<b>Information management markers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Legal privilege <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative secrecy <b>Caveat</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Categories</b>	Freedom of Information\Requests\Valid\2024/25
<b>Visibility</b>	Limited Readers
<b>Editors</b>	Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS, "Angalea Turnbull" <Angalea.Turnbull@abs.gov.au>, PALS WDB Access, Deborah Wallace/Staff/ABS
<b>Readers</b>	Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS, PALS WDB Access, FOI Stakeholder Group
<b>Document Usage</b>	Information Management - determines recordkeeping action
<b>Last modified</b>	02/01/2025 09:35:17 AM <b>By</b> Kristina Chan/Staff/ABS
<b>Document Id</b>	DCCO-DCGUD3

-----Original Message-----

From: noseyrosey <foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au>

Sent: Monday, 30 December 2024 5:59 PM

To: Angalea Turnbull <Angalea.Turnbull@abs.gov.au>

Subject: Re: Acknowledgement of your FOI request ABS reference : [FOI202425/25] [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Dear Kristina,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 18 December 2024, regarding my Freedom of Information (FOI) request received on 14 December 2024. I appreciate your clarification questions and offer the following responses to assist with the processing of my request.

#### Exclusion of Certain Details

I consent to the exclusion of the names and contact details of non-Senior Executive public servants, as well as the mobile phone numbers of Senior Executive public servants, from the scope of my request.

#### Draft Documents

I confirm that I am only seeking access to the final version of documents, or the latest version where no formal "final" version exists. Drafts of documents may be excluded from the scope.

#### Duplicate Documents

I consent to the exclusion of duplicate documents, provided the final or complete version of any email chains or records is retained and included in the scope of the request.

#### Agency Name

I confirm that the agency referenced in my request is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

#### Charges and Statutory Timeframe

While I note the ABS's policy to impose charges consistent with section 29 of the FOI Act, I request that any charges be waived or reduced on public interest grounds under section 29(5)(b). This request pertains to sensitive information sharing practices involving veterans, which is a matter of significant public interest, transparency, and accountability.

I also acknowledge your reference to the Census & Statistics Act 1905, which may exempt some information from release. If any documents are withheld under this exemption or any other, I request that you provide detailed reasoning for each exemption applied in accordance with the FOI Act.

Please proceed with processing my request as clarified above. I look forward to receiving your decision within the statutory timeframe. Should you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me via email.

Yours sincerely,

Nosey

-----Original Message-----

Good afternoon Nosey,

I refer to your application in which you seek access to documents under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) (ABS reference FOI 202425/25) regarding:

"access to any and all documents, records, data, and supporting material held by [Name of Agency] concerning the sharing of personal information originating from the Department of Veterans ' Affairs (DVA) over the last ten years"

Your request was received by the ABS on 14/10/2024 and the 30-day statutory period for processing your request commenced from the day after that date.

We understand your request seeks documents concerning the sharing of personal information that has originated from DVA between 14 December 2014 to 14 December 2024, however we would like to clarify a few things. Please provide a contact number that we may be able to reach you on.

In addition, before we commence processing your request can you please confirm the following via return e-mail:

1. Whether you agree to the names and contact details of non-Senior Executive public servants, and the mobile phone numbers of Senior Executive public servants being excluded from the scope of this

request;

2. Where there are a number of drafts of a document, whether you are seeking access to those drafts, or only the final version of documents (this includes the latest version where no 'final' version was issued);

3. Where there are duplicate documents, whether you agree to exclude them from the scope of this request;

4. That you confirm the name of the Agency in the scope of your request .

It is ABS policy to impose charges consistent with section 29 of the FOI Act. We will inform you of our decision in this respect once we have conducted a search for documents.

To note, information collected under the authority of the Census & Statistics Act 1905 (C&S Act), is exempt from release under Schedule 2, Part II, Division 2 of the FOI Act.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this email. A response is appreciated as soon as possible.

Kind regards

Kristina

Policy and Legal Officer

Policy and Legislation Section| Legislative Compliance and Parliamentary Branch| Australian Bureau of Statistics

(E) [1][ABS request email] (W) [2]www.abs.gov.au

[3]Inactive hide details for "noseyrosey" ---14/12/2024 02:41:15

PM---"noseyrosey"

<[FOI #12576 email]>"noseyrosey" ---14/12/2024

02:41:15 PM---"noseyrosey" <[FOI #12576 email]>

\*

Basics

"noseyrosey" 14/12/2024 02:41 PM

<[FOI #12576 email]>

Send To "FOI requests at ABS" <[ABS request email]>

cc

Freedom of Information request - Documents Relating to the  
Subject Sharing of DVA Client Information [4] Policy & Legislation  
Section WDB

Protective Mark

Information management markers

Caveat

Categories Freedom of Information\Requests\Valid\2024/25

Visibility Limited Readers

Editors Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS, PALS WDB Access

Readers Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS, PALS WDB Access, FOI Stakeholder  
Group

Last modified 16/12/2024 11:27:55 AM By Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS

Document Id DCOO-DBX6EA

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Dear FOI Officer,

I am making this request for access to documents under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth).

I seek access to any and all documents, records, data, and supporting material held by [Name of Agency] concerning the sharing of personal information originating from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) over the last ten years. This includes any data transfers from or to the DVA, whether they were one-off exchanges or ongoing, systematic transfers of DVA client information, including personal, medical, financial, or service-related details concerning veterans or their dependents.

I am interested in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of what DVA client information [Authority name] has received or accessed and for what purposes. Specifically, I request:

All records of data sharing arrangements between DVA and [Authority name], including but not limited to memoranda of understanding, service-level agreements, emails, letters, meeting minutes, file transfer logs, internal reports, and instructions that outline what data was shared, when it was shared, and the format or system used for the transfer.

Any policies, procedures, guidelines, or frameworks that govern how [Authority name] requests, obtains, stores, handles, or uses DVA client

information. This includes documents that detail the criteria for approving access to such data, any consent or authorization processes, security controls, and retention or destruction policies.

Copies of any ethics committee approvals, privacy impact assessments, internal review board decisions, or other documents that reflect deliberations or authorizations for obtaining DVA client information. This includes records that show the agency considered the ethical, legal, or privacy implications of receiving or using DVA client data.

Documents that outline the intended uses or practical applications of the DVA client data, such as project proposals, business cases, internal strategy papers, or briefings that explain why [Authority name] sought access to this information, how it was intended to be integrated into the agency's operations, and any expected outcomes or benefits.

A representative sample (in a suitably de-identified or redacted form) of the data or data fields received, so long as providing this sample does not breach any exemption under the FOI Act. The purpose is to understand the nature and granularity of the information shared, without disclosing identifiable personal details.

If the only data [Authority name] received pertains solely to data linked to the Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS) arrangements as described at

[5]

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.servicesaustralia.gov.au%2Fcentrelink-confirmation-eservices-cces&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808501657570%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoITWFpbCIslldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yN3eY7PmwLU03%2BpCGXeNVNqzmlph4uzAVKwfJT9cBs%3D&reserved=0>,

and there were no other forms of DVA data shared, then no CCeS-related

data needs to be provided under this request .

I emphasize that I am not authorizing the transfer of this FOI request to the Department of Veterans' Affairs or any other agency. If [Authority name] holds the requested information, it should provide it directly. If there are parts of this request that [Name of Agency] does not understand or believes are not held, I invite you to contact me to clarify or refine the scope under section 24AB of the FOI Act, rather than initiating a transfer. However, I do not consent to the transfer of this request to another entity. The FOI Act places the onus on agencies to process requests for documents they hold, and I expect [Authority name] to meet its responsibilities in this regard.

I note that the statutory timeframe for processing FOI requests is 30 days from the date of receipt. I do not consent to any extension of time due to internal reduced activity periods, holiday stand-down periods, or other internal operational issues. If [Authority name] considers that it cannot meet the 30-day timeframe, it may seek an extension from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner as provided under section 15AB of the FOI Act. I request to be notified if such an application is made .

If you consider any part of this request too broad or complex, please contact me promptly to discuss refining its scope. I remain willing to consider adjustments that will assist efficient processing, provided that they occur within the statutory timeframe and do not undermine the substance of what I am seeking.

I believe that disclosure of these documents is in the public interest , as it promotes transparency and accountability in how government agencies access and use sensitive personal information about veterans . Should you

consider charges applicable, I request that you exercise your discretion to reduce or waive them, given the importance of the matter and its alignment with the principles of open government and public accountability.

I look forward to receiving your acknowledgment and decision within the statutory timeframe. Please contact me at the details below if you require further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Nosey

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Please use this email address for all replies to this request :

[FOI #12576 email]

Is [ABS request email] the wrong address for Freedom of Information requests to Australian Bureau of Statistics? If so, please contact us using this form:

[6]

[https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fchange\\_request%2Fnew%3Fbody%3Dabs&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504717182%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eYJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=1axRIIdLa0fRUp7wkIVPIMkag68j3dNuWt5OzC4EntKU%3D&reserved=0](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fchange_request%2Fnew%3Fbody%3Dabs&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504717182%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eYJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=1axRIIdLa0fRUp7wkIVPIMkag68j3dNuWt5OzC4EntKU%3D&reserved=0)

This request has been made by an individual using Right to Know. This message and any reply that you make will be published on the internet.

More information on how Right to Know works can be found at :

[7]

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fhelp%2Fofficers&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504728695%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFPbCIIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=gkct3G3uauqTrT9uGo%2F%2Bwt%2B9wBSZjef7YxpAZF84qNc%3D&reserved=0>

Please note that in some cases publication of requests and responses will be delayed.

If you find this service useful as an FOI officer, please ask your web manager to link to us from your organisation's FOI page.

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## References

### Visible links

1. [mailto:\[ABS request email\]](mailto:[ABS request email])
2. <http://www.abs.gov.au/>
4. <file:///tmp/Notes:/domco1510.corp.abs.gov.au/CA25814D00045998/F54534119E524D36CA256D4800227591/67D6E3479B723BB5CA258BF5000275FF>
5. <https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.servicesaustralia.gov.au%2Fcentrelink-confirmation-eservices-cces&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504738786%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFPbCIIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=w7Y4QNc2ARMD76eCm0zcZ1rJJw7p1zNij0hPGp%2BVi%2FQ%3D&reserved=0>
6. [https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fchange\\_request%2Fnew%3Fbody%3Dabs&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504748968%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFPbCIIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yX07Ea%2FHNYQyXdxOj0HHb%2B0yYwEk4Qgh33gSpORNJ](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fchange_request%2Fnew%3Fbody%3Dabs&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504748968%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFPbCIIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yX07Ea%2FHNYQyXdxOj0HHb%2B0yYwEk4Qgh33gSpORNJ)

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7.

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fhelp%2Fofficers&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504759028%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWVpbCIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C&sdata=jJnS86eCOVob0CpB3h6EQeoN%2FQz3umpRRPx2I1MxvZU%3D&reserved=0>

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Please use this email address for all replies to this request :

[foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au)

This request has been made by an individual using Right to Know. This message and any reply that you make will be published on the internet. More information on how Right to Know works can be found at :

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fhelp%2Fofficers&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7C93e20b0429b04e403b4108dd29ea4eca%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638712808504769030%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWVpbCIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C&sdata=J5m0oQgIyF2BDhCxPbB4lCgrxiDBku%2Bp3134S%2BbdYQg%3D&reserved=0>

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Basics

**Policy & Legislation Section WDB**  
Sent by Angalea Turnbull

08/01/2025 10:41 AM

<b>Send</b>	To noseyrosey <foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au> cc bcc
<b>Subject</b>	Re: FW: Consultation request from the ABS [SEC=OFFICIAL] 📎
<b>Protective Mark</b>	<b>OFFICIAL</b>
<b>Information management markers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Legal privilege <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative secrecy <b>Caveat</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Categories</b>	Freedom of Information\Requests\Valid\2024/25

Good morning Nosey,

Thank you for your quick response and refining the scope of your request.

You will receive a response to your request from the ABS soon.

Regards,

**Angalea Turnbull**

Policy & Legislation Section | Planning, Compliance & Risk Branch

**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(E) [angalea.turnbull@abs.gov.au](mailto:angalea.turnbull@abs.gov.au) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"Angalea Turnbull"

"Angalea Turnbull"

08/01/2025 08:28:50 AM

Basics

"Angalea Turnbull"  
Angalea.Turnbull@abs.gov.au

08/01/2025 08:28 AM

<b>Send</b>	To "Policy & Legislation Section WDB" <policy.and.legislation.section.wdb@abs.gov.au> cc
<b>Subject</b>	FW: Consultation request from the ABS [SEC=OFFICIAL]
<b>Protective Mark</b>	
<b>Information management markers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Legal privilege <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative secrecy <b>Caveat</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Categories</b>	Freedom of Information\Requests\Valid\2024/25
<b>Visibility</b>	Limited Readers
<b>Editors</b>	Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS, PALS WDB Access, Deborah Wallace/Staff/ABS
<b>Readers</b>	Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS, PALS WDB Access, FOI Stakeholder Group
<b>Last modified</b>	08/01/2025 08:33:37 AM <b>By</b> Angalea Turnbull/Staff/ABS
<b>Document Id</b>	DCOO-DCPT8P

-----Original Message-----

From: noseyrose <foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au>  
Sent: Tuesday, 7 January 2025 7:14 PM  
To: Angalea Turnbull <Angalea.Turnbull@abs.gov.au>  
Subject: Re: Consultation request from the ABS [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Dear Deborah Wallace,

Thank you for your letter dated 6 January 2025 regarding my Freedom of Information (FOI) request. I appreciate the opportunity to consult and revise the scope of my request to facilitate its processing. However, I must also remind you of the agency's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) to assist applicants in framing their requests, as set out in section 15(3) of the FOI Act.



The FOI Act requires agencies to take reasonable steps to assist applicants to make requests in a manner that complies with the Act. Further, section 3(4) emphasises that agencies are to exercise their functions and powers under the Act to facilitate and promote public access to information promptly and at the lowest reasonable cost. Sending generic refusal notices without actively assisting in refining the request does not align with these principles.

To address the grounds for practical refusal outlined in your letter, I propose the following revised request:

#### Revised Scope

I seek access to:

Memoranda of understanding (MOUs), agreements, or similar documents that govern the sharing of personal information between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) over the last ten years.

Policies, procedures, or guidelines that outline how the ABS requests, receives, handles, stores, or uses client information originating from the DVA.

Reports, summaries, or reviews conducted by the ABS that evaluate or discuss the sharing of personal information between the ABS and the DVA.

#### Additional Clarifications

I am seeking documents that specifically pertain to DVA-collected client information shared with the ABS.

Please limit the search to documents held by Senior Executive Service (SES) or project management staff.

I consent to the exclusion of names and contact details of non-Senior Executive staff, mobile numbers, duplicate documents, and draft versions.

This revised scope narrows the request to a manageable range of high-level documents, as suggested in your letter, while ensuring its purpose is met.

#### Obligations Under the FOI Act

I respectfully remind you of the agency's obligation under section 24AB(3) to actively assist in refining the scope of requests during a practical refusal consultation process. This includes:

Clearly identifying why the request, as currently framed, is considered too broad.

Suggesting alternative, narrower scopes that would allow the agency to process the request without unreasonable diversion of resources.

Failure to provide adequate assistance or to engage meaningfully in this process would constitute non-compliance with the FOI Act and its intent to promote access to information.

I trust this revised request addresses your concerns and facilitates the processing of my request. If further clarification or adjustments are required, I ask that you outline these in detail, as required by the FOI Act, before the end of the consultation period.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your confirmation that my revised request can now proceed.

Yours sincerely,

Nosey

-----Original Message-----

Good afternoon Nosey,

Please find attached the response from the ABS regarding your Freedom of Information request.

(See attached file: Consultation Request from the ABS.pdf)

Regards,

Angalea Turnbull

Policy & Legislation Section | Legislative Compliance & Parliamentary

Australian Bureau of Statistics

(E) [1][email address] (W) [2]www.abs.gov.au

References

Visible links

1. [mailto:\[email address\]](mailto:[email address])
2. <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

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Please use this email address for all replies to this request :

[foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au)

This request has been made by an individual using Right to Know. This message and any reply that you make will be published on the internet. More information on how Right to Know works can be found at :

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.righttoknow.org.au%2Fhelp%2Fofficers&data=05%7C02%7Cpolicy.and.legislation.section.wdb%40abs.gov.au%7Ce433fd7ecec64cd98fb608dd2f62478b%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C0%7C0%7C638718821342437990%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIiLCAiOiJXaW4zMmIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIiLCIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jOWLU6Ma7tDDvJT8PaWN2iKQO4WQ8YArhkxPFPoHVQY%3D&reserved=0>

Please note that in some cases publication of requests and responses will be delayed.

If you find this service useful as an FOI officer, please ask your web manager to link to us from your organisation's FOI page.

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Name: *Nosey*

e-mail: *foi+request-12576-0f5b6ef2@righttoknow.org.au*

Dear Nosey,

**RE: YOUR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST [FOI202425/25]**

I refer to your request submitted 14 December 2024 under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) in which you asked the ABS for:

*“access to any and all documents, records, data, and supporting material held by [Name of Agency] concerning the sharing of personal information originating from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) over the last ten years.”*

**Purpose of this letter**

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

I am writing to notify you that a practical refusal reason exists under Section 24AA(1)(a) of the FOI Act, as the work involved in processing your request in its current form would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of this agency from its other operations.

**Grounds for a practical refusal of your request**

I have decided that a practical refusal reason exists because:

As worded, this request includes searching for a broad range of documents. The ABS requires further clarification regarding the origin of the client information and the relevant information you seek in order to conduct a thorough and defensible search for documents.

**Request consultation process**

Before I make a final decision to refuse access, you have an opportunity to revise your request to enable it to proceed. Therefore, I am requesting a consultation process as set out under section 24AB of the FOI Act.

Revising your request may include, but is not limited to, providing more specific detail or further clarification on the information you are seeking, for example:

- specifying clearly the client information you are referring to (ABS collected client information or DVA collected client information) for each point in your request.
- reducing the broadness of the request and identifying more specific information you are hoping to receive.
- identifying documents or information that is irrelevant to the request.
- limiting the search to identify specific types documents or information.

- limiting the search to documents held by specific staff, such as SES or project management staff only.

Before the end of the consultation period, you must do one of the following in writing:

1. withdraw your request
2. make a revised request
3. tell us that you do not wish to revise your request.

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

During this period, you are welcome to seek assistance from the ABS FOI team to revise your request. 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 purpose of the 30-day time limit for processing your request.

If you do not do one of the three things outlined above during the consultation period or you do not consult the contact person during this period, your request will be taken to have been withdrawn.

#### **Contact Person**

If you would like to revise your request or have any questions, please contact the ABS FOI Contact Officer at: [freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au](mailto:freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Wallace  
A/g Program Manager  
Legislative Compliance and Parliamentary Branch  
Australian Bureau of Statistics

06 January 2025

## **INFORMATION ON RIGHTS OF REVIEW**

### **1. INTERNAL REVIEW OF DECISION**

If you disagree with our decision you have the right to apply for an internal review under section 54 of the FOI Act.

Application for a review of the decision must be made within 30 days of receipt of this letter. No particular form is required but it would assist the decision-maker if you set out in the application the grounds on which you consider that the decision should be reviewed.

Application for an internal review of the decision should be e-mailed to [freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au](mailto:freedomofinformation@abs.gov.au) or posted to:

ABS FOI Contact Officer  
Policy and Legislation Section  
Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Locked Bag 10  
BELCONNEN ACT 2617

### **2. AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION COMMISSIONER REVIEW OF DECISION**

Section 54L of the Act gives you the right to seek a review of the decision from the Information Commissioner. An application for review must be made within 60 days of receiving the decision.

An application for Information Commissioner review of the decision can be made via this [online form](#). Alternatively, you can apply for Information Commissioner review via email at [foidr@oaic.gov.au](mailto:foidr@oaic.gov.au) or via post to:

FOI Regulatory Group  
GPO Box 5228  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

### **3. COMPLAINTS TO THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER**

Section 70 of the Act provides that a person may complain to the Information Commissioner about action taken by an agency in the exercise of powers or the performance of functions under the Act.

A complaint to the Information Commissioner must be in writing and identify the agency the complaint is about. You can lodge a complaint to the Information Commissioner via this [online form](#). Alternatively, you can lodge your complaint via email to [foidr@oaic.gov.au](mailto:foidr@oaic.gov.au) or via post to:

FOI Regulatory Group  
GPO Box 5228  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

The Information Commissioner may decline to investigate the complaint in a number of circumstances, including that you did not exercise your right to ask the agency, the Information Commissioner, a court or tribunal to review the decision.