



**Australian Government**  
**Geoscience Australia**

Our ref: 76400

Noseyrosey

By email: [foi+request-12609-7076475c@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-12609-7076475c@righttoknow.org.au)

Dear Noseyrosey

**Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) – Notice of Decision**

I refer to your request received by Geoscience Australia (GA) on 14 January 2025, seeking access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)* (**FOI Act**). You sought 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.*

## **Decision**

I am an authorised decision maker under section 23 of the FOI Act.

GA has undertaken extensive searches of all relevant electronic databases, files and corporate file lists for the documents you have requested, however has been unable to locate any existing documents that contain the information you are seeking.

On the basis of these searches, I am satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate documents relevant to your request, and no such documents exist.

As such, I have decided to refuse your request in accordance with section 24A of the FOI Act on the grounds that the documents you have requested do not exist.

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, your review rights are set out in **Attachment A**.

Please do not hesitate to contact the FOI team at [FOI@industry.gov.au](mailto:FOI@industry.gov.au) if you require any further clarification.

Yours sincerely



Charlie Middleton  
A/g General Manager  
Enabling Services  
Geoscience Australia

10 February 2025

## **Enclosures**

Attachment A – Review Rights

**ATTACHMENT A****REVIEW RIGHTS****Application for Internal Review**

Section 54 of the FOI Act gives you the option to apply for a departmental internal review of my decision. If you make an application for internal review it will be conducted by an officer of the department (other than me) appointed by the Secretary of the department to conduct a review and make a completely fresh decision on the merits of the case.

Application for a review of the decision must be made within 30 days after the day of receipt of this letter, or within 15 days of receipt of the documents to which this decision relates (whichever is the longer period). You do not have to pay any fees or processing charges for an internal review, except for charges relating to the provision of any additional relevant material located as a result of the review (for example photocopying). While a specific form is not required, it would assist the decision maker if your application specifies the grounds on which you consider the decision should be reviewed.

Application for a review of a decision should be addressed to:

FOI Coordinator  
Department of Industry, Science and Resources (Geoscience Australia)  
GPO Box 2013  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

or by email to: [FOI@industry.gov.au](mailto:FOI@industry.gov.au).

**Review by the Australian Information Commissioner**

If any decision on internal review were not satisfactory to you, section 54L of the FOI Act gives you the right to apply for review of my decision by the Information Commissioner.

An application for review by the Information Commissioner may be made regardless of whether the decision was the subject of a departmental internal review. An application for review by the Information Commissioner must be made within 60 days of receipt of this notice. There is no fee for review by the Information Commissioner.

You must apply in writing and you can lodge your application in one of the following ways:

Online: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
Post: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001  
Fax: +61 2 9284 9666  
Email: [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)

An application form is available on the website at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au). Your application should include a copy of this notice and your contact details. You should also set out why you are objecting to the decision.

## **Complaints to the Australian Information Commissioner**

You may complain to the Australian Information Commissioner concerning action taken by an agency in the exercise of powers or the performance of functions under the FOI Act. There is no fee for making a complaint. The Australian Information Commissioner will make a completely independent investigation of your complaint. A complaint to the Australian Information Commissioner must be made in writing and can be lodged online using the Information Commissioner Complaint Application form on the Australian Information Commissioner's website at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au).