

24 January 2025

Bob Buckley

By email: [foi+request-12665-bfab483f@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-12665-bfab483f@righttoknow.org.au)

Dear Bob Buckley

## Freedom of Information request — Notification of Decision

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 December 2024, in which you requested access to documents held by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

### Scope of your request

You have requested access to the following documents:

*“...In 2023, the phrase "mild autism" came up in several media items published by the NDIA Minister.*

*Please provide, in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information ACT, all information and communication sent from NDIA officials or representatives to ABC staff in the 2nd half of 2023 that mention "mild autism"..."*

### Decision on access to documents

I am authorised to make decisions under section 23(1) of the FOI Act. My decision on your request and the reasons for my decision are set out below.

I have decided to refuse your request for access under section 24A of the FOI Act.

In reaching my decision, I took the following into account:

- your correspondence outlining the scope of your request
- the FOI Act
- the FOI Guidelines published under section 93A of the FOI Act
- consultation with relevant officers of the NDIA
- the NDIA's operating environment and functions.

**Reasons for decision - Refuse a request for access (section 24A)**

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

We have conducted searches of the NDIA's documents management systems and made enquiries with NDIA staff. The data team searched any emails to any @abc.net.au recipients in the date range 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023 including the keywords "mild autism". This search produced zero results. The search parameters were tested with different, unrelated keywords and returned results, so I am confident in the search methodology.

I have also searched for any media releases issued by the NDIA (to any source) containing the words "mild autism". No results were found.

Further, in reviewing the links you provided in your original request, these are transcripts of interviews with Minister Shorten, not material published by the NDIA.

I am satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate the documents you have requested and the documents do not exist. I have, therefore, decided to refuse access to your request in accordance with section 24A(1)(b)(ii) of the FOI Act.

**Rights of review**

Your rights to seek a review of my decision, or lodge a complaint, are set out at **Attachment A**.

Should you have any enquiries concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at [foi@ndis.gov.au](mailto:foi@ndis.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Cindy – CGN062  
Senior Freedom of Information Officer  
Complaints Management & FOI Branch  
General Counsel Division

## Your review rights

### Internal Review

The FOI Act gives you the right to apply for an internal review of this decision. The review will be conducted by a different person to the person who made the original decision.

If you wish to seek an internal review of the decision, you must apply for the review, in writing, within 30 days of receipt of this letter.

No particular form is required for an application for internal review, but to assist the review process, you should clearly outline your grounds for review (that is, the reasons why you disagree with the decision). Applications for internal review can be lodged by email to [foi@ndis.gov.au](mailto:foi@ndis.gov.au) or sent by post to:

Freedom of Information Section  
Complaints Management & FOI Branch  
General Counsel Division  
National Disability Insurance Agency  
GPO Box 700  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

### Review by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

The FOI Act also gives you the right to apply to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) to seek a review of this decision.

If you wish to have the decision reviewed by the OAIC, you may apply for the review, in writing, or by using the online merits review form available on the OAIC's website at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au), within 60 days of receipt of this letter.

Applications for review can be lodged with the OAIC in the following ways:

Online: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
Post: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001  
Email: [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)  
Phone: 1300 363 992 (local call charge)

### Complaints to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner or the Commonwealth Ombudsman

You may complain to either the Commonwealth Ombudsman or the OAIC about actions taken by the NDIA in relation to your request. The Ombudsman will consult with the OAIC before investigating a complaint about the handling of an FOI request.

Your complaint to the OAIC can be directed to the contact details identified above. Your complaint to the Ombudsman can be directed to:

Phone: 1300 362 072 (local call charge)  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Your complaint should be in writing and should set out the grounds on which it is considered that the actions taken in relation to the request should be investigated.