



Harry Williams

Via email: [foi+request-12850-c48660c4@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-12850-c48660c4@righttoknow.org.au)

Dear Harry Williams

**Freedom of Information Request LEX 53000 – 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 19 February 2025. The request is seeking the following information related to the Cashless Debit Card:

*briefs that discuss the expansion to new sites or nationally.  
And any policy-related emails on the same topic.*

You advised in previous correspondence that the request was intended to capture documents generated between the dates of 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

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

**Practical refusal reason**

This request generally seeks all briefs and emails generated in connection with the expansion of the cashless debit card between the dates of 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022 at a time of high media scrutiny.

Our preliminary searches have identified a minimum of 500 documents that fall within the scope of this request, though the total number is likely far in excess of this. That said, working from the minimum 500 documents number and assuming that they are on average of 3 pages in length, if an officer of the Department were to assess each for sensitivities and mark them up with redactions accordingly, it would take them a total of 4,500 minutes or 75 hours or 10 working days to review the documents at a rate of 3 minutes a page.

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 the scope to only to Ministerial briefs that focussed on some aspect of the expansion of the Cashless Debit Card.

Please note that refining the scope of the request may remove the practical refusal reason, but does not necessarily mean that 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 March 2025** 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](mailto: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

21 February 2024