



3 February 2025

Our reference: LEX 83128

Lyn McAllister

Only by email: [lyn1312@westnet.com.au](mailto:lyn1312@westnet.com.au)

Dear Lyn

### **Decision on your Freedom of Information Request**

I refer to your request received by Services Australia (the Agency) on 3 January 2025 for access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) to the following documents:

Exempting a job seeker from mutual obligation requirements due to special circumstances 001-09120030.

#### **My decision**

The Agency holds one document (totalling 36 pages) that relates to your request.

I have decided to grant you **part access** to the document (Document 1) with some of the content removed.

I have decided that certain parts of the document you have requested are exempt under the FOI Act as the document contains operational information, the disclosure of which would have a substantial adverse effect on the proper and efficient conduct of the operations of the Agency, and release would be contrary to the public interest (section 47E(d) conditional exemption).

Please see the schedule at **Attachment A** to this letter for a description of the document and the reasons for my decision, including the relevant sections of the FOI Act.

#### **How we will send the document to you**

The document is attached.

#### **You can ask for a review of our decision**

If you disagree with any part of the decision you can ask for a review. There are two ways you can do this. You can ask for an internal review from within the Agency, or an external review by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. See **Attachment B** for more information about how to request a review.

**Further assistance**

If you have any questions please email [freedomofinformation@servicesaustralia.gov.au](mailto:freedomofinformation@servicesaustralia.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Leanne  
Authorised FOI Decision Maker  
Freedom of Information Team  
FOI and Reviews Branch | Legal Services Division  
Services Australia



**Attachment A**

**SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENT FOR RELEASE**  
**MCALLISTER, Lyn - LEX 83128**

Doc No.	Pages	Date	Description	Decision	FOI Exemption	Comments
1.	1 - 36	27 November 2024	Operational Blueprint: Exempting a job seeker from mutual obligation requirements due to special circumstances – 001-09120030	Release in part	s 47E(d)	Operational information redacted under s 47E(d). Information redacted under s 22 (out of scope).



## REASONS FOR DECISION

### What you requested

Exempting a job seeker from mutual obligation requirements due to special circumstances 001-09120030.

On 13 January 2025 the Agency acknowledged your request.

### What I took into account

In reaching my decision I took into account:

- your request dated 3 January 2025
- the document which falls within the scope of your request
- whether the release of material is in the public interest
- consultations with Agency officers about:
  - the nature of the document
  - the Agency's operating environment and functions
- guidelines issued by the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the Guidelines), and
- the FOI Act.

### Reasons for my decision

I am authorised to make decisions under section 23(1) of the FOI Act.

I have decided that certain parts of the document you requested are exempt under the FOI Act. My findings of fact and reasons for deciding the exemption applies to the document are discussed below.

#### Operations of the Agency

I have applied the conditional exemption in section 47E(d) of the FOI Act to parts of Document 1.

Section 47E(d) of the FOI Act provides a document is conditionally exempt if it would have a substantial adverse effect on the Agency's ability to conduct its operations efficiently and properly.

Document 1 contains information for exempting job seekers from mutual obligation requirements due to special circumstances. The information includes specific discretionary decision-making guidelines for Agency staff.

I am satisfied this information is relevant to the implementation, delivery and management of processes administered by the Agency, and therefore is relevant to the conduct of the Agency's operations.

I consider that providing this material to you, which is not publicly available, would negatively affect the conduct of the Agency's operations as it would provide insight to malicious users about navigating the Agency's internal systems. The material may allow individuals to manipulate or circumvent established Agency processes for personal gain in obtaining favourable outcomes from mutual obligations. Additionally, it may carry a risk to operational activity/security and has the potential to create safety/security concerns for individuals.

While I have no reason to believe that you would misuse the exempt material in this way, the FOI Act does not control or restrict use or dissemination of the information once released, so I must consider actions any member of the public might take once the information enters the public domain and is available to the world at large.

#### *Public interest considerations*

Access to conditionally exempt material must be given unless I am satisfied it would not be in the public interest to do so.

I consider disclosure of the material would generally promote the objects of the FOI Act, which is in the public interest. However, I also consider disclosure of the exempt material would prejudice the Agency's ability to properly and efficiently deliver services to the public, by providing information which would allow individuals to circumvent the Agency's established processes. I also consider some of the exempt material contains detailed system coding instructions for staff which could be used as a 'how to' guide by malicious users to navigate the Agency's system, and therefore presents a cyber security risk.

Based on these factors, I am satisfied in this instance, the public interest in disclosing the information in the document is outweighed by the public interest against disclosure.

Out of scope or irrelevant information has been deleted in accordance with section 22 of the FOI Act.

I have not taken into account any of the irrelevant factors set out in section 11B(4) of the FOI Act in making this decision.

#### *Conclusion*

In summary, I have decided the parts of the document, as set out in the Schedule, are conditionally exempt under section 47E(d) of the FOI Act. Furthermore, I have decided on balance it would be contrary to the public interest to release this information. Accordingly, I have decided not to release the document in full to you.

As identified in the Schedule, I have redacted the exempt information in the document and released the remaining material in accordance with section 22(1) of the FOI Act.



**Attachment B**

**INFORMATION ON RIGHTS OF REVIEW**

***FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982***

**Requesting a full explanation of a Freedom of Information (FOI) decision**

Before you ask for a formal review of a FOI decision, you can contact us to discuss your request. We will explain the decision to you. This allows you to correct any misunderstandings.

**Requesting a formal review of a FOI decision**

If you consider the decision is incorrect, you have the right to apply for a review under sections 54 and 54L of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act).

You can apply for:

1. an **internal review** by an Internal Review Officer of Services Australia (the agency), and/or
2. an **external review** by the Australian Information Commissioner.

**Applying for an internal review by an Internal Review Officer**

In an internal review, a different decision maker to the Agency delegate who made the original decision will carry out the review. The Internal Review Officer will make a fresh decision on your request and will consider all aspects of the original decision and identify any relevant additional factors.

An application for an internal review must be:

- made in writing
- made within 30 days of receiving this letter
- sent to the address at the top of the first page of this letter, or by email to [freedomofinformation@servicesaustralia.gov.au](mailto:freedomofinformation@servicesaustralia.gov.au)

**Note:** You do not need to fill in a form. However, it is a good idea to set out any relevant submissions you would like the Internal Review Officer to further consider, and your reasons for disagreeing with the decision.

**Applying for external review by the Australian Information Commissioner**

If you disagree with the original or internal review decision, or if you have not received a decision within 30 days of applying for an internal review, you will have 60 days to apply in writing for a review by the Australian Information Commissioner.

**Note:** The Australian Information Commissioner generally prefers FOI applicants to seek an internal review before applying for an external review.

You can lodge your application:

Online: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

Post: Australian Information Commissioner  
GPO Box 5218  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: [FOIDR@oaic.gov.au](mailto:FOIDR@oaic.gov.au)

**Important:**

- If you are applying online, the application form the FOI Review Form is available at [Information Commissioner Review Application form](#)
- If you have one, you should include with your application a copy of the Agency's original and internal review decisions on your FOI request
- Include your contact details
- Set out your reasons for objecting to the Agency's decision.

**Complaints to the Australian Information Commissioner and Commonwealth Ombudsman**

***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. A complaint to the Australian Information Commissioner must be made in writing. The Australian Information Commissioner's contact details are:

Telephone: 1300 363 992

Website: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

Smart Form: [FOI Complaint Form](#)

***Commonwealth Ombudsman***

You may also complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman 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. A complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. The Commonwealth Ombudsman's contact details are:

Phone: 1300 362 072

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

The Commonwealth Ombudsman generally prefers applicants to seek review before complaining about a decision.