

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: Cross Outcome - Across Programs

Question No: 179

Topic: Freedom of Information

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Ludwig asked:

Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?

- a. If so, which departments or agencies?
- b. If so, when?
- c. If so, how does this occur?

Answer:

The Department will, where appropriate, consult or inform other departments or agencies of certain Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

In accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) and the Better Practice Guide issued by the Attorney-General's Department, other departments or agencies will be consulted if the request covers documents prepared, or provided by, that agency.

Some departments will also be consulted or informed where a particular exemption is being considered in relation to an FOI request. For example, in relation to potential exemption claims under section 34 of the FOI Act (the Cabinet documents exemption), the Department will consult with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

When consulting another department in relation to an FOI request, an FOI officer within the Department will contact the FOI officer of the other department or agency and that officer will then coordinate a response.