

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 5-6 JUNE 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Freedom of Information

Question reference number: HS 95

Senator: Bilyk

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 25 July 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Ms Excell requested a copy of her rehabilitation case file and the documentation sent to the area of the Department handling her CDDA claim. This request was treated as a Freedom of Information (FOI) application.

Her application was rejected on the basis that the work involved in processing her request would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the Department from its other operations.

Please provide the following detail in relation to the estimate of the time to process Ms Excell's request:

- a) Search and retrieval time—Why would it take 117 hours to retrieve the documents Ms Excell is seeking?
- b) Examine 3563 pages for decision making—Why is it necessary for the Department to examine these pages in order to process Ms Excell's request?
- c) Redaction time—What documents need to be redacted and why?
- d) Consult third parties—Who are the 19 third parties that need to be consulted?
- e) Is it usual procedure to treat a request from an employee to access their personnel files as an FOI application?
- f) Why was Ms Excell's request to access her files treated as an FOI application?

Answer:

- a) – f) All Freedom of Information requests received by the department are processed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. For privacy reasons the department is unable to comment on individual Freedom of Information applications.