

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission

Outcome/Program: 1.1

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator: Ludwig

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Type of question: Written

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Question:

1. Since Mr Lloyd assumed office, how many applications for information or documents have been granted in response to an FOI application?
2. How many applications have been received and been declined due to exemptions under the act during the same period?
3. When was the last application for information or documents granted by the ASPC?
4. What does Mr Lloyd believe is the intent of FOI legislation?
5. Does the ASPC have a set of guidelines that are used in determining whether a FOI request will be granted? If yes, please provide a copy.

Answer:

1. Mr Lloyd was appointed Australian Public Service Commissioner in December 2014. At that time, one Freedom of Information (FOI) request was being processed in the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). A further five FOI requests have been made since then. The outcomes of these six FOI requests are as follows:

- a) Two requests were refused on the basis of section 24A of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) because the requested documents did not exist.
- b) Two requests were withdrawn with relevant information provided to applicants outside the context of the FOI Act.
- c) Partial access was granted in respect of one application. Parts of the requested documents were found to be exempt from disclosure.
- d) Partial access was granted in respect of another application. Part of that request was refused on the basis of section 24A because the requested documents did not exist.

2. See answer to question 1.

3. The most recent grant of access to documents under the FOI Act was on 1 May 2015.

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4. The Australian Public Service Commissioner believes the intent of the FOI Act is as set out in the objects clauses of the FOI Act.

5. Employees of the APSC who are authorised to make FOI decisions are referred to the FOI guidelines published by the Australian Information Commissioner on the website of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.