



ACT
Government

Environment, Planning and
Sustainable Development

Phone: 6207 1923
Reference: 22/126706

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of information request: 22/126706

I refer to your request above under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (Act), which was received by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) on 17 September 2022. I note that you are seeking the following information relating to the provisional registration under the *Heritage Act 2004* of the Kingston Post Office:

“...documents, in relation to the provisional registration under the Heritage Act 2004 of the Former Kingston Post Office:

- the public consultation report to the Minister under s38 of the Act

- the direction to the Heritage Council made by the Minister under s39 of the Act.”

I am an Information Officer appointed under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

EPSDD is required to provide a decision on your access application in accordance with section 41 of the Act, by 18 October 2022.

Searches conducted

Comprehensive searches were conducted by the EPSDD for documents relevant to your application.

Decision on Access

Searches were completed by Heritage for relevant documents, and seven documents were located that fall within the scope of your request.

Please refer to [Attachment A](#) for the schedule. The schedule also provides a description of the documents and the access decision for each of those documents.

I have decided to grant full access to four documents. I have decided to grant partial release to three documents in scope of your application with deletions applied to information I consider to be contrary to the public interest.

My access decision is detailed further in the following statement of reasons and the document released to you is provided as Attachment B to this letter.

Material Considered

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- the FOI Act, particularly sections; 17, 47, 50, Schedule 2;
- the content of the document that falls within the scope of your request;
- the *Information Privacy Act 2014*;

Public Interest Considerations

My reasons for deciding not to grant access to parts of documents is explained below. These documents contain information that I consider to be contrary to the public interest to disclose.

Information Disclosure – Contrary to the Public Interest under schedule 2 of the Act

In assessing the public interest, I must apply the descending test as outlined under section 17 of the Act which requires consideration of all the factors favouring disclosure, any favouring nondisclosure and the balance of those factors when considered collectively.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

Disclosure of the identified information could reasonably be expected to do the following:

- Schedule 2.1(a)(i) –promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government’s accountability;
- Schedule 2.1(a)(ii) –contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest;
- Schedule 2.1(a)(viii) – reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision.

I have given regard to the public interest regarding the potential impacts of Heritage assessments under the *Heritage Act 2004*, specifically the former Post Office, Kingston and that the release of the requested information may assist in public understanding of government decisions. I have also given regard to the advancing of public understanding and transparency in government assessment processes. It is for this reason that I have decided to release to you three documents in part (as outlined in the attached schedule).

Factors favouring Non-disclosure

In applying the public interest test, I have determined that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to do the following:

- Schedule 2.2(a)(ii) – prejudice the protection of an individual’s right to privacy or any other right under the *Human Rights Act 2004*;

Personal Information

In my review of the requested material, I have given regard to the pro-disclosure bias in the Act and the benefit of open government and transparency in government processes and decision-making. I have considered whether the release of the personal information identified would advance the public interest and it is my view that, in this instance, the release of this information would not serve to further open discussion, government accountability, informed debate and the provision of contextual or background information.

Both items scheduled for partial release contain information that falls within the meaning of personal information as defined by the Act, email addresses, mobile numbers, and personal associated information which could easily identify individuals and personal information.

I am satisfied that the disclosure of this personal information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy under the *Human Rights Act 2004*. This is a factor favouring nondisclosure under Schedule 2, section 2.2(a)(ii) of the Act.

In balancing public interest considerations, I am satisfied that, on the information available, disclosure of the identified personal information may constitute a breach of privacy and is therefore contrary to the public interest.

Charges

In accordance with section 107(2)(b) of the Act any charges applicable are waived.

Online publication

Under section 28 of the Act, EPSDD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. Under the Open Access Information Scheme, documents associated with access applications are published on the disclosure log no earlier than three days after a decision on access is provided to the applicant. Documents containing your personal information will be published in redacted form to protect your privacy.

You may view the EPSDD's disclosure log at:

<https://www.environment.act.gov.au/about-us/access-government-information/disclosure-log>

Ombudsman review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in the disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman. For more information and the application form for Ombudsman review, please visit:

https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/79190/Apply-for-Ombudsman-review.pdf

Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision.

Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Level 4, 1 Moore St
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601

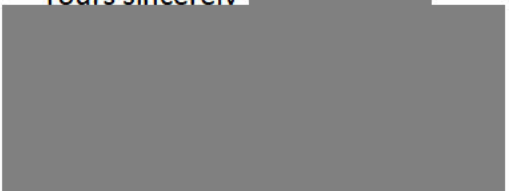
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740

<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Further information

If you have any queries concerning the Directorate's processing of your request, or would like further information, please contact EPSDD Customer Service on (02) 6207 1923 and ask for the FOI team, or email to EPSDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely 



Bren Burkevics
Information Officer
Executive Group Manager, Environment, Heritage and Water

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October 2022