



**Australian Government**  
**Office of the Australian  
Information Commissioner**

Office of the Australian  
Information Commissioner

# Annual report 2024–25

Volume 2

Report on information provided by  
agencies and ministers subject to  
the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

**OAIC**

# Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

Annual report 2024–25

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Report on information provided by agencies and ministers  
subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals, creating a sense of movement and depth.

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# FOI Commissioner's foreword

I am pleased to present this collection of FOI statistics reported to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) in 2024–25 by Australian Government agencies and ministers that are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). This volume forms part of the OAIC's annual report prepared under ss 30 and 31 of the *Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010* (AIC Act), and s 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The FOI system is a critical pillar of open government and robust democracy in Australia. Government information is a national resource that should be available for community access and use. My goal as FOI Commissioner has been to address the OAIC's backlog of IC reviews whilst driving agency compliance. The focus on ageing IC reviews has required agencies to participate in the process to resolve these older matters whilst continuing to meet their statutory obligations in relation to new FOI requests.

The results in this volume demonstrate that agencies continue to face challenges meeting processing timeframes against a rising trend in FOI request numbers. The OAIC sees these challenges across various FOI oversight and regulatory functions, including FOI statistics, IC reviews, FOI complaints and extension of time applications. This latest data will inform the OAIC's approach to support agencies to achieve better outcomes and to embed a positive culture of compliance.

## Key statistics and themes

In 2024–25, Australian Government agencies and ministers received 43,456 FOI requests, which is the highest number on record. The 2019–20 reporting year is the only other year in the past 7 years where the number of FOI requests exceeded 40,000. However, the drivers of this increase following a period of relative stability should be examined.

It is clear there continues to be pressure on the FOI system, with the number of requests being made to agencies. This increase is largely driven by one agency, the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs). The majority of requests continue to be for personal

records. There does not appear to be a single cause for this increase, with agencies describing different reasons.

The significance of the Home Affairs workload to the performance of the FOI system as a whole is highlighted in this report for the first time. Making up 40% of all FOI requests, the statistical results now report figures for all agencies *including* Home Affairs, and for all agencies *excluding* Home Affairs. This is intended to give a more complete picture of the trends experienced across the system.

Several agencies again struggled to meet the statutory timeframes imposed by the FOI Act for making FOI decisions. The OAIC has focused our regulatory activities to uplift those agencies' timeliness:

- our IC review procedure directions, which took effect on 1 July 2024, set out certain procedures in relation to IC review of deemed access refusal decisions
- the OAIC published a webpage on IC review focus areas for 2024–25, which confirmed our focus on IC reviews of deemed access refusal decisions during the year
- we focused on timeliness as a theme in our investigations of FOI complaints – the OAIC commenced investigations into 3 agencies in response to complaints about their compliance with statutory timeframes, and
- in March 2025, we launched an FOI [processing period calculator](#) to further assist agencies with timeliness.

Pleasingly, 4 agencies deciding more than 100 matters during the year were able to do so whilst meeting the statutory timeframes for all matters. These were:

- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) – 316 decisions
- Department of Social Services (DSS) – 176 decisions
- IP Australia – 147 decisions
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) – 146 decisions.



We received

**43,456**

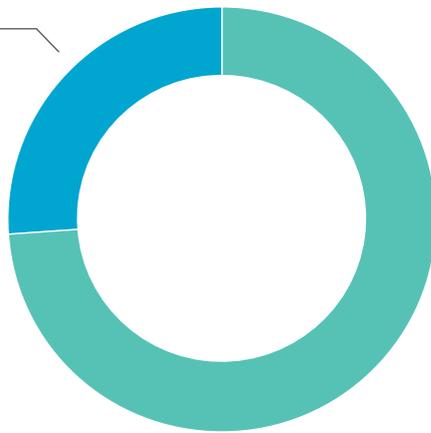
FOI requests

**↑ 25%**

increase on 2023–24

### Type of information requested

Other **26%** (11,347)



Personal **74%** (32,109)

We also observed an increase in proactive disclosure this year, through both IPS publication and disclosure log processes. Disclosure logs continue to be an effective strategy for agencies to reduce the likelihood of receiving multiple FOI requests for the same information. The data we have received indicates Australians are continuing to access documents via agencies' disclosure log. For example, in 2024–25, there were 102,080 unique visitors to disclosure logs, and 237,516 page views. These pro-disclosure activities will assist to reduce the FOI impact on agencies, and I commend their continued use by agencies to the greatest extent possible.

As the outgoing FOI Commissioner, I urge agencies to continue to work on improving the quality of FOI decision-making and focus on the benefits of

disclosure whenever possible. In 2024–25, 248 IC review decisions were made under s 55K of the FOI Act, and 62% of those decisions 'set aside' the decisions under review. The high set-aside rate indicates there is more work to do to embed a pro-disclosure approach. This work is important to ensure proper alignment with the objects of the FOI Act, to increase public participation in Government processes and to increase scrutiny, discussion, comment and review of the Government's activities.

**Toni Pirani**

FOI Commissioner  
26 September 2025

# Overview

Volume 2 of the OAIC's 2024–25 annual report contains information on:

- FOI requests for access to documents
- applications for amendment of personal records
- charges
- disclosure logs
- reviews of FOI decisions
- complaints about agency FOI actions
- the impact of FOI on agency resources, and
- the impact of the Information Publication Scheme (IPS) on agency resources.

This volume has been prepared using data collected from Australian Government agencies and ministers subject to the FOI Act through FOI statistical returns in which they are required to provide, among other details, information about:

- the number of FOI requests made to them
- the number of decisions they made granting, partially granting or refusing access, and the number and outcome of applications for internal review
- the number and outcome of applications to them to amend personal records, and
- charges they collected.

Key data provided by ministers and agencies in their FOI statistical returns is published on the OAIC's [FOI statistics dashboard](#), and the full data set from the returns, including agencies' and ministers' comments, is published separately on [data.gov.au](#).

This volume has also been prepared using comments that agencies and ministers have given to the OAIC to explain certain data provided in their FOI statistical returns, information collected separately from the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART), and records of the OAIC.

In this volume, the term 'FOI request' means a request for access to documents made under s 15 of the FOI Act. Applications for amendment or annotation of personal records under s 48 are discussed separately from FOI requests.

The FOI Act requires agencies and ministers to provide access to documents in response to FOI requests that meet the requirements of s 15 of the Act. The statistics in this volume do not include requests that did not satisfy those requirements.

## Summary of key statistics

Australian Government agencies and ministers received the highest number of FOI requests on record in 2024–25, totalling 43,456. The 2019–20 reporting year is the only other year in the past 7 years where the number of FOI requests exceeded 40,000.

Home Affairs accounted for 40% of all FOI requests in 2024–25 (17,342), which is more than the next 11 Australian Government agencies combined. Recognising this high proportion, the statistical results summarised below show results for all agencies *including* Home Affairs, and for all agencies *excluding* Home Affairs. This is intended to identify instances where Home Affairs FOI results may be obscuring key FOI trends experienced by other agencies.

Comparisons in the analysis below (ie 'increased', 'decreased', etc) are between 2024–25 results and the results from the previous period in 2023–24.

## Requests

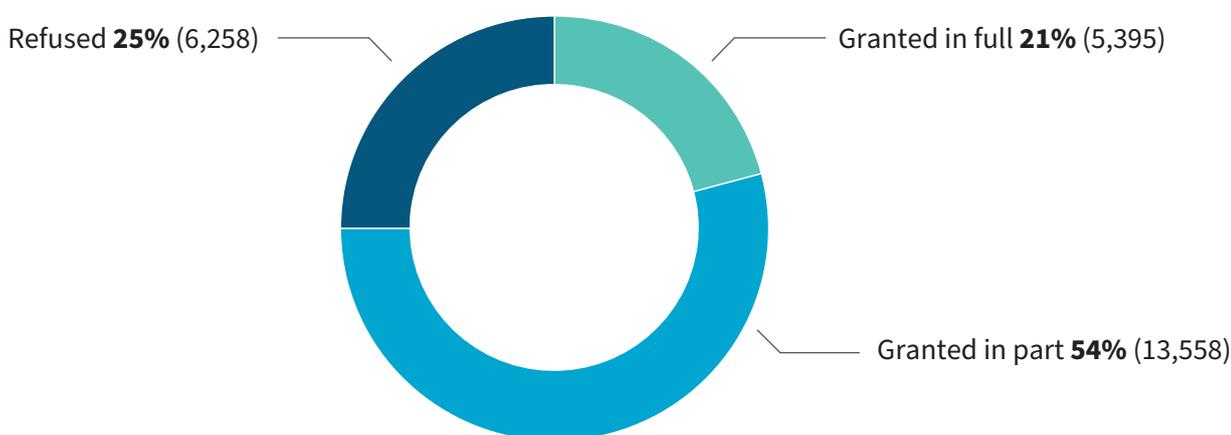
The 20 agencies that received the most FOI requests in 2024–25 accounted for 86% of all requests made to the Australian Government. Excluding Home Affairs data, the top 20 agencies received 46% of all requests.

The proportion of requests seeking access to personal information was 74%, while 26% were for other information. This is consistent with data from the previous 2 years. When Home Affairs figures are excluded, the proportion of requests seeking personal information decreased to 59%.

**25,211**Decisions made  
on FOI requests**↑ 18%**

increase on 2023–24

## Decision outcomes



## Decisions

The percentage of requests **granted in full** in 2024–25 remained unchanged at 21%. However, when Home Affairs figures are excluded, only 17% of requests were granted in full (down from 20% in 2023–24).

The percentage of FOI requests **granted in part** decreased slightly to 54% (down from 55%). When Home Affairs figures are excluded, 56% of requests were granted in part (up from 54% in 2023–24).

The percentage of requests **refused in full** increased to 25% (up from 24%). When Home Affairs figures are excluded, 27% of requests were refused in full, up from 26% in 2023–24).

## Practical refusals

Agencies and ministers issued 2,858 notices advising of an intention to refuse a request for a practical refusal reason in 2024–25. This is 17% more than in 2023–24. Of these, 32% of requests were subsequently processed (down from 38% in 2023–24).

When Home Affairs figures are excluded, agencies and ministers issued 1,772 practical refusal notices, which was 23% more than in 2023–24. Of these, 33% were subsequently processed (down from 43% in 2023–24).

## Exemptions

The personal privacy conditional exemption in s 47F of the FOI Act remains the most claimed exemption, at 42% of all exemptions claimed. This is greater than in 2023–24 when it was 39% and the same as in 2022–23 and 2021–22. The other exemptions applied in 2024–25 remained broadly consistent with previous years.

When Home Affairs figures are excluded, the s 47F exemption was still the most claimed, comprising 40% of all exemptions. This is greater than in 2023–24 (37.5%), 2022–23 (39%) and 2021–22 (37%). The other exemptions applied in 2024–25 remained broadly consistent with previous years.

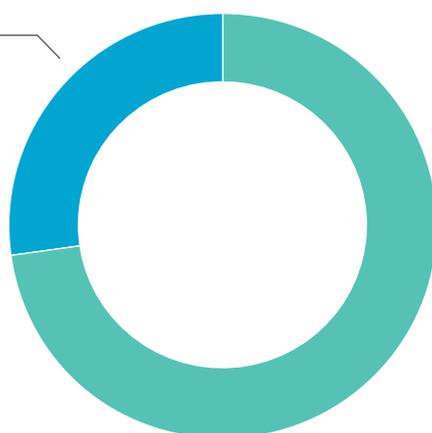
# 73%

of decisions made within statutory time frame

# ↓ 1 p.p.

decrease on 2023–24

After the statutory time period **27%** (6,916)



Within the statutory time period **73%** (18,295)

## Processing times

The percentage of FOI requests decided within the applicable statutory timeframe remained unchanged from the previous year at 73% (including Home Affairs). When Home Affairs is excluded, there was a slight decrease on the previous year's result, with 84% of requests decided in time (compared with 85% in 2023–24).

## Internal reviews

There was a 13% increase in the number of internal review applications (915) in 2024–25, and a 9% increase in internal review decisions (812).

Excluding Home Affairs, the increase in internal review applications was still 13% (872), while the number of internal review decisions (788) was 10% more than in 2023–24.

In 2024–25, internal reviews affirmed the original decision in 62% of matters, compared with 55% affirmed in 2023–24. Excluding Home Affairs, 61% of internal reviews affirmed the original decision, compared with 56% in 2023–24.

## FOI costs and charges

The total reported costs attributable to FOI in 2024–25 were \$97.99 million, a 14% increase on 2023–24 (\$86.24 million). When Home Affairs figures are excluded, the total reported costs attributable to FOI in 2024–25 were \$76.74 million, a 9% increase on 2023–24 (\$70.37 million).

Home Affairs made up 20% of the costs of the FOI system and 40% of all FOI requests in 2024–25. According to these figures, Home Affairs expenditure on FOI requests appears disproportionately lower than other agencies.

The average staff days for each FOI request received in 2024–25 was 3.6 days, compared with 4.2 days in 2023–24. Home Affairs' average staff days for each FOI request received was 4.7 days this year, compared with 5.2 days in 2023–24.

There was a 1% increase in the total charges notified in 2024–25 (\$186,802) compared with 2023–24. When Home Affairs figures are excluded, total charges were \$187,584 (also 1% up from 2023–24).

Agencies including Home Affairs collected 11% less in charges (\$65,181) than in 2023–24 (\$73,067). The results were similar for all agencies excluding Home Affairs, with 10.5% less in charges collected (\$65,181) than in 2023–24 (\$72,846).

## Requests to ministers

FOI requests to ministers continue to comprise a small proportion of all requests received by Australian Government agencies and ministers. In 2024–25 ministers received 536 requests.

However, the number of requests to ministers has steadily increased over the past 6 years, almost doubling from 2019–20, when there were 284 requests.

## Disclosure logs and the IPS

There were 3,363 new entries added to agency disclosure logs in 2024–25. This was an increase from 2023–24 (2,481) and 2022–23 (2,493). When Home Affairs figures are excluded, the total number of new entries added to agency disclosure logs in 2024–25 was 3,118, also up from previous years: 2,313 in 2023–24 and 1,761 in 2022–23.

The proportion of new documents available directly from agency websites (including Home Affairs) increased in 2024–25 to 79%, compared with 75% in 2023–24. Similar results are evident when Home Affairs numbers are excluded. In that case, the increase in the proportion of new documents available directly from agency websites was 77% in 2024–25, compared with 73% in 2023–24.

## The OAIC's FOI regulatory activities

Against the backdrop of the FOI results summarised above, and presented in more detail in the body of this report, the OAIC has undertaken a range of activities to uplift agencies' FOI capabilities, including the following.

### FOI practitioners survey 2024

Any insights from the data presented in this volume might be usefully considered alongside the responses we received during the 2024–25 financial year from an FOI practitioners survey. We conducted the survey to better understand FOI officers' experiences of the FOI system.

Improving access to government-held information in Australia is a multifaceted task with shifting needs across both the environment at large and for Australian Government agencies that have a duty to manage information for public purposes.

To support our work towards this goal, it became clear that we needed to better understand the needs of the people at the heart of the system – FOI practitioners. The OAIC set out to identify ways the environment is changing and the needs of practitioners, so we can better target our activities and the resources we provide as the regulator.

In mid-2024, ORIMA Research, on our behalf, surveyed FOI practitioners in Australian Government agencies, including those working in large agencies that deal with high volumes of FOI requests.

This was the first time we have conducted a survey of this kind. It builds upon our 2023 review of Australian Government agencies' compliance with their IPS obligations.

The OAIC published a [report on the survey](#) on 13 January 2025, highlighting three key learnings, summarised below.

## **Improving systems will make complying with FOI obligations easier**

The majority of agencies require improvement to their systems and policies for records management and managing and reporting on FOI requests.

Only 29% of agencies surveyed had an integrated records management system, and only 22% had comprehensive document management policies covering all forms of records, including messaging services like WhatsApp.

While 26% used a case management system to manage and report on FOI requests, the majority (63%) used a basic spreadsheet or other static record.

Improving these systems would make complying with FOI obligations easier. As examples, an integrated records management system makes searching and retrieving documents more efficient, while using a case management system assists to track cases, meet obligations under the FOI Act and identify trends to support proactive publication.

## **There are opportunities to expand training**

Most agencies reported using informal, on-the-job methods (79%) to train staff on their obligations under the FOI Act, followed by internal resources (69%). Training provided by the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) (42%) and internal legal services (39%) were also common. External service providers (17%) and internal online training (28%) were less likely to be used.

There is an opportunity for agencies to consider formalising their training offerings to ensure agency staff are well equipped to meet FOI Act obligations. The OAIc will continue to maintain resources such as the [FOI Essentials](#) toolkit and issue updates and fact sheets to explain specific issues to support these efforts.

## **There is work to do to elevate FOI as a whole-of-agency responsibility**

Practitioners were asked a series of questions about which area in their agency is responsible for managing various obligations under the FOI Act.

Legal sections, followed by corporate teams, were most likely to be responsible for meeting FOI obligations. Business areas commonly played a role in making decisions on FOI requests but were less likely to be involved in other aspects.

Agency-wide understanding and coordination of the FOI request process and proactive release obligations are critical to Australian Government agencies meeting their legal obligations under the FOI Act. This requires leadership and understanding that FOI is a core function and a responsibility of all Australian Public Service (APS) staff. It should be taken seriously, demonstrated by better resourcing and all APS staff being stewards of government-held information and playing a role in meeting FOI obligations, including through record-keeping.

The survey findings are informing the OAIc's approach to supporting agencies and embedding a positive culture where agencies strive for not only compliance, but best practice. The OAIc has an opportunity to advance our training offerings and build on existing guidance to support agencies in upskilling *all* staff on FOI best practice.

The survey results will be used by the OAIc to drive agency compliance and support better practice, while being mindful of changes in the operating environment.

## Guidance to assist practitioners

As noted in Volume 1 of this annual report, in 2024–25 we published a number of guidance and educational resources to support capability building within agencies:

- FOI self-assessment tool, published January 2025
- FOI processing period calculator, published March 2025
- Revisions to Part 2 of the FOI Guidelines (Scope of application of the FOI Act), published in April 2025, and
- Public consultation on draft revisions to Part 3 of the FOI Guidelines (Processing and deciding on requests for access), published May 2025.

These tools and guidance will assist agencies in addressing non-compliance or risks of non-compliance with statutory timeframes prescribed in s 15(5)(b) of the FOI Act.

## Thematic investigations and prioritisation of IC reviews of deemed access refusal decisions

The OAIC undertook thematic investigations of FOI complaints in the 2024–25 year in relation to agencies identified as non-compliant with statutory timeframes, including the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), Australian Federal Police (AFP), and Department of Defence (Defence) and this work will continue in the coming year.

In conducting IC reviews, the OAIC also prioritised IC reviews of deemed access refusal decisions, noting only 10 agencies account for 88% (917) of the applications for IC review of deemed refusal decisions received by the OAIC between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025.



# Part 1

## FOI requests for access to documents



# FOI requests for access to documents

## Number of requests received

Table 1 compares the number of FOI requests received by agencies and ministers in each of the past 7 reporting years, including the percentage increase or decrease from the previous financial year. Of those requests, ministers received a total of 536 requests.

Requests to Home Affairs totalled 17,342, comprising 40% of the total of FOI requests in 2024–25.

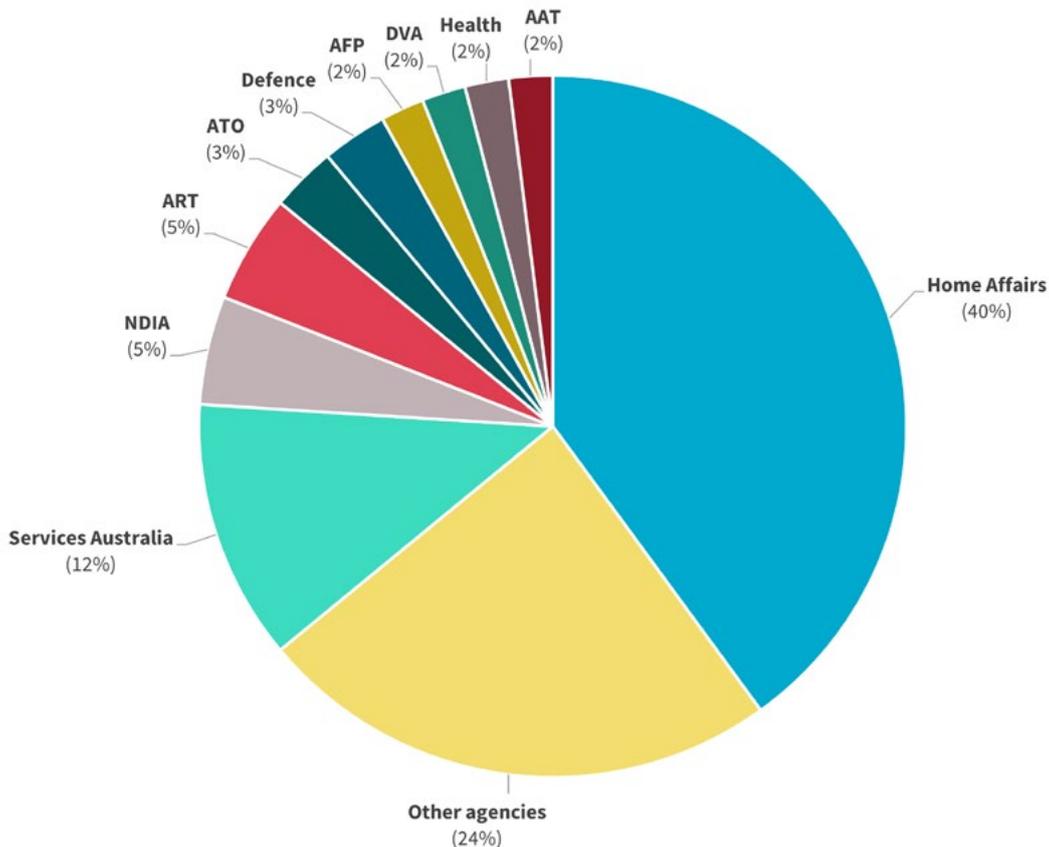
Services Australia received the second highest total number of requests (5,135), and NDIA received the third highest total number of requests (2,331).

Table 2 ranks the top 20 Australian Government agencies and ministers in terms of the number of FOI requests received in 2024–25, and compares them with the number of requests those agencies received in 2023–24.

**Table 1: FOI requests received over the past 7 years**

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Number of FOI requests received	38,879	41,333	34,797	34,236	34,219	34,706	43,456
% change from previous financial year	+13	+6	-16	-2	<0.5	+1	25

**Figure 1: Agencies by the number of FOI requests received**



**Table 2: Agencies by the number of FOI requests received**

Agency	2023-24						2024-25										
	Rank*	Personal	Other	Total	% of all FOI requests	Rank	Personal	Other	Total	% of all FOI requests	Rank	Personal	Other	Total	% of all FOI requests	Change in total	% change in total
Home Affairs	1	11,297	605	11,902	34	1	16,678	664	17,342	40	1	16,678	664	17,342	40	5,440	46
Services Australia	2	4,469	281	4,750	14	2	4,899	236	5,135	12	2	4,899	236	5,135	12	385	8
National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)	5	1,125	256	1,381	4	3	1,838	493	2,331	5	3	1,838	493	2,331	5	950	69
ART <sup>1</sup>						4	2,070	50	2,120	5	4	2,070	50	2,120	5	2,120	
Australian Taxation Office (ATO)	7	677	247	924	3	5	679	543	1,222	3	5	679	543	1,222	3	298	32
Defence	6	261	728	989	3	6	395	765	1,160	3	6	395	765	1,160	3	171	17
AFP	8	512	200	712	2	7	724	338	1,062	2	7	724	338	1,062	2	350	49
DVA	4	1,609	197	1,806	5	8	692	181	873	2	8	692	181	873	2	-933	-52
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Health)	9	85	520	605	2	9	191	620	811	2	9	191	620	811	2	206	34
Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) <sup>2</sup>	3	1,895	47	1,942	6	10	760	19	779	2	10	760	19	779	2	-1,163	-60
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)	11	331	206	537	2	11	327	416	743	2	11	327	416	743	2	206	38
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)	12	192	312	504	1	12	258	409	667	2	12	258	409	667	2	163	32
OAIC	13	334	164	498	1	13	370	209	579	1	13	370	209	579	1	81	16
Office of the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety)	10	520	53	573	2	14	372	56	428	1	14	372	56	428	1	-145	-25
DCCEEW	17	2	306	308	1	15	5	398	403	1	15	5	398	403	1	95	31
Attorney-General's Department (AGD)	14	101	337	438	1	16	80	254	334	1	16	80	254	334	1	-104	-24
Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)	18	83	199	282	1	17	120	208	328	1	17	120	208	328	1	46	16

<sup>1</sup> The ART replaced the AAT on 14 October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> The AAT was replaced by the ART on 14 October 2024.

Agency	2023-24					2024-25						
	Rank*	Personal	Other	Total	% of all FOI requests	Rank	Personal	Other	Total	% of all FOI requests	Change in total	% change in total
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA)	15	9	347	356	1	18	12	295	307	1	-49	-14
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC)	16	14	325	339	1	19	21	282	303	1	-36	-11
Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)	22	3	196	199	1	20	6	253	259	1	60	30
<b>Total of current year top 20*</b>		<b>23,736</b>	<b>5,550</b>	<b>29,286</b>	<b>84</b>		<b>30,497</b>	<b>6,689</b>	<b>37,186</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>8,141</b>	<b>28</b>
Others		1,383	4,037	5,420	16		1612	4659	6,270	14	609	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>25,119</b>	<b>9,587</b>	<b>34,706</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>32,109</b>	<b>11,347</b>	<b>43,456</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,750</b>	<b>25</b>

\* This is the total of the current year's top 20 only. The composition of the top 20 has changed since 2024-25.

The top 3 agencies in the top 20 – Home Affairs, Services Australia, and NDIA – all received more FOI requests compared with 2023–24.

Overall, the ‘top 20 agencies’ (based on the number of FOI requests received) have been receiving a consistent proportion of FOI requests each year for the past 3 years:

- 87% of all FOI requests in 2022–23
- 84% of all FOI requests in 2023–24
- 86% of all FOI requests in 2024–25.

All ‘other’ agencies outside the top 20 experienced an increase of 11% in the number of FOI requests received, from 5,420 in 2023–24 to 6,270 in 2024–25. This is a smaller increase in FOI requests received than that of the top 20 agencies, which received a 28% increase (from 29,286 in 2023–24 to 37,186 in 2024–25).

## Requests for personal and other (non-personal) documents

The [FOI Statistics Guide](#), which is issued by the OAIC to help agencies complete their FOI statistical returns, defines a request for personal information as a request in which personal information is the predominant type of information sought. For this purpose, ‘personal information’ includes both an applicant’s own personal information and information about other individuals.

‘Personal information’ is defined in s 4(1) of the FOI Act by reference to the definition in the *Privacy Act 1988*. In summary, ‘personal information’ means information or an opinion about an identified individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable. A request for ‘other’ (non-personal) information means a request for all other documents, such as documents concerning policy development or government decision-making.

In 2024–25, 32,109 FOI requests (74% of all FOI requests received) were for documents containing predominantly personal information. This is an increase in the proportion of those requests in 2023–24, when 72% of all requests received were for documents containing predominantly personal information.

Home Affairs received the most significant increase in requests for documents containing predominantly personal information, an increase of 40% from 2023–24.

The total of requests for other (non-personal documents) increased by 18%, from 9,587 in 2023–24 to 11,347 in 2024–25.

### Home Affairs personal information requests

Home Affairs continues to attract a considerable number of requests for personal information. In 2024–25, personal information requests made up 96% of requests received, similar to 95% received in 2023–24. However, this was also accompanied by a substantial increase in number of requests received. This percentage breakdown compares with 86% in 2022–23.

The number of personal information requests that Home Affairs receives places pressure on its processing timeframes. In 2024–25, 70% of matters were decided after the statutory timeframe had expired, compared to the 29% average across all agencies.

There has been a longstanding practice within Home Affairs (and its predecessor departments) in its failure to comply with the mandatory statutory processing timeframes under the FOI Act. This issue of non-compliance has been consistent and continues to recur.<sup>3</sup>

For large departments with high FOI volumes, this is a reminder to ensure that they have sufficient governance arrangements and supporting tools and systems in place. The OAIC’s [self-assessment tool for agencies](#) contains questions about governance arrangements – covering authorisations, independence, and contractors – and questions about supporting tools and systems – covering smart forms, case management systems, and planning for increased FOI workloads. The strategies table, complementing the self-assessment tool, provides short strategies and web links to relevant parts of the FOI Guidelines and other OAIC agency resources such as our guide on [managing increased volume of FOI requests](#).

<sup>3</sup> View the summary of our investigation outcomes on our website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/information-commissioner-decisions-and-reports/freedom-of-information-investigation-outcomes>. See also, for example, the following CII reports (referred to as own motion investigations): FOI at the Department of Human Services, published on 2 December 2014, and Processing of non-routine FOI requests by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, published on 26 September 2012, on the OAIC website, <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/foi-reports/>.

## Largest decreases

The largest decreases in the percentages of FOI requests received in 2024–25 were seen by:

- DVA – a 52% decrease, from 1,806 in 2023–24 to 873 in 2024–25
- eSafety – a 25% decrease, from 573 in 2023–24 to 428 in 2024–25
- AGD – a 24% decrease, from 438 in 2023–24 to 334 in 2024–25.

DVA explains that it continues to encourage the use of administrative access where appropriate, which has reduced the number of FOI requests. DVA also explains that a significant percentage of its information release is via administrative access, as recorded in DVA's 2023–24 and 2024–25 annual reports. This practice is commended – it delivers outcomes that promote confidence in the agency's practices, and its results demonstrate the impact of good practice for the community, agencies and the regulator.

### **Administrative access**

Administrative access means release of government information in response to a specific request outside the processes in the FOI Act. Administrative access can offer resource benefits to the agency, and applicants may receive documents within shorter timeframes than under the FOI Act.

Administrative access may involve providing information or documents when requested by a member of the public, allowing clients to access and update their personal information through an online portal, or designating an access arrangement for information or documents the agency is commonly asked for.

Administrative access may also involve establishing a formal access arrangement for staff seeking their own personnel records. If an agency has established procedures for employees to request their own personnel records, the FOI Act provides that those employees (which include former employees) cannot make an FOI request for their personnel records unless they have already made a request under those established administrative access procedures (s 15A of the FOI Act).

For more information, see the OAIC's resource on [administrative access](#) on our website.

eSafety commented that in 2024–25 and 2023–24 it received a large number of FOI requests that could be attributed to a coordinated 'end eSafety' campaign with the express intention of diverting eSafety's resources from its other operations. eSafety explains that the campaign peaked during 2023–24, and the campaign in 2024–25 resulted in fewer requests being made than in 2023–24.

AGD explained that it experienced a very significant increase in the number of requests in the previous years, between 2021–22 and 2023–24. While the number of requests in 2024–25 is a decrease from 2023–24, the number of requests in 2024–25 is still an increase of 20% from the number of requests in 2021–22.

## Largest increases

The largest increases in the percentages of FOI requests received in 2024–25 were seen by:

- NDIA – a 69% increase, from 1,381 in 2023–24 to 2,331 in 2024–25
- AFP – a 49% increase, from 712 in 2023–24 to 1,062 in 2024–25
- Home Affairs – a 46% increase, from 11,902 in 2023–24 to 17,342 in 2024–25.

NDIA commented in its annual FOI statistical return that it received a substantial increase in the total number of information requests under both FOI and administrative access in 2024–25, and processed more requests across both FOI and administrative access.

AFP commented that its 49% increase in FOI requests received involved more complex and voluminous requests.

Home Affairs made no comments in its annual FOI statistical return about its increase in FOI requests received in 2024–25, and opted to not provide an explanation to the OAIC for inclusion in this annual report.

## Large increase in requests – other agencies

Some agencies outside the top 20, and therefore not featured in Table 2, received significantly more FOI requests in 2024–25 than in 2023–24. These included:

- **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) – an increase of 85%, from 127**

### requests received in 2023–24, to 235 in 2024–25.

The NDIS Commission explains that it experienced an increase of received FOI requests for documents relating to complaints, reportable incidents, investigations, audits, banning orders, policy and procedure guides and CCTV files. There has been an increase in the volume and complexity of FOI requests as a result of the increased regulatory functions of the NDIS Commission. Media and public interest in particular matters falling within the NDIS Commission's functions have also contributed to the increase in FOI activity. There is also an increase in the requests for matters that fall outside the jurisdiction, for example matters relating to NDIA.

- **Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) – an increase of 89%, from 79 requests received in 2023–24, to 147 in 2024–25.** The ABC explains that it received 263% more FOI requests from media, representing 47% of all new requests.
- **National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) – an increase of 53%, from 59 requests received in 2023–24, to 90 in 2024–25.** NIAA explains that in 2024–25, it received the highest number of FOI requests since it was established on 1 July 2019, likely due to an increase in requests received from Australian Senators and Federal Members of Parliament (20% of all requests) – which were mostly related to NIAA procurements – and journalists (10% of all requests) on compliance matters.
- **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) – an increase of 34%, from 109 requests received in 2023–24, to 146 in 2024–25.** The ACCC explains that it received an increase in FOI requests from the media and across all functions of the ACCC, which may be attributable to the increased scope of the ACCC's functions, and the high-profile nature of some ACCC matters.

- **DSS – an increase of 29% from 177 requests received in 2023–24, to 228 in 2024–25.** DSS explains the increase in FOI requests occurred most notably in quarters 1 and 3 of 2024–25, and was driven by requests for non-personal information. The increase in FOI requests was not specific to a particular subject matter or departmental program.

## FOI requests to ministers

FOI requests to ministers are presented here separately, to distinguish their FOI activity from that of other types of agencies.

In 2024–25, requests to ministers totalled 536, a 16% increase in requests made to ministers in 2023–24 (462).

In the last 6 years, there has been a significant rise in the number of requests made to ministers, increasing by 22% between 2021–22 (300) and 2022–23 (367), increasing by a further 26% in 2023–24 (462), and 16% in 2024–25 (536).

The ministers who received the highest numbers of requests in 2024–25 were:

- Minister for the Environment and Water (75 requests)
- Minister for Communications (58)
- Prime Minister (54)
- Minister for Health and Ageing (29)
- Minister for Climate Change and Energy (26)
- Attorney-General (23)
- Minister for Industry and Innovation (23)
- Minister for Resources (20)
- Minister for Foreign Affairs (20), and
- Treasurer (19).

These 10 ministers received 65% of all requests made to ministers in 2024–25 (347 of 536 requests).

**Table 3: FOI requests received by Australian government ministers over the past 6 years**

	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Number of FOI requests received	284	266	300	367	462	536
% change from previous reporting period		-6.3	12.8	22.3	25.9	16

**Geoffrey Shafran and Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel (Freedom of information) [2025] AICmr 46 (4 March 2025)**

This decision discusses whether a document is 'an official document of a minister' under the FOI Act in a situation where the document was 'a document of an agency' on the day the FOI request was made. The decision has broader implications for agencies and ministers where there is a change of minister as a consequence of a change of government following a federal election, and may be instructive for how to manage requests to ministers where the document is not in their possession at the time of the request but is in the possession of an agency. The FOI Guidelines were updated to reflect this decision.

## FOI requests finalised

Table 4 reveals how Australian Government agencies dealt with the FOI requests they received in 2024–25, compared with 2023–24 – including whether those requests were withdrawn, transferred to another agency or a minister, or decided.

Agencies and ministers commenced 2024–25 with more FOI requests on hand requiring a decision than

the previous financial year (32% more than at the beginning of 2023–24).

The requests received during the 2024–25 increased by 25% and the numbers of requests withdrawn, transferred to another agency or a minister, or decided increased in similar proportions.

## Decisions on FOI requests

Agencies made 25,211 FOI decisions in 2024–25, 18% more than in 2023–24 when 21,347 decisions were made.

Table 5 shows the proportion of decisions made by Australian Government agencies and ministers to grant access to documents in full, in part, or refused in full.

The proportion of FOI requests granted in full was 21% in 2024–25, which is the same result as 2023–24, and lower than 2022–23 when it was 25%.

The proportion of FOI requests granted in part was 54% in 2024–25. In 2023–24 this was 55% and in 2022–23 it was 52%.

The proportion of FOI requests refused in 2024–25 increased to 25%, compared with 24% in 2023–24. This includes requests refused because the requested documents did not exist or could not be found, or

**Table 4: Overview of FOI requests received and finalised**

FOI request processing	2023–24	2024–25	% change
On hand at the beginning of the year <sup>4</sup>	5,507	7,290	32
Received during the year	34,706	43,456	25
Requiring decision <sup>5</sup>	40,213	50,746	26
Withdrawn	11,024	13,353	21
Transferred	612	826	35
Decided <sup>6</sup>	21,347	25,211	18
Finalised <sup>7</sup>	32,983	39,390	19
On hand at the end of the year	7,230	11,356	57

<sup>4</sup> Agencies and ministers can ask the OAIC to change the number of FOI requests on hand at the beginning of a reporting year if the number carried over from the previous year is incorrect.

<sup>5</sup> Total of FOI requests on hand at the beginning of this reporting period and requests received during this reporting period.

<sup>6</sup> Covers access granted in full, part or refused.

<sup>7</sup> The sum of requests withdrawn, transferred, and decided.

**Table 5: Outcomes of FOI requests decided in 2024–25 compared with 2023–24**

Decision	Personal 2023–24	Other 2023–24	Total 2023–24	%	Personal 2024–25	Other 2024–25	Total 2024–25	%
Granted in full <sup>8</sup>	3,461	1,004	4,465	21	4,100	1,295	5,395	21
Granted in part <sup>9</sup>	8,665	2,994	11,659	55	9,602	3,956	13,558	54
Refused	2,309	2,914	5,223	24	3,136	3,122	6,258	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,435</b>	<b>6,912</b>	<b>21,347</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16,838</b>	<b>8,373</b>	<b>25,211</b>	<b>100</b>

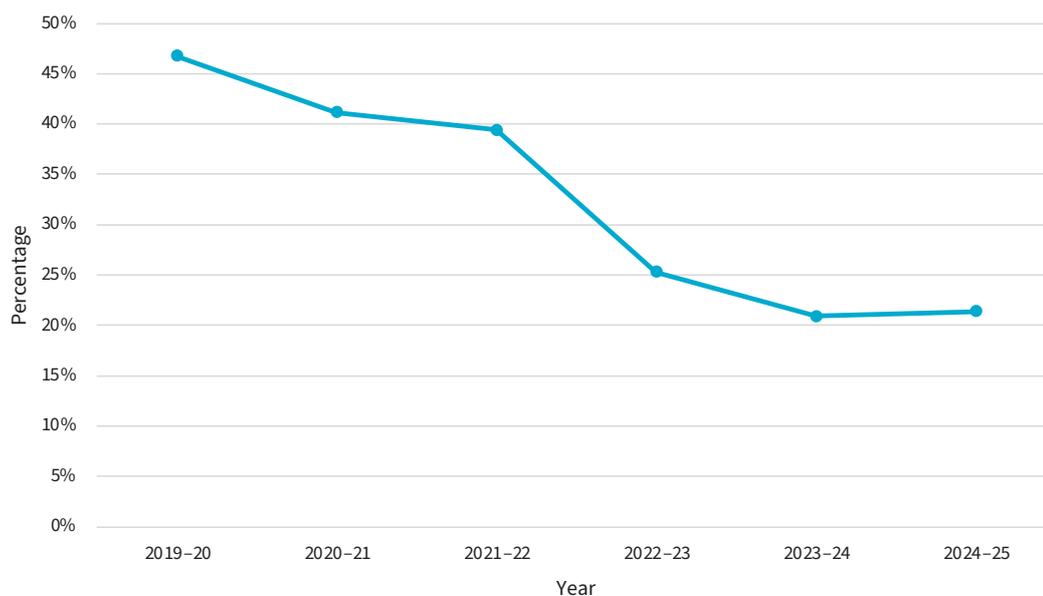
a practical refusal reason existed, as well as when exemptions were applied. This percentage was 23% in 2022–23, 19% in 2021–22, and 18% in 2020–21.

Sixty-seven per cent of all decisions made in 2024–25 were made in relation to personal information (this was 68% in 2023–24).

In 2024–25, agencies made 17% more decisions in relation to personal information (16,838 compared to 14,435 in 2023–24). There were 21% more decisions made in relation to other (non-personal) information (8,373 in 2024–25), compared to 6,912 in 2023–24.

Figure 2 shows a reduction in the percentage of FOI requests granted in full.

The decline in the percentage of requests granted in full up until 2023–24 and thereafter could be somewhat attributed to the OAI's clarification in December 2022 that if an agency redacts material in documents on the basis that the scope of the request does not include that material, and is therefore irrelevant (s 22 of the FOI Act), the agency should report the decision as 'granted in part' (see s 31(3) of the *Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010*). The OAI expected the new guidance to result in fewer FOI decisions being reported as granted in full, and more FOI decisions being reported as granted in part. That expectation has been realised in the full reporting years after December 2022. The percentage

**Figure 2: Percentage of requests granted in full – 2019–20 to 2024–25**

<sup>8</sup> The release of all documents within the scope of the request, as interpreted by the agency or minister.

<sup>9</sup> A document is granted in part when a part, or parts, of a document have been redacted to remove any irrelevant, exempt or conditionally exempt matter.

of FOI decisions granting access in full has decreased from 25% in 2022–23 to 21% in both 2023–24 and 2024–25, and the percentage granting access in part has increased from 23% in 2022–23 to 24% in 2023–24, and 25% in 2024–25. This change has no bearing on the refusal rates reported by agencies.

Table 6 lists the top 20 agencies by the number of FOI decisions made in 2024–25, and differences in outcomes of FOI requests compared with other agencies.

In 2024–25, agencies in the top 20 (ranked by the number of decisions made) granted access in full to 22% of all the FOI decisions made; the remaining agencies granted 17% of all requests in full. In 2023–24, agencies in the top 20 granted access in full in 22% of all FOI decisions; the remaining agencies granted 16% of all requests in full.

In 2024–25, agencies in the top 20 granted access in part in 55% of all FOI decisions made; this was 47% for the agencies outside the top 20. In 2023–24, agencies in the top 20 granted access in part in 57% of FOI

**Table 6: The top 20 agencies by the number of FOI decisions made in 2024–25**

Agency	Granted in full	%	Granted in part	%	Refused	%	Total	Rank
Home Affairs	2,076	33	3,021	49	1,131	18	<b>6,228</b>	1
Services Australia	389	10	2,851	76	520	14	<b>3,760</b>	2
ART	660	37	1,044	59	80	4	<b>1,784</b>	3
NDIA	376	29	601	46	333	25	<b>1,310</b>	4
ATO	199	23	480	56	180	21	<b>859</b>	5
Defence	23	3	415	53	352	45	<b>790</b>	6
AFP	38	5	384	54	284	40	<b>706</b>	7
AUSTRAC	23	3	425	63	232	34	<b>680</b>	8
AAT	375	57	254	39	25	4	<b>654</b>	9
DVA	57	9	472	73	117	18	<b>646</b>	10
Health	85	15	246	44	224	40	<b>555</b>	11
eSafety	10	2	59	13	388	85	<b>457</b>	12
DFAT	37	9	288	67	107	25	<b>432</b>	13
DCCEEW	65	21	174	55	77	24	<b>316</b>	14
ASIC	27	10	112	41	136	49	<b>275</b>	15
DITRDCA	53	20	146	55	68	25	<b>267</b>	16
PMC	37	14	121	47	99	39	<b>257</b>	17
AGD	8	4	109	50	101	46	<b>218</b>	18
Treasury	31	16	80	41	82	42	<b>193</b>	19
DSS	26	15	69	39	81	46	<b>176</b>	20
<b>Total top 20</b>	<b>4,595</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11,351</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>4,617</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20,563</b>	
Others	798	17	2,207	47	1,641	35	<b>4,648</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,393</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13,558</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6,258</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25,211</b>	

decisions made; this was 44% for the agencies outside the top 20.

In 2024–25, 13 agencies in the top 20 refused access to documents at rates higher than the average of all agencies (which is 25%).

eSafety refused access to 85% of FOI requests they decided in 2024–25 and was the only agency to refuse access to documents in more than 50% of FOI requests decided by an agency or minister in 2024–25. eSafety explains that approximately 300 of those refusals were made in response to requests for documents that were not in eSafety's possession. eSafety also explains that approximately 285 of those 300 refusals were made in response to persons' requests – encouraged by the 'end eSafety' campaign – for documents about them or their nominated social media profiles, which eSafety did not have in its possession. Accordingly, eSafety responded to 300 requests for documents that were not in its possession by way of the relevant access refusal provision in the FOI Act, s 24 (documents cannot be found, do not exist or have not been received).

Agencies receiving high proportions of requests for access to personal information that granted full access to documents in high proportions in 2024–25 included:

- AAT (up to 14 October 2024) – 57% (375 decisions to grant access in full out of 654 decisions)
- ART (from 14 October 2024) – 37% (660 decisions to grant access in full out of 1,784 decisions)
- Home Affairs – 33% of all requests granted in full (2,076 decisions to grant access in full out of 6,228 decisions)
- NDIA – 29% (376 decisions to grant access in full out of 1,310 decisions made).

Services Australia also had a high proportion of requests for access to personal information (4,899 requests out of 5,135 or 95% of all requests in 2024–25) but granted access in full in only 10% of its total decisions made (making 389 decisions to grant access in full out of a total of 3,760 decisions made). That lower proportion of decisions to grant access in full may be attributable to Services Australia having an established administrative access scheme, allowing persons to access their personal information outside of the FOI Act.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Refer to Services Australia's webpage <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/personal-information-releases?context=22>.

The AAT explained that its FOI outcomes – granted in full, in part, refused and transferred – continued to remain steady when compared to the previous reporting year. The ART, which replaced the AAT on 14 October 2024, commented that since its establishment, it has instituted a more robust FOI framework, and now benefits from a team of dedicated, full-time FOI officers, enabling a substantial increase in hours worked on FOI matters and delivering improved service and responsiveness in a growing caseload. The ART also commented that the decrease in requests granted in full since its establishment can be attributed to its development of consistent approaches to decision-making following the centralisation of FOI work in the ART.

## Use of exemptions

Table 7 shows how Australian Government agencies and ministers claimed exemptions under the FOI Act when processing FOI requests in 2024–25. More than one exemption may be applied in processing an FOI request. Exemptions were not claimed or were not relevant<sup>11</sup> in 4,038 FOI requests decided in 2024–25 (16%) compared to 29% of all requests in 2023–24.

There was very little change in the application of exemptions in 2024–25 compared with previous years. The personal privacy conditional exemption (s 47F) remains the most claimed. It was applied in 42% of all FOI decisions in which an exemption was claimed in 2024–25, up slightly from 38% in 2023–24 and 2022–23.

The next most claimed exemptions were:

- s 47E (certain operations of agencies) – 26%, up slightly from 25% in 2023–24
- s 47C (deliberative processes) – 5%, slightly down from 2023–24 when it was applied in 6% of decisions in which an exemption was applied
- s 47G (business affairs exemption) – 5%, the same as in 2023–24
- s 38 (documents to which secrecy provisions apply) – 5%, down slightly from 6% in 2023–24.

<sup>11</sup> As well as decisions granting access to documents in full, this also includes decisions made under s 24 of the FOI Act (practical refusal) and s 24A (documents do not exist or cannot be found).

**Table 7: Use of exemptions in FOI decisions in 2024–25**

FOI Act reference	Exemption	Personal	Other	Total	% of all exemptions applied <sup>12</sup>
s 33	Documents affecting national security, defence or international relations	195	439	634	3
s 34	Cabinet documents	6	239	245	1
s 37	Documents affecting enforcement of law and protection of public safety	473	262	735	3
s 38	Documents to which secrecy provisions of enactments apply	882	136	1,018	5
s 42	Documents subject to legal professional privilege	174	404	578	3
s 45	Documents containing material obtained in confidence	35	216	251	1
s 46	Documents disclosure of which would be contempt of Parliament or contempt of court	10	25	35	0
s 47	Documents disclosing trade secrets or commercially valuable information	37	428	465	2
s 47A	Electoral rolls and related documents	8	1	9	0
s 47B	Commonwealth–state relations	116	137	253	1
s 47C	Deliberative processes	288	852	1,140	5
s 47D	Financial or property interests of the Commonwealth	113	89	202	1
s 47E	Certain operations of agencies	3,918	1,647	5,565	26
<b>s 47F</b>	<b>Personal privacy</b>	<b>6,919</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>8,932</b>	<b>42</b>
s 47G	Business affairs	252	846	1,098	5
s 47H	Research	1	2	3	0
s 47J	The economy	0	5	5	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>13,427</b>	<b>7,741</b>	<b>21,168</b>	<b>100</b>

### ***‘AWH’ and Australian Federal Police (Freedom of information) [2025] AICmr 97 (22 May 2025)***

This decision discusses the application of ss 22, 24A, 47E(c) and 47F of the FOI Act to documents in relation to the investigation of a workplace complaint. This decision was made on the same day as *‘AWC’ and Australian Federal Police (Freedom of information) [2025] AICmr 96 (22 May 2025) (‘AWC’)*. The applicants in both matters were complainants in the same

workplace investigation and sought access to the same documents.

The FOI Commissioner considered the nature and context of the requested documents, and found that they fell into two categories – the Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Investigation Report, which was

<sup>12</sup> Percentage of decisions in which the exemption has been applied by all agencies and ministers in 2024–25.

prepared by an external consultant, and the complaint file relating to the internal Professional Standards Investigation (the CRAMS file), which was a subsequent internal investigation undertaken to investigate and determine whether any of the allegations constituted a Code of Conduct issue in accordance with the AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards. The FOI Commissioner found that while both categories of documents contained mixed personal information, the WHS Investigation Report contained information of a general nature that had largely been released in the related matter, and other information of a similar type to what had been released in the related matter.

The FOI Commissioner did not accept that the release of this information would have a substantial adverse effect on the management or assessment of the AFP's staff, as required by s 47E(c). The FOI Commissioner distinguished the nature and context of the CRAMS file, noting that it squarely related to the

AFP's management of its staff, in particular the AFP's investigation of whether breaches of the AFP's Code of Conduct had occurred.

The FOI Commissioner accepted that the disclosure of this material would be likely to result in a substantial adverse effect on the AFP's management or assessment of its staff under s 47E(c). It was also necessary for the FOI Commissioner to consider the application of s 47F to the information found not to be exempt under s 47E(c). In relation to this material, the FOI Commissioner accepted the intertwined nature of personal information within material relating to workplace complaints. However, due to the release of similar material in the related matter, and the fact the individuals were known to the applicant to be associated with the documents, the FOI Commissioner was not satisfied the material at issue was conditionally exempt under s 47F of the FOI Act.

In their FOI statistical returns, agencies and ministers report on all exemptions applied for each FOI request decided.

The top agencies that reported applying the personal privacy exemption (s 47F) in their decisions were:

- Home Affairs – applied in 2,701 decisions (30% of all decisions in which s 47F was applied in 2024–25)
- Services Australia – applied in 1,625 decisions (18% of all decisions in which s 47F was applied in 2024–25)
- ART – applied in 789 decisions
- NDIA – applied in 462 decisions
- DVA – applied in 367 decisions
- AFP – applied in 248 decisions
- Defence – 219 decisions
- AAT – 212 decisions
- DFAT – 205 decisions
- DCCEEW – 161 decisions.

The top agencies that reported applying the certain operations of agencies exemption (s 47E) in their decisions were:

- Home Affairs – 1,679 decisions
- Services Australia – 640 decisions
- ART – 537 decisions
- Defence – 397 decisions
- AFP – 385 decisions
- ATO – 237 decisions
- DFAT – 165 decisions
- NDIA – 162 decisions
- Health – 123 decisions
- PMC – 82 decisions.

The top agencies that reported applying the deliberative processes exemption (s 47C) in their decisions were:

- Home Affairs – 264 decisions
- DITRDCA – 67 decisions
- DCCEEW – 51 decisions
- Health – 46 decisions
- PMC – 44 decisions
- Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority – 50% of all exceptions claimed by the agency in 2024–25 (2 of 4).

Figure 3: Application of personal privacy exemption (s 47F)

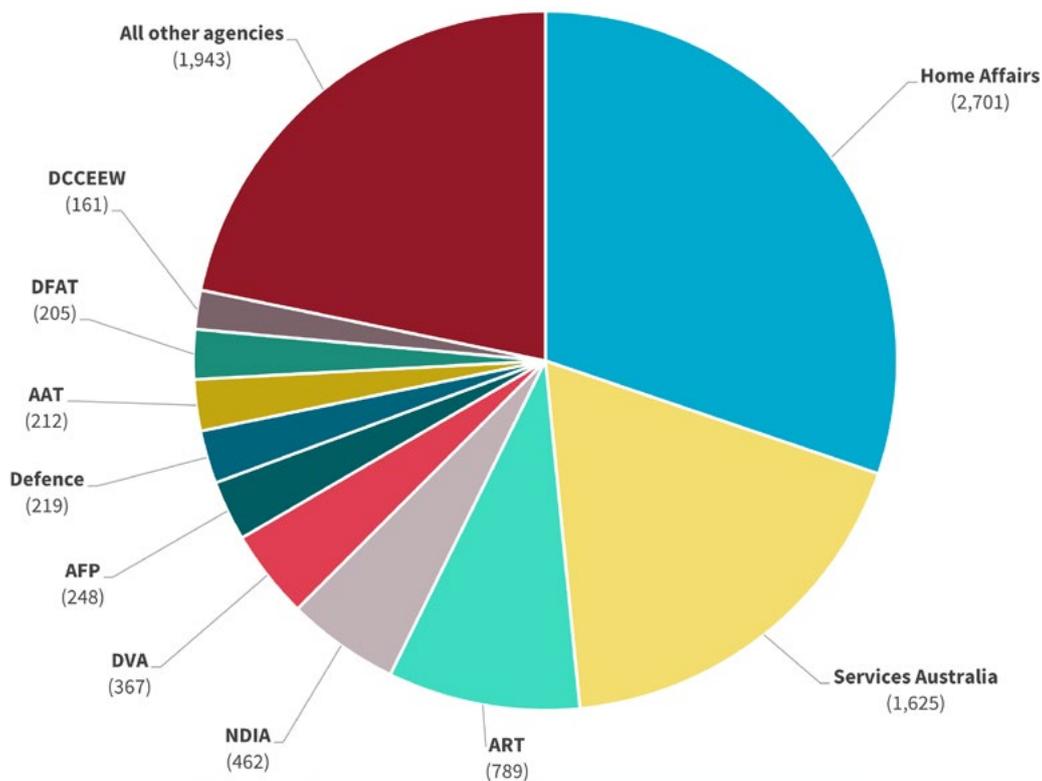
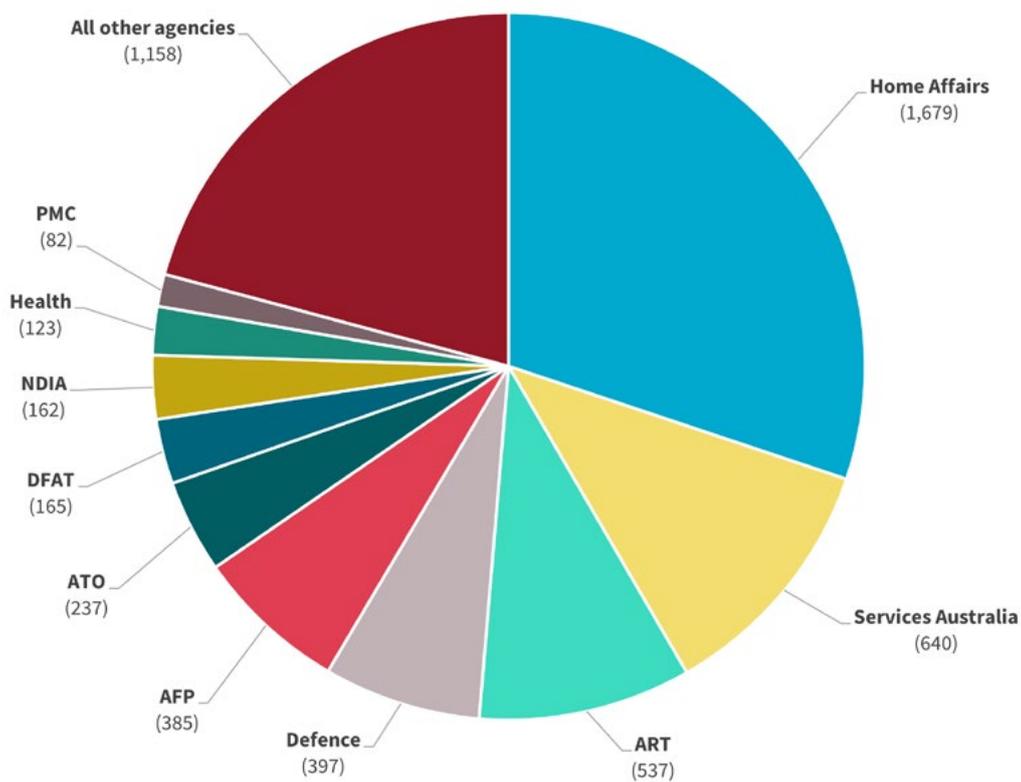
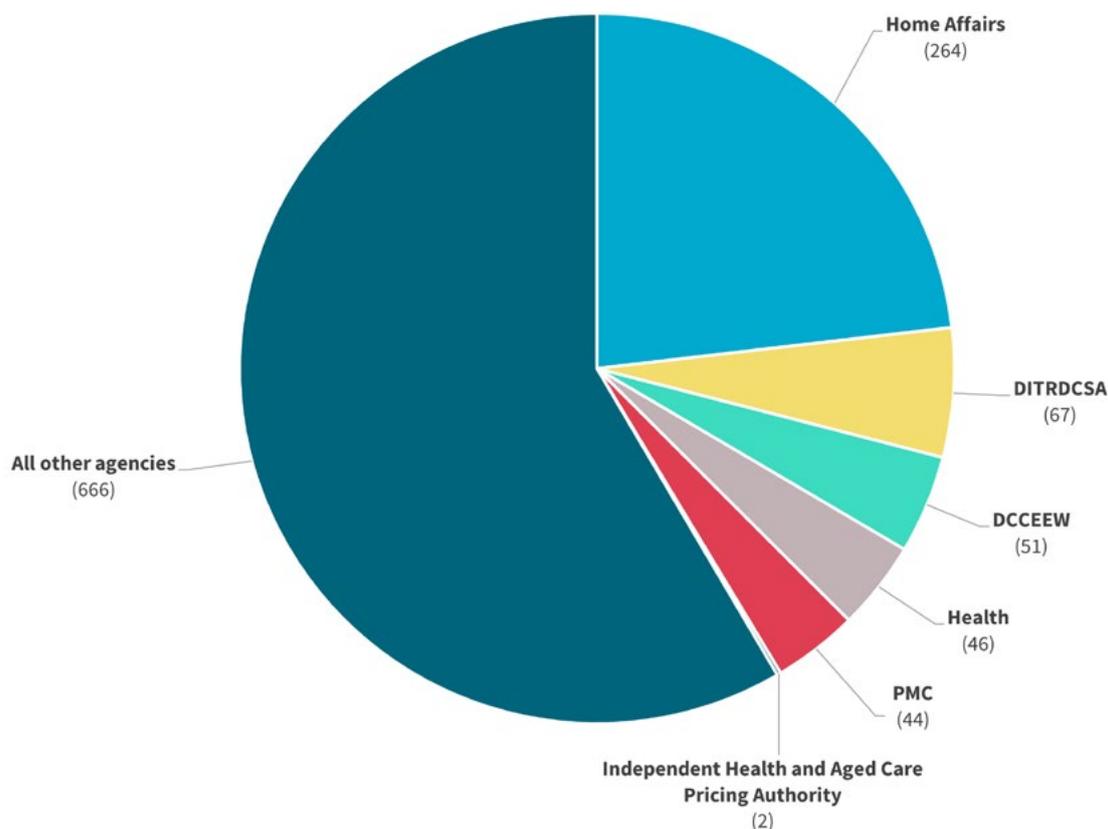


Figure 4: Application of operations of agencies exemption (s 47E)



**Figure 5: Application of deliberative processes exemption (s 47C)**



The top agencies that reported applying the business affairs exemption (s 47G) were:

- Health – 91 decisions
- DVA – 86 decisions
- Home Affairs – 78 decisions
- Defence – 72 decisions
- DFAT – 68 decisions
- DITRDCSA – 48 decisions
- DCCEEW – 47 decisions.

The top agencies that reported applying the secrecy provisions exemption (s 38) were:

- Services Australia – 481 decisions
- ATO – 289 decisions
- Home Affairs – 103 decisions
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) – 25 decisions
- DSS – 19 decisions
- Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) – 15 decisions.

## Use of practical refusal

Section 24AB of the FOI Act provides that a ‘request consultation process’ must be undertaken if a ‘practical refusal reason’ exists (s 24AA). A practical refusal reason exists if the work involved in processing the FOI request would substantially and unreasonably divert the agency’s resources from its other operations, or if the FOI request does not adequately identify the documents sought. In the case of a minister, a practical refusal reason will exist if the work involved in processing the request would substantially and unreasonably interfere with the performance of the minister’s functions.

The request consultation process involves the agency or minister sending a written notice to the FOI applicant advising them of an intention to refuse the request and providing details of how the FOI applicant can consult the agency or minister (a practical refusal notice). The FOI Act imposes an obligation on the agency or minister to take reasonable steps to help the FOI applicant revise their request so that the practical refusal reason no longer exists.

Figure 6: Application of business affairs exemption (s 47G)

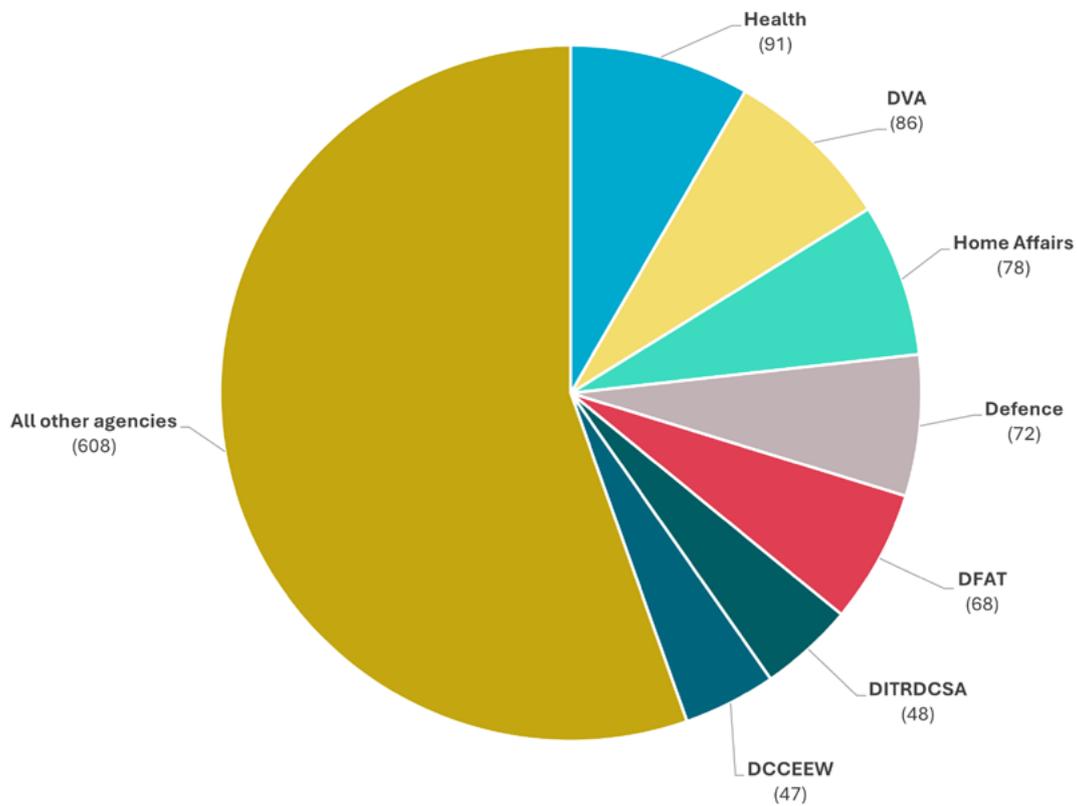


Figure 7: Application of secrecy provisions exemption (s 38)

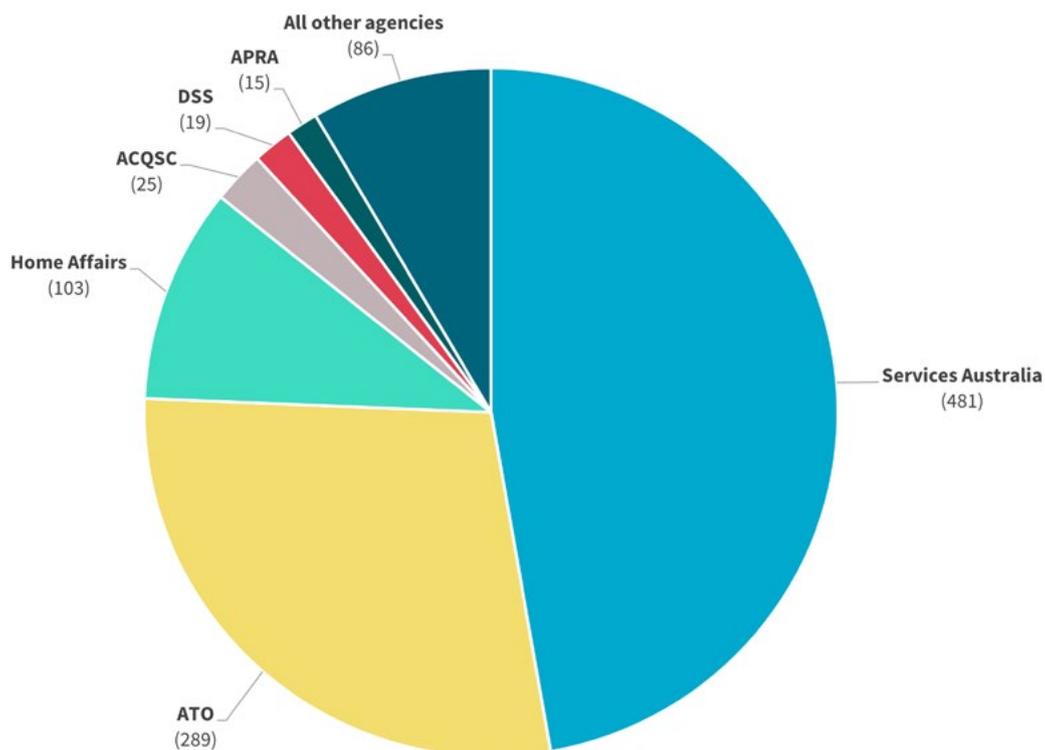


Table 8 provides information about how agencies and ministers engaged in request consultation processes under s 24AB of the FOI Act in 2024–25, and the outcome of those processes.

Agencies and ministers sent 2,858 practical refusal notices in 2024–25, 17% more than in 2023–24 when 2,450 notices were sent.

While some agencies sent substantially more notices in 2024–25, this was slightly offset by a reduction in the number of notices sent by DITRDCSA (46 fewer notices, a 70% reduction), and the ATO (14 fewer notices, a 38% reduction).

Some agencies sent significantly more practical refusal notices in 2024–25 than in 2023–24. These agencies included:

- NDIA, which sent 123% more practical refusal notices in 2024–25 (105) than in 2023–24 (47), in the context of a 69% increase in total FOI requests
- DVA, which sent 122% more practical refusal notices in 2024–25 (80) than in 2023–24 (36), in the context of a 52% reduction in total FOI requests. DVA explains the requests have become increasingly complex, and
- Health, which sent 55% more practical refusal notices in 2024–25 (118) than in 2023–24 (76), in the context of a 34% increase in total FOI requests. The department explains the increase in these practical refusal notices reflects both the increase in the number of access requests received, and the size and complexity of those requests.

### ***‘AVQ’ and Department of Health and Aged Care (Freedom of information) [2025]*** **AICmr 85 (9 May 2025)**

This decision primarily discusses whether a practical refusal reason exists in relation to a deemed decision. It provides an example of a circumstance in which processing a broadly worded request for information or documents could lead to a substantial and unreasonable diversion of an agency’s resources in circumstances where the agency has made targeted suggestions about scope to the applicant (which the applicant did not accept). It was found that a practical refusal reason exists for the purposes of s 24(1)(b) of the FOI Act.

Some agencies and ministers issued a high proportion of notices of an intention to refuse a request for a practical refusal reason, as a percentage of all the FOI requests they decided during 2024–25. These agencies included:

- Commonwealth Grants Commission – 100% (2 notices issued)
- Aboriginal Hostels Limited – 67% (2 notices issued)
- ACCC – 62% (56 notices issued)
- Clean Energy Finance Corporation – 50% (one notice issued).

Previous years’ annual reports have commented on the percentage of FOI requests refused after a practical refusal notice is issued. However, agencies and ministers are not asked to report this information (only the number subsequently processed, other than by confirming the practical refusal or withdrawal by

**Table 8: Use of practical refusal in 2024–25**

Practical refusal processing step	Personal	Other	Total	%
Notified in writing of intention to refuse request	1,406	1,452	2,858	11 <sup>13</sup>
Request was subsequently processed (other than by confirming the practical refusal or withdrawal of the request)	357	551	908	32 <sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Notices sent advising of an intention to refuse a request for a practical refusal reason expressed as a percentage of all the FOI requests received in 2024–25.

<sup>14</sup> Percentage of the total number of notices sent advising of an intention to refuse a request for a practical refusal reason.

the applicant). The percentage refused was calculated by subtracting the number of requests subsequently processed from the number of practical refusal notices sent.

In 2024–25, 32% of all FOI requests for which a practical refusal notice was sent were subsequently processed (other than by confirming the practical refusal). Thirty-eight per cent were subsequently processed in 2023–24. This means a request was slightly less likely to be processed as a result of the request consultation process in 2024–25 than the previous year.

Although fairly equal numbers of practical refusal notices were issued with respect to personal and other (nonpersonal) requests, notices were issued for 8% of all personal requests decided compared with 17% for all other (non-personal) requests decided in 2024–25.

The request consultation process for other (non-personal) FOI requests is more likely to result in requests subsequently being processed (other than by confirming the practical refusal reason). In 2024–25, 38% of all other (non-personal) FOI requests were subsequently processed; only 25% of personal FOI requests were subsequently processed.

Home Affairs issued 38% of all notices of an intention to refuse a request for a practical refusal reason in 2024–25 (1,086 notices). It subsequently processed 316 of these requests (29%). This is consistent with 2023–24, when Home Affairs also processed 29% of the requests for which a practical refusal notice was issued.

For all other agencies, the percentage of FOI requests subsequently processed after a practical refusal notice was issued was 33%, which is lower than 2024–25 when 43% were subsequently processed.

The percentage of FOI requests subsequently processed after a practical refusal notice has been issued has fluctuated over the past 8 years. For example, in 2016–17, 34% of all requests for which a practical refusal notice was issued were subsequently processed. This decreased to 16% in 2017–18 but rose again in 2018–19 (23%), 2019–20 (40%), 2020–21 (52%), 2021–22 (46%), 2022–23 (31%), 2023–24 (38%) and 2024–25 (32%).

### ***‘AVD’ and Department of Home Affairs (Freedom of information) [2025] AICmr 68 (15 April 2025)***

This decision discusses the application of ss 22, 24A and 47F to documents relating to the applicant’s visa application, and to information concerning their spouse’s marital status (past and present). One finding of broader interest relates to whether reasonable steps had been taken to find documents. Reforms to the FOI Act in 2010 removed earlier provisions that enabled agencies to refuse to grant access to documents without identifying them where it was apparent from the request that all of the documents would be exempt documents. It found that even though the documents held by the Department may well be exempt documents, it must nevertheless search for and identify those documents. Given the Department had acknowledged that it holds additional relevant information, the FOI Commissioner was satisfied that further documents do exist and that the Department had not taken all reasonable steps to locate documents relevant to the applicant’s request.

### **Time taken to respond to FOI requests**

Under the FOI Act, agencies and ministers have 30 days to make a decision in response to an FOI request. The FOI Act allows for that timeframe to be extended in certain circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

If a decision is not made on an FOI request within the statutory timeframe (including any extension period), s 15AC of the FOI Act provides that a decision refusing access is deemed to have been made. Nonetheless, agencies may continue to process a request that has been deemed to be refused.

<sup>15</sup> An agency or minister may extend the time to make a decision by agreement with the applicant (s 15AA), or to undertake consultation with a third party (ss 15(6)–(8)). An agency or minister can also apply to the Information Commissioner for more time to process a request when the request is complex or voluminous (s 15AB), or when access has been deemed to have been refused (ss 15AC and 51DA) or deemed to have been affirmed on internal review (s 54D). These extension provisions acknowledge there are circumstances when it is appropriate for an agency or minister to take more than 30 days to process a request. When an agency or minister has obtained an extension of time to deal with an FOI request and finalises the request within the extended time, the request is recorded as having been made within the statutory time period.

In 2024–25, 73% of all FOI requests were processed within the applicable statutory timeframe: 67% of all personal information requests and 85% of all other (non-personal) requests. The timeliness of decision-making for personal information requests further declined from 69% in 2023–24 to 67% in 2024–25, while the timeliness of decision-making for ‘other’ requests increased from 84% in 2023–24 to 85% in 2024–25.

Accordingly, there was an overall minor deterioration (1%) of FOI requests processed within the applicable statutory timeframe (73% in 2024–25 compared with 74% in 2023–24).

Generally, timeliness of decision-making has declined since 2017–18, when 85% of all FOI requests were decided within the relevant statutory timeframe (86% of all requests for access to personal information and 85% of all other (non-personal) requests).

Four agencies and 2 ministers decided less than 50% of their FOI requests within the statutory time in 2024–25.

The agencies that decided more than one request during the year with less than 50% compliance with statutory timeframes included:

- Home Affairs – 37% (2,275 of 6,228 requests decided in time)
- Aboriginal Hostels Limited – 33% (1 of 3 requests)
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency – 29% (2 of 7 requests)
- NDIA – 33% (433 of 1,310 requests).

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency explained that 2 of the responses outside the statutory timeframe were outside by 1 to 2 days. Additionally, the increase in the number and complexity of FOI requests, combined with no dedicated resource in a very small agency, contributed to its reduction in compliance with timeframes.

Aboriginal Hostels Limited explained that 2 FOI requests involved complexity, and it required legal advice in responding to those requests.

Only one minister decided more than one request during the year with less than 50% compliance with statutory timeframes. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship decided 33% of requests within the statutory timeframe, 8% of requests in 61 to 90 days after the expiry of the statutory time period, and 58% of requests 90 days after the expiry of the statutory time period.

**Table 9: FOI request response times for 2023–24 and 2024–25**

Response time	2023–24				2024–25			
	Personal	Other	Total	% of total requests decided	Personal	Other	Total	% of total requests decided
Within applicable statutory time period	9,979	5,775	15,754	74	11,207	7,088	18,295	73
Up to 30 days over applicable statutory time period	1,331	526	1,857	9	1,700	587	2,287	9
31–60 days over applicable statutory time period	728	261	989	5	1,128	259	1,387	6
61–90 days over applicable statutory time period	502	127	629	3	614	159	773	3
More than 90 days over applicable statutory time period	1,895	223	2,118	10	2,189	280	2,469	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,435</b>	<b>6,912</b>	<b>21,347</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16,838</b>	<b>8,373</b>	<b>25,211</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10: Agencies deciding 5% or more of FOI requests more than 90 days after the expiry of applicable statutory period in 2024–25**

Agency	Total requests decided	FOI requests decided >90 days after expiry of statutory period	% of requests decided >90 days after expiry of statutory period (as % of all requests decided)
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship	12	7	58
Minister for Home Affairs	16	7	44
Home Affairs	6,228	1,817	29
ABC	90	23	26
NDIA	1,310	274	21
Net Zero Economy Authority	5	1	20
DVA	646	115	18
National Emergency Management Agency	17	3	18
PMC	257	38	15
AGD	218	26	12
AFP	706	77	11
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)	15	1	7
Total decided (agencies deciding 5% or more of FOI requests more than 90 days after the expiry of applicable statutory period)	9,520	2,389	25
<b>Total decided (all agencies and ministers)</b>	<b>25,211<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>2,469<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>10</b>

There was a slight increase the number of FOI requests decided more than 90 days over the applicable statutory time limit in 2024–25 compared with the previous year. In 2024–25, 2,469 FOI requests were decided more than 90 days after the statutory time had expired; in 2023–24 this was 2,118.

Accordingly, in 2024–25, 10% of all requests decided by all agencies and ministers (totalling 25,211) were decided more than 90 days after the expiry of the statutory processing period, the same as in 2023–24.

The percentage decided more than 90 days over time was 19% in 2021–22, 12% in 2020–21 and 10% in 2019–20. It is worth noting that in 2018–19, only 2%

of requests were decided more than 90 days after the statutory time had ended.

Home Affairs accounted for 74% of all requests decided more than 90 days after the expiry of the statutory time period in 2024–25 (1,817 of 2,469 requests decided) so the department remains the primary driver for the continuing high rate of requests decided more than 90 days over time.

Overall, 29% of all the FOI decisions made by Home Affairs were made more than 90 days after the statutory time period; 32% of personal requests and 3% of other (non-personal) requests. This is an improvement from 2023–24 when Home Affairs

<sup>16</sup> Total of all FOI requests decided by Australian Government agencies and ministers in 2024–25.

<sup>17</sup> Total of all FOI requests decided by Australian Government agencies and ministers more than 90 days after the expiry of the statutory timeframe in 2024–25.

accounted for 75% of all requests decided more than 90 days over time and when 32% of its decisions were made more than 90 days over time (34% of personal information requests and 8% of other (non-personal) requests).

In 2023–24, the NDIA made 274 decisions more than 90 days after the statutory time period had expired (20% of all decisions made that year); this reduced to 274 decisions made more than 90 days over time in 2024–25 (21% of all decisions made).

The AFP and DVA also experienced increases in the number and percentage of requests decided more than 90 days over time in 2024–25. In 2024–25, the AFP made 77 decisions over 90 days late (11% of all decisions), an increase from 2023–24, when the AFP made 53 decisions over 90 days late (9% of all decisions made). In 2024–25, DVA made 115 decisions over 90 days late (18% of all decisions made), an increase from 2023–24 when DVA made 82 decisions more than 90 days over time in 2023–24 (7% of all decisions made).

Some agencies and ministers received more than 50 FOI requests in 2024–25 and decided them all within the statutory timeframe. These agencies included:

- DCCEEW – 316 decisions
- DSS – 176 decisions
- IP Australia – 147 decisions
- DEWR – 146 decisions
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) – 95 decisions
- Australian Electoral Commission – 89 decisions
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) – 87 decisions
- Fair Work Ombudsman – 75 decisions
- Immigration Assessment Authority – 63 decisions
- Fair Work Commission – 61 decisions
- APRA – 56 decisions
- Minister for the Environment and Water – 51 decisions.



# Part 2

## Applications for amendment of personal records



# Applications for amendment of personal records

Section 48 of the FOI Act confers a right on a person to apply to an agency or minister to amend or annotate a document to which lawful access has been granted, if the document contains personal information about the applicant:

- that is incomplete, incorrect, out of date or misleading, and
- has been used, is being used, or is available for use by the agency or minister for an administrative purpose.

In 2024–25, 15 agencies received 2,057 amendment applications (no amendment applications were received by ministers). This represents a 48% increase in amendment applications compared with 2023–24, when 1,393 amendment applications were received.

The increase in amendment applications is due to Home Affairs receiving 658 more amendment applications in 2024–25 (1,981) than in 2023–24 (1,323), which is a 50% increase. The OAIC also received more amendment applications in 2024–25 (7) compared with 1 amendment application in 2023–24, and the NDIA received 6 amendment applications (compared with 2 in 2023–24). Services Australia received 15 amendment applications in 2024–25, a decrease of 29% from 2023–24 when it received 21 amendment applications.

Three agencies and one minister that did not receive any amendment applications in 2023–24 received amendment applications in 2024–25 (ASIC, Cancer Australia, Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, and Minister for Health and Ageing).

Table 11 shows that agencies and ministers made 1,553 decisions on these amendment applications, and whether the decisions were to amend, annotate, or amend and annotate the record of personal information about the applicant.

## Time taken to respond to amendment applications

Agencies and ministers are required to notify an applicant of a decision on their application to amend personal records as soon as practicable, but in any case, not later than 30 days after the day the request is received, or a longer period as extended under the FOI Act.

In 2024–25, 34% of all amendment applications were decided within the applicable statutory timeframe, which is considerably lower than in 2023–24 when 70% of all amendment applications were decided in time (and 2022–23 when 87% were decided within time).

**Table 11: Decisions on amendment applications 2023–24 and 2024–25**

Decision	2023–24	% of total	2024–25	% of total	% change <sup>18</sup>
<b>Granted</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>26</b>
Amend record	964	77	1,248	80	29
Annotate record	5	0.40	1	0.06	-80
Amend and annotate record	96	8	95	6	-1
<b>Refused</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>

<sup>18</sup> Percentage increase or decrease compared with 2023–24.

Nine per cent of all amendment applications in 2024–25 were decided up to 30 days after the expiry of the statutory timeframe (this was 25% in 2023–24) and 57% were decided more than 30 days after the time period expired (this was 5% in 2023–24).

The overall timeliness of decision-making for amendment applications directly reflects timeliness of decision-making within Home Affairs (which decided approximately 32% of all amendment applications within time, nearly 10% up to 30 days after the expiry of the applicable processing period, and just under 59% more than 30 days after the processing period expired).<sup>19</sup>

Excluding Home Affairs, agencies decided 80% of all amendment applications within time, 4% up to 30 days after the expiry of the applicable processing period, and 16% more than 30 days after the processing period expired.

<sup>19</sup> Total does not add to 100% due to rounding.



# Part 3

## Charges



# Charges

Section 29 of the FOI Act provides that an agency or minister may impose charges in respect of FOI requests, except requests for access to personal information, and sets out the process by which charges are assessed, notified and adjusted. Charges may only be imposed for requests relating to other (non-personal) information.

Table 12 shows the amounts collected by the 20 agencies that collected the most in charges under the FOI Act in 2024–25. These top 20 agencies are responsible for 99.7% of all charges collected by agencies and ministers under the FOI Act during the reporting period.

Agencies issued fewer charges notices in 2024–25 (540) than in 2023–24 (577), a 6% reduction, and notified 8% more in charges (\$187,584 in 2024–25, compared with \$186,107 in 2023–24). Although agencies notified slightly more in charges in 2024–25, they collected a smaller percentage of the charges notified than in previous years (35% compared with 39% in 2023–24).<sup>20</sup>

Some agencies collected much larger amounts of charges than in previous years. These agencies included:

- Austrade – a 552% increase, up from \$61 in 2023–24 to \$398 in 2024–25
- NIAA – a 96% increase, up from \$1,867 in 2023–24 to \$3,653 in 2024–25
- DCCEEW – 53% more collected in 2024–25 (\$19,382) than in 2023–24 (\$12,694).

Home Affairs did not collect any charges in 2024–25, a 100% reduction from 2023–24 when Home Affairs collected \$221 in charges. In 2022–23, Home Affairs collected \$9,487 in charges.

<sup>20</sup>The difference between charges notified and charges collected is due to agencies exercising the discretion in s 29 of the FOI Act not to impose the whole charge, or because applicants withdraw their FOI request without paying the notified charge.

Table 12: Top 20 agencies by charges collected in 2024–25

Agency	Rank	Requests received	Requests where charges notified	Total charges notified (\$)	Total charges collected (\$)	% of charges notified that were collected
DCCEEW	1	403	144	40,485	19,382	48
Health	2	811	105	29,812	13,440	45
DAFF	3	120	34	11,215	5,860	52
DISR	4	259	57	20,580	3,793	18
NIAA	5	90	22	8,608	3,653	42
Australian Research Council	6	30	7	5,589	2,736	49
ACCC	7	146	43	9,580	2,728	28
Department of Education (Education)	8	161	18	5,796	2,540	44
ACMA	9	86	12	10,031	2,153	21
Defence Housing Australia	10	27	6	3,834	2,086	54
National Capital Authority	11	32	8	1,499	1,248	83
ASIC	12	328	3	1,307	1,076	82
Treasury	13	231	22	9,131	854	9
Gene Technology Regulator	14	1	1	822	822	100
National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority	15	36	6	1,653	714	43
Civil Aviation Safety Authority	16	179	8	2,243	564	25
Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)	17	37	13	1,920	398	21
ABC	18	147	3	1,855	345	19
Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury	19	7	1	288	288	100
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	20	62	3	2,240	283	13
<b>Total top 20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3,193</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>168,488</b>	<b>64,963</b>	<b>39</b>
Others	22	40,263	24	19,096	218	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>43,456</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>187,584</b>	<b>65,181</b>	<b>35</b>



# Part 4

## Disclosure Logs



# Disclosure logs

All Australian Government agencies and ministers subject to the FOI Act are required to maintain an FOI disclosure log on a website. The disclosure log lists information that has been released to FOI applicants, subject to some exceptions (such as personal or business information). Information about agency and ministerial compliance with disclosure log requirements has been collected since 2012–13.

Australian Government agencies and ministers reported 3,363 new entries on disclosure logs during 2024–25, including 2,651 new entries for which documents are available for download directly from the agency’s or minister’s website (79% of all new disclosure log entries), 41 new entries for which documents are available from another website (1% of all new entries), and 671 new entries for which the documents are available by another means, usually upon request (20% of all new listings).

The total number of new entries published on disclosure logs in 2024–25 is significantly higher than in 2023–24, when 2,481 new entries were added. This increase is to be expected, as the number of FOI decisions made in 2024–25 (25,211) is significantly higher (18% more) than the number decided in 2023–24 (21,347).

There was a slight increase in the proportion of new documents that members of the public can access directly from agency websites in 2024–25 (79%). In 2023–24, 75% of all documents could be accessed directly from agency websites, in 2022–23 this was 80%, and in 2021–22 this was 79%. In 2020–21, 83% of all documents were accessible to the public directly from agency websites.

Fourteen agencies added more than 60 new entries to their disclosure log in 2024–25, and 8 of those agencies made all released documents available for direct download from their websites, or from another website. These agencies included:

- Health – 251 (which made 100% of released documents available for direct download from their websites, or from another website)
- Home Affairs – 245 (100%)
- DCCEEW – 237 (100%)

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – 202 (100%)
- DITRDSCA – 182 (97%)
- NDIA – 152 (which added more than 60 new entries to their disclosure log, but made 0% of those entries available for direct download<sup>21</sup>)
- PMC – 137 (99%)
- Defence – 92 (91%)
- DISR – 91 (100%)
- Treasury – 79 (100%)
- AGD – 75 (100%)
- DSS – 64 (which added more than 60 new entries to their disclosure log, but made 0% of those entries available for direct download<sup>22</sup>)
- DEWR – 62 (100%), and
- ASIC – 61 (100%).

Each quarter, in addition to providing the number of new entries added to their disclosure logs, agencies are asked to provide – where these statistics are collected in relation to disclosure log webpages – the number of unique visitors to their disclosure log, and the number of webpages viewed (‘page views’) from their disclosure logs.<sup>23</sup> Only 17% of agencies registered on the FOI statistics database (51 out of 299) report that they collect statistics on unique visitors and page views.

In 2024–25, agencies and ministers reported 102,080 unique visitors to disclosure logs and 237,516 page views, which represents a 20% decrease in unique visitors from 2023–24 (when it was 127,356), and an 18% decrease in total page views (when it was 289,624).

<sup>21</sup> Refer to the NDIA’s disclosure log at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/policies/freedom-information/foi-disclosure-log>.

<sup>22</sup> Refer to DSS’s disclosure log at <https://www.dss.gov.au/access-information/freedom-information/our-freedom-information-disclosure-log>.

<sup>23</sup> The FOI statistics guide explains that disclosure log webpages include the disclosure log index page/s and the webpages containing the released information/documents. Webpages in this context includes PDFs, RTFs and Excel documents etc, kept on a publicly accessible website.

The substantial decrease in unique visitors to disclosure logs is due to a 66% reduction in those unique visitors reported by Home Affairs (37,374 unique visitors to its disclosure log compared with 62,024 in 2023–24).

The decrease in the number of page views is also the result of changes reported by Home Affairs (133,747 – down 49% from 198,991 in 2023–24).

The number of unique visitors to Home Affairs' disclosure log comprises the highest proportion (37%) of the total of unique visitors to Australian Government agency disclosure logs. Health comprises the second-highest proportion (12%) of total unique visitors to those disclosure logs.

The number of page views reported by Home Affairs (133,747) comprises 56% of total page views from Australian Government agency disclosure logs (237,516).



# Part 5

## Review of FOI decisions



# Review of FOI decisions

Under the FOI Act, a person who is dissatisfied with a decision made by an agency or minister in response to their initial FOI request has a number of avenues of review. The applicant can seek:

- internal review with the agency (except if the FOI request is deemed to have been refused because a decision was not made within the statutory time period)
- external merits review by the Information Commissioner (IC review)
- review of Information Commissioner decisions under s 55K of the FOI Act by the ART, and
- appeal of ART decisions on a question of law to the Federal Court.

In addition, a person can complain at any time to the Information Commissioner about actions taken by an agency under the FOI Act.

Third parties consulted during the FOI process also have review rights if an agency or minister decides to release documents contrary to their submissions. Consultation requirements apply for State governments (s 26A), commercial organisations (s 27) and private individuals (s 27A).

The FOI Act also provides for internal review, IC review and ART review of decisions made in relation to applications for amendment of personal records.

## Internal review of FOI decisions

The Information Commissioner recommends and encourages FOI applicants to apply for an internal review before applying for IC review.

In 2024–25, 915 applications were made for internal review of an FOI decision, 13% more than in 2023–24 (when 808 internal review applications were received). In 2024–25, 4% of all FOI requests decided led to applications for internal review, the same proportion as 2023–24, 2022–23, and 2021–22.

Some agencies had high rates of internal review applications as a proportion of the number of FOI requests decided during the year (compared with the Australian Government average of 4%). These agencies include:

- OAIC – 19%
- DISR – 17%
- Defence – 14%
- Department of Finance – 14%
- ASIC – 10%
- DSS – 10%.

These higher than average internal review application rates may indicate clear communication of internal review rights by these agencies, decisions being made within the statutory timeframe (so applicants have an additional review option open to them), greater trust in these agencies to conduct independent merits review of their own decisions, or it may reflect the interests of the FOI applicants and the types of document they seek to access.

While some agencies received significantly more internal review applications in 2024–25 compared with 2023–24 (for example, Defence received 111 internal review applications in 2024–25, compared to 59 in 2023–24; and the OAIC received 31 internal review applications, up from 13 in 2023–24), these were outweighed by decreases in applications made to the ATO (18 fewer applications than in 2023–24), NDIA (15 fewer) and Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) (14 fewer applications).

Of the 915 applications for an internal review, 386 (42%) sought review of decisions made in response to requests for personal information and 529 (58%) were for review of decisions on other (non-personal) information requests. Because 74% of all FOI decisions made in 2024–25 related to requests for access to personal information, this indicates that FOI applicants seeking access to personal information are less likely to seek internal review than those seeking to access other (non-personal) information.

Agencies finalised 812 internal reviews in 2024–25, 9% more than in 2023–24. This reflects the larger number of applications for internal review made during 2024–25. The outcomes of these applications, including a comparison with outcomes in 2023–24, are:

- 491 (60%) affirmed the original decision (this was 55% in 2023–24)

- 39 (5%) set aside the original decision and granted access in full (8% in 2023–24)
- 192 (24%) granted access in part (25% in 2023–24)
- 2 (0.2%) granted access after deferment (2% in 2023–24)
- 16 (2%) granted access in another form (3% in 2023–24)
- 22 (3%) resulted in lesser access (3% in 2023–24)
- 42 (5%) were withdrawn by applicants without concession by the agency (3% in 2023–24)
- 8 (1%) reduced the charges levied (1% in 2023–24).

### Internal review of amendment decisions

In 2024–25, 12 applications for internal review of amendment decisions were received by 7 agencies. Of these, 7 applications were made to Home Affairs (which received 10 in 2023–24), and one each to Defence, ABS, ATO, OAIC, Health, and Services Australia.

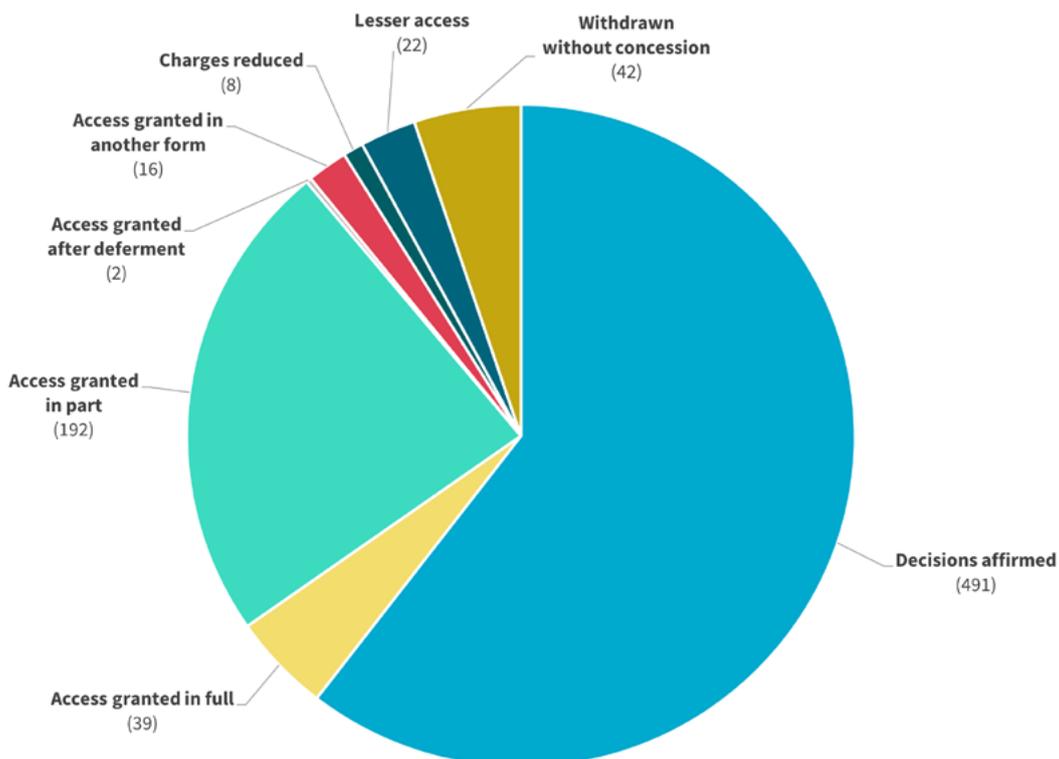
Eleven internal review decisions were made during the reporting year (compared with 1 made in 2023–24). Of these 11 internal review decisions, 1 decision granted the requested amendment or annotation (9%) and 10 decisions refused the requested alteration (91%).

### IC review

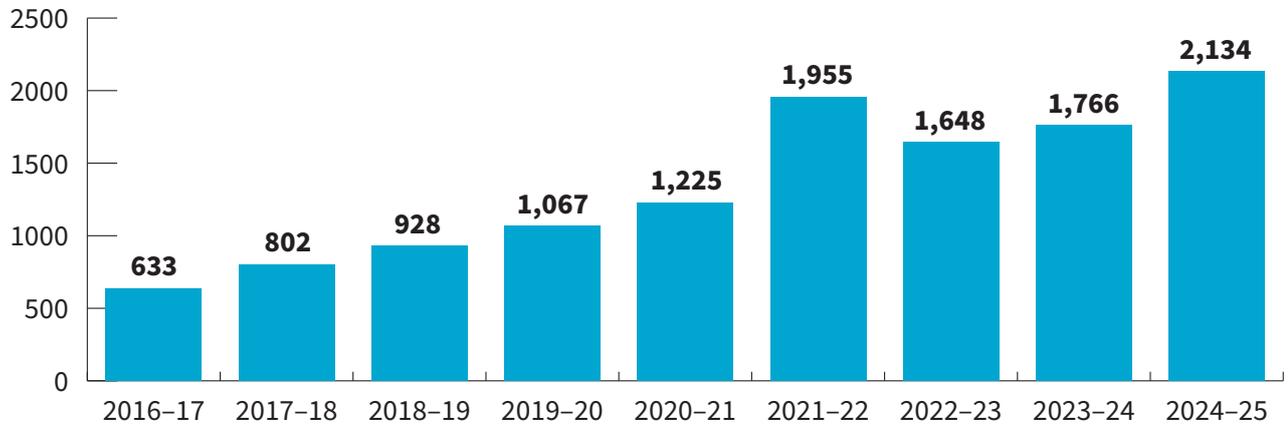
There were 2,134 applications for IC review in 2024–25 (a 21% increase from 1,766 in 2023–24). As shown in Figure 9, this is the highest number of IC review applications received by the OAIC in a year (the second-highest number was 1,955 in 2021–22).

There was also a 41% increase in the number of IC reviews finalised by the OAIC in 2024–25 (2,470), compared with 2023–24 (when 1,748 were finalised). As shown in Figure 10, since 2016–17, there have been year-on-year increases in the number of IC reviews finalised, and the number finalised by the OAIC in 2024–25 is the highest on record, by a significant amount.

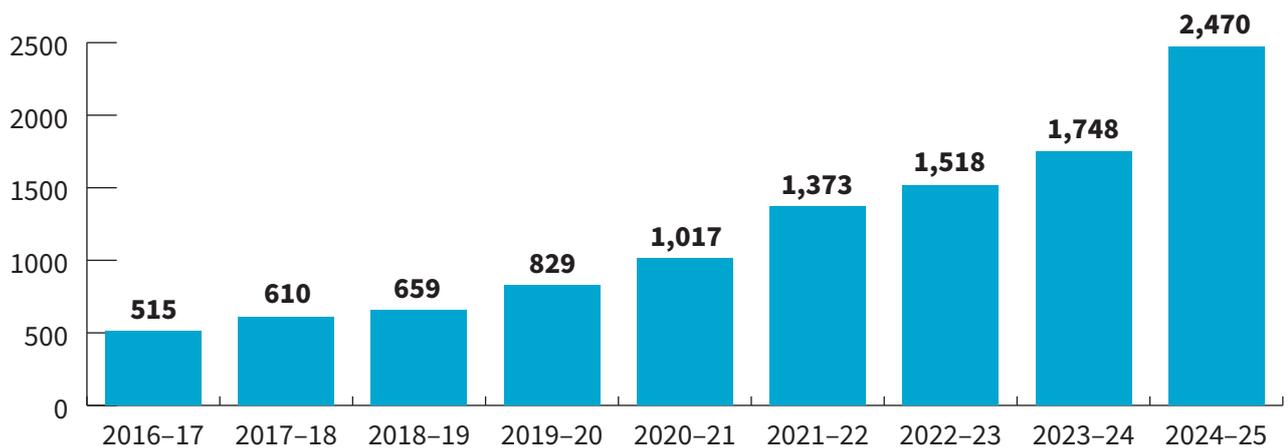
**Figure 8: Outcome of applications for internal review**



**Figure 9: IC reviews received by OAIC from 2016–17 to 2024–25**



**Figure 10: IC reviews finalised by OAIC from 2016–17 to 2024–25**



**IC review applications**

Agencies that received the most FOI requests generally had the most IC review applications lodged against their decisions. Table 13 provides an agency breakdown of IC review applications received by the OAIC in 2024–25 (for the top 20 agencies and overall).

In 2024–25, 16 of the top 20 agencies by IC review received are also in the top 20 agencies for the number of FOI requests received.

However, some agencies that did not receive large numbers of FOI requests were the subject of a comparatively large number of IC review applications given their FOI caseload. In 2024–25, the agencies

with a large number of IC reviews lodged, expressed as a proportion of the total number of FOI requests received included:

- OCO (23%)
- Comcare (6%)
- Treasury (6%), and
- ANU (12 IC review applications were made against ANU in 2024–25 despite ANU making no decisions in the same year).

**Table 13: Information Commissioner review – top 20 agencies ranked by the number of IC review applications received in 2024–25**

Agency / Minister	Rank	Requests received	Access grant applications	Access refusal applications	Total IC reviews applications	% of agency's FOI requests
Home Affairs	1	17,342		1,062	1,063	6
DVA	2	873		141	141	16
NDIA	3	2,331		111	111	5
AFP	4	1,062		97	97	9
Defence	5	1,160		92	92	8
Services Australia	6	5,135		74	74	1
Health	7	811	9	43	52	6
ATO	8	1,222		30	30	2
PMC	9	303		30	30	10
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO)	10	120		27	27	23
DFAT	11	667	3	16	19	3
AGD	12	334		18	18	5
ART	13	2,120		13	13	1
DCCEEW	14	403	3	10	13	3
ASIC	15	328	3	9	12	4
Australian National University (ANU)	16	163		9	12	7
DISR	17	579		11	11	2
Comcare	18	171		10	10	6
DITRDCA	19	307		6	6	2
APSC	20	56		5	5	9
<b>Total top 20</b>		<b>35,451</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,814</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>5</b>
Others		8,005			289	
<b>Total</b>		<b>43,456</b>			<b>2,136</b>	<b>5</b>

### ***‘AQU’ and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Freedom of information) [2024] AICmr 257 (29 November 2024)***

This decision discusses the application of ss 47(1)(a) and 47G(1)(a) of the FOI Act to information comprising laboratory samples and tests of imported food. The IC review applicant in this matter was the affected third party in the related IC review of the Department’s access refusal decision (*‘AQS’ and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Freedom of information) [2024] AICmr 256 (29 November 2024)*). During the IC review of the access refusal decision (*‘AQS’*), the Department made a revised decision under s 55G of the FOI Act. The Department identified six additional documents within the scope of the request and proposed to release five documents in full and one document in part. In making its revised decision, the Department undertook consultation with third parties under s 27 of the FOI Act, including the IC review applicant. The Department decided to grant access to the additional six documents over the objections of the IC review applicant. The IC review applicant sought review of the Department’s access grant decision and the FOI Commissioner made s 55K decisions in both the access refusal IC review and the access grant IC review on the same day. This decision highlights the requirement to ensure all parties to an IC review of an access grant decision are afforded procedural fairness.

### ***‘AUN’ and Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Freedom of information) [2025] AICmr 51 (21 March 2025)***

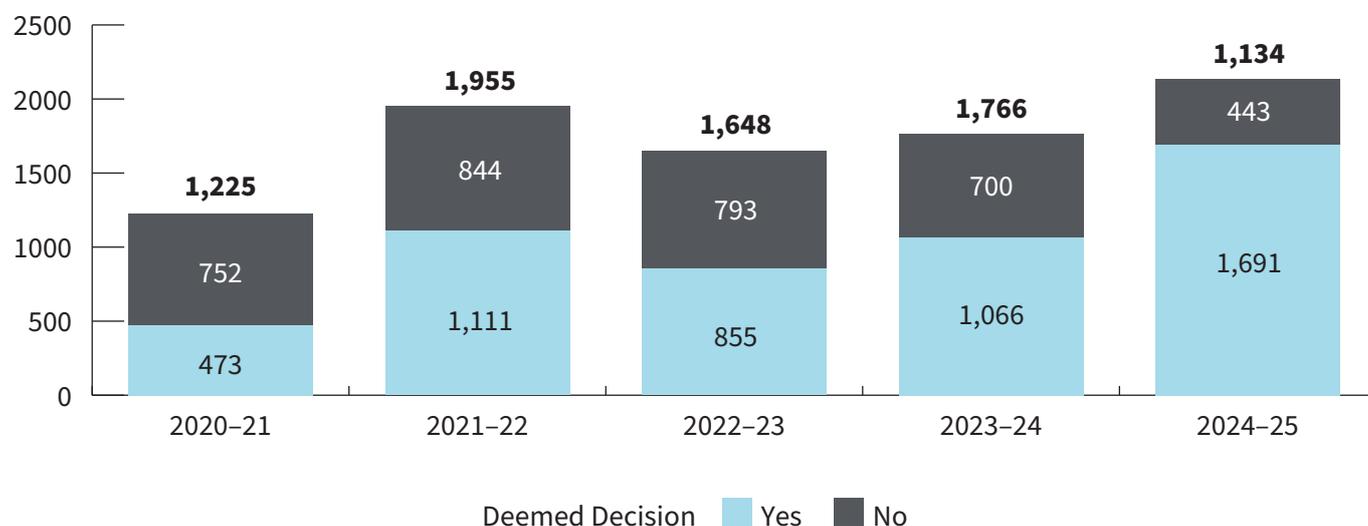
This decision involves a review of a decision to grant access to documents related to the IC review applicant’s registration and/or accreditation with the respondent. The decision sets aside parts of the decision under review in circumstances where the respondent agreed, and the decision-maker was satisfied, based on the submissions, that the material was conditionally exempt under s 47G of the FOI Act and disclosure would be contrary to the public interest. The OAIc wrote to the FOI applicant to notify them of the IC review. The FOI applicant requested to be joined as a party to the IC review and the OAIc subsequently joined the FOI applicant under s 55A of the FOI Act. This decision highlights the requirement to ensure all parties to an IC review of access grant decision are afforded procedural fairness.

When an agency fails to make a decision on an FOI request within the statutory timeframes in the FOI Act, the request is deemed to have been refused, and the applicant may apply for IC review (the FOI Act does not allow for internal review of a deemed access refusal decision).

In 2024–25, 79% of all IC review applications involved deemed access refusal decisions (1,691 IC review applications for review of deemed decisions out of a total of 2,136 IC review applications received), an increase of 19% from 2023–24 (when 60% of all IC review applications involved deemed access refusal decisions).

More than 50% of all IC review applications for 12 agencies involved deemed access refusal decisions. These agencies were:

- Home Affairs – 1,028 of 1,062 IC review applications related to deemed access refusal decisions (97% of all IC review applications that named Home Affairs as the respondent)
- DVA – 111 of 141 applications (79%)
- NDIA – 100 of 111 applications (90%)
- AFP – 81 of 97 applications (83.5%)
- Defence – 72 of 92 applications (78%)
- Services Australia – 44 of 74 applications (59%)
- PMC – 25 of 30 applications (83%)
- AGD – 11 of 18 applications (61%)
- Treasury – 7 out of 13 applications (54%)
- ANU – 8 out of 12 applications (67%)
- Comcare – 6 out of 10 applications (60%).

**Figure 11: IC reviews by deemed access refusal decision**

On average, 84% of all IC review applications that named an agency in the top 20 as the respondent (Table 13) were the result of deemed access refusal decisions. Only 49% of IC review applications for the other agencies were the result of deemed access refusals.

### IC reviews finalised

IC reviews may be finalised by way of various outcomes under the FOI Act. The review parties may reach an agreement (s 55F), or the IC review applicant may withdraw their application (s 54R), or the Commissioner may decide not to undertake an IC review or continue to undertake an IC review (s 54W of the FOI Act).

If an IC review is not finalised by way of those outcomes, the Commissioner must make a decision after a merits review of the IC review application under s 55K of the FOI Act. The Commissioner has 3 options:

- to affirm the respondent's decision (s 55K(1)(a))
- to vary the respondent's decision (s 55K(1)(b)), or
- to set aside the respondent's decision and make a fresh decision (s 55K(1)(c)).

Table 14 provides a breakdown of the outcomes of the IC reviews that were finalised in 2024-25.

In 2024-25, 248 IC review decisions were made under s 55K of the FOI Act (a 20% increase compared with 2023-24, when 207 s 55K decisions were made).

Decisions under s 55K of the FOI Act comprised 10% of all IC reviews finalised in 2024-25.

Of the 248 IC review decisions made under s 55K, 62% of those decisions 'set aside' the decisions under review. The high set-aside rate indicates there is more work to do to embed a pro-disclosure approach and an uplift in decision-making capabilities.

In 2024-25, 206 IC reviews were declined under s 54W(a) (lacking in substance, failure to cooperate, or lost contact) (8% of the total reviews finalised), compared to 142 in 2023-24 (also 8% of the total).

The number of IC reviews declined under s 54W(c) (fail to comply with a direction of the Information Commissioner) increased from 403 in 2023-24 (23% of the total finalised) to 669 (27% of the total finalised in 2024-25). This increased use of s 54W(c) reflects a practice of using that section, rather than s 54W(a)(iii) (lost contact) to decline to undertake a review (this practice was codified in the Procedure Directions issued by the Information Commissioner on 1 July 2024) as well as requiring responses to be made within certain timeframes.

There were 166 IC reviews declined under s 54W(b) (decision to be considered by the AAT/ART) compared with 112 in 2023-24 (a 48% increase that reflects the increase in finalisations in 2023-24). Declines under s 54W(b) comprised 7% of all the IC reviews finalised in 2024-25 (166 of 2,470).

Of the 166 IC reviews declined under s 54W(b), 8 (5%) related to FOI decisions made by the Oaic. Part 10.88

**Table 14: Information Commissioner review outcomes**

Information Commissioner decisions	2023–24	% of 2023–24 total	2024–25	% of 2024–25 total
Section 54N – out of jurisdiction	231	13	232	9
Section 54R – withdrawn	637	36	909	37
Section 54R – withdrawn/conciliated	12	1	40	2
Section 54W(a)(i) – frivolous, vexatious, misconceived, lacking in substance, or not in good faith	86	5	171	7
Section 54W(a)(ii) – failure to cooperate	20	1	3	0
Section 54W(a)(iii) – lost contact	36	2	32	1
Section 54W(b) – refer AAT/ART	112	6	166	7
Section 54W(c) – failure to comply	403	23	669	27
Section 55F – set aside by agreement	2	<0.5	0	0
Section 55F – varied by agreement	1	<0.5	0	0
Section 55F – affirmed by agreement	1	<0.5	0	0
Section 55K – affirmed by IC	62	4	74	3
Section 55K – set aside by IC	125	7	154	6
Section 55K – varied by IC	20	1	20	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,748</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,470</b>	<b>100</b>

of the FOI Guidelines states that the Information Commissioner may decline to undertake a review under s 54W(b) if there may be a perceived or actual conflict of interest in the Commissioner undertaking review, including where the FOI request under review was made to, or decided by, the Information Commissioner or the Information Commissioner’s delegate.

In total, 949 IC reviews were closed under s 54R as withdrawn (38% of the total finalised), which is consistent with 2023–24 when 649 were withdrawn (37% of the total finalised).

In 2023–24, 300 of the IC review applications that were withdrawn followed the agency or minister making a revised decision to provide further access

to documents under s 55G of the FOI Act. The number withdrawn following a s 55G decision increased to 515 in 2024–25 (72% more).

Of the 515 IC review applications withdrawn following a s 55G decision in 2024–25, 88% (453) involved applications for IC review of a deemed access refusal decision.

### Review by the AAT or ART

On 14 October 2024, the ART replaced the AAT. This report includes some references to the AAT, where those AAT statistics were reported to us before the commencement of the ART.

An application can be made to the ART for review of the following FOI decisions:

- a decision of the Information Commissioner under s 55K
- an IC reviewable decision (that is, an original decision or an internal review decision), but only if the Information Commissioner decides, under s 54W(b), that the interests of the administration of the FOI Act make it desirable that the decision be considered by the ART directly.

Table 15 provides a breakdown, by agency, of applications to the AAT or ART for review of FOI decisions in 2024–25. This data has been provided by the ART.

In 2024–25, 93 applications for review of FOI decisions were filed with the ART. This is a 4% decrease from 2023–24, when 97 applications were made to the AAT.

As noted above, in the section on IC review applications, the Information Commissioner will decline to undertake an IC review of an FOI decision

**Table 15: AAT or ART review by agency (respondent)**

Respondent	Applications <sup>24</sup>	Respondent	Applications
NDIA	18	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	1
OAIC	9	Australian Submarine Agency	1
OCO	6	ATO	1
Services Australia	6	Australian War Memorial	1
AGD	5	DAFF	1
Home Affairs	4	Defence	1
AFP	3	DEWR	1
Comcare	3	DSS	1
DISR	3	PMC	1
Fair Work Ombudsman	3	Minister for the Arts	1
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction Total	2	National Archives of Australia (NAA)	1
ASIC	2	National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner	1
ACQSA	1	Veteran's Review Board	1
ACCC	1	Other (appeals by agencies against IC review decisions)	13
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

<sup>24</sup>These applications may be made in relation to a decision by the Information Commissioner under s 55K of the FOI Act, or they may be the result of the Information Commissioner exercising the discretion in s 54W(b) of the FOI Act to allow the decision to be considered by the AAT.

made by the OAIC due to a perceived or actual conflict of interest in reviewing a decision made by the Information Commissioner or the Information Commissioner’s delegate. As a result, the only review option for these applicants lies with the ART.

In 2024–25, 13 agencies sought AAT or ART review of decisions made by the Information Commissioner under s 55K of the FOI Act:

- DCCEEW, Health and Treasury each made one application
- AFP and Home Affairs each made 2 applications, and
- Services Australia and the Repatriation Medical Authority each made 3 applications.

At the end of 2024–25, 115 applications remained outstanding with the ART. This is a 13% increase on the number of applications outstanding at the end of 2023–24, when there were 102.

Table 16 shows the outcomes of applications to the AAT or ART for review of FOI decisions in 2024–25, compared with the previous reporting year. The ART provided this data.

Sixteen of the 83 reviews finalised by the AAT or ART in 2024–25 involved applications made by agencies against decisions made by the Information Commissioner under s 55K of the FOI Act. Six were varied/set aside/remitted by decision, 9 were varied/set aside/remitted by consent, and one was finalised as invalid.

**Table 16: Outcomes of applications to the AAT or ART for review of FOI decisions**

AAT or ART outcomes	Number in 2023–24	% of total 2023–24	Number in 2024–25	% of total 2024–25
Affirmed by consent	1	1	4	5
Varied/set aside/remitted by consent	12	17	18	22
Dismissed by consent	1	1	5	6
Withdrawn by applicant	22	32	19	23
Decision affirmed	16	23	14	17
Decision varied/set aside	4	6	14	17
Dismissed	0	0	1	1
Dismissed – non-reviewable decision/no jurisdiction	13	19	8	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>





# Part 6

## Complaints about agency FOI actions



# Complaints about agency FOI actions

The OAIc continues to receive a large volume of FOI complaints about agencies' compliance with timeliness.

The OAIc received 340 complaints in 2024–25, a 26% increase compared to 2023–24 (269). The issue most commonly raised is timeliness.

As at 30 June 2025, the top 3 agencies with the highest volume of FOI complaints were Home Affairs at 27% (20 complaints), NDIA at 12% (9 complaints), and the AFP at 9% (7 complaints).

Agencies' compliance with statutory timeframes under s 15(5)(b) of the FOI Act has been the subject of various investigations, including two Commissioner-initiated investigations into Home Affairs since the commencement of the OAIc.

The OAIc undertook thematic investigations of FOI complaints in the 2024–25 year. In 2024–25 we undertook investigations into FOI complaints about DVA, the AFP, and Defence, in relation to their non-compliance with statutory timeframes for processing FOI requests under the FOI Act.

# Part 7

## Impact of FOI on agency resources



# Impact of FOI on agency resources

To assess the impact on agency resources of compliance with the FOI Act, agencies are asked to estimate the hours their staff spent on FOI matters and the non-labour costs directly attributable to FOI, such as legal and FOI training costs. Agencies submit these estimates annually. Agency estimates may also include FOI processing work undertaken on a minister's behalf.

Agencies are also asked to report their costs of compliance with the IPS. To facilitate comparison with information in previous annual reports, IPS costs are not included in the analysis of the cost of agency compliance with the FOI Act but are discussed separately.

The total cost attributable to processing FOI requests in 2024–25 was \$97.99 million, a 14% increase over the previous financial year's total of \$86.24 million. In 2023–24, there was a 23% increase in total FOI costs compared with the previous year (when FOI costs were \$70.33 million).

The 14% increase in total FOI costs in 2024–25 occurred in the context of Australian Government agencies and ministers receiving and finalising significantly higher numbers of FOI requests than in 2023–24 discussed earlier in this report.

## Staff costs

Agencies provide estimates of the number of staff hours spent on FOI to enable the calculation of salary costs directly attributable to FOI request processing. The OAIC then adds an additional 60% related costs, which covers overheads such as computers, electricity and stationery.

The total staff hours devoted to FOI was 8% higher in 2024–25 (1,171,890 hours) than in 2023–24 (1,087,650 hours). The average staff days for each FOI request received in 2024–25 was 3.6 days, which is 14% lower than in 2023–24 when it was 4.2 days. In 2022–23 this was 3.5 days.

A summary of staff costs is provided in Table 18, based on information provided by agencies and ministers, and is calculated using the following median base annual salaries from the APSC's Remuneration Report for 2024:<sup>26</sup>

- FOI contact officer (officers whose duties included FOI work): \$88,944<sup>27</sup>
- Other officers involved in processing requests:
  - Senior Executive Service (SES) officers (or equivalent): \$244,086<sup>28</sup>
  - APS Level 6 and Executive Levels (EL) 1–2: \$130,071<sup>29</sup>
  - Australian Public Service (APS) Levels 1–5: \$70,009<sup>30</sup>

**Table 17: Total FOI staff hours across all Australian Government agencies**

Staffing	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Total staff hours	893,564	855,498	851,290	903,492	1,087,650	1,171,890
% change in total staff hours	6	–4	<0.5	6	20	8
Total staff years <sup>25</sup>	446.78	427.75	425.65	451.75	543.83	585.95
% change in total staff years	6	–4	<0.5	6	20	8

<sup>25</sup>The FOI statistics guide explains that calculating staff hours can be based on the assumption that 100% of time during a year is 2,000 hours (this is the figure built into the portal).

<sup>26</sup>Because salary levels differ between agencies, median salary levels have been used. These are published by the APSC in its Remuneration Data 2024. These median levels are as at 31 December 2024.

<sup>27</sup>APS Level 5 base salary median.

<sup>28</sup>SES Band 1 base salary median.

<sup>29</sup>Executive Level 1 base salary median.

<sup>30</sup>APS Level 3 base salary median.

- Minister's office:
  - Minister and advisers: \$161,521<sup>31</sup>
  - Minister's support staff: \$70,009<sup>32</sup>

In 2024–25, staff costs were 13% higher than in 2023–24 (\$92.51 million, compared with \$81.66 million in 2023–24).

## Non-labour costs

Non-labour costs directly attributable to FOI in 2024–25 are summarised in Table 19, including the percentage change from the previous financial year.

Total non-labour costs were \$5.48 million in 2024–25, which is 20% more than the previous financial year (when total non-labour costs were \$4.58 million).

**Table 18: Estimated staff costs of FOI in 2023–24 compared to 2022–23**

Type of staff	Staff hours 2023–24	Total staff costs 2023–24 (\$)	Staff hours 2024–25	Total staff costs 2024–25 (\$)	% change in total staff costs
FOI contact officers	849,710	57,698,708	887,053	66,049,743	14
SES	46,218	8,369,562	52,614	10,952,432	31
APS Level 6 and EL 1–2	109,530	10,909,626	85,833	10,350,530	–5
APS Levels 1–5	78,315	4,225,126	63,220	4,737,873	12
Minister and advisers	3,452	431,354	3,041	393,336	–9
Minister's support staff	425	22,929	442	24,867	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,087,650</b>	<b>81,657,304</b>	<b>1,092,203</b>	<b>92,508,781</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 19: Identified non-labour costs of FOI 2019–20 to 2024–25**

Costs	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	% change <sup>33</sup>
Total legal costs	1,631,269	2,088,755	3,165,875	3,003,802	3,942,561	4,794,522	22
General legal advice costs	719,718	834,454	1,087,999	1,095,140	1,371,054	1,964,642	43
Litigation costs	911,551	1,254,301	2,077,876	1,908,662	2,571,507	2,829,880	10
General administrative costs	136,634	94,678	91,920	159,855	110,007	221,835	102
Training	168,339	276,042	293,624	268,237	311,403	391,887	26
Other	242,585	348,097	447,345	1,554,017	214,424	73,473	–66
<b>Total non-labour costs</b>	<b>2,178,827</b>	<b>2,807,572</b>	<b>3,998,764</b>	<b>4,985,911</b>	<b>4,578,395</b>	<b>5,481,717</b>	<b>20</b>

<sup>31</sup> Executive Level 2 base salary median.

<sup>32</sup> APS Level 3 base salary median.

<sup>33</sup> Percentage change from 2023–24 to 2024–25.

Total legal expenditure, training costs, and general administrative costs increased by 24% in 2024–25, while ‘other’ costs decreased by 66%.

Overall, legal expenditure was 22% higher in 2024–25 than the previous year. Litigation expenses increased 10%, from \$2,571,507 in 2023–24 to \$2,829,880 in 2024–25. General legal advice costs increased 43%, from \$1,371,054 in 2023–24 to \$1,964,642 in 2024–25.

NDIA reported a 339% increase non-labour expenditure in 2024–25 (\$332,473), compared with 2023–24 (\$75,774). NDIA’s expenditure on general legal advice was 453% higher (\$132,672 compared with \$24,000 in 2023–24) and its expenditure on litigation was 253% higher (\$182,801 compared with \$51,774 in 2023–24).

DCCEEW reported the largest spend in the Australian Government on FOI litigation with \$424,444 (31% more than in 2023–24 when it reported \$325,249). In relation to this increase, DCCEEW commented that the number of requests received increased for the financial year. The department also had an increased amount of ART or litigation proceedings due to an increase in finalised IC reviews and IC reviews referred to the ART by the OAIC.

Home Affairs had the next highest litigation spend with \$372,486 (a 138% increase from 2023–24 when it reported \$157,131 in litigation expenses). Home Affairs

commented that the increase in litigation costs reflects an increased need for support for litigation matters.

Norfolk Island Regional Council had the next highest general legal advice spend at \$101,000 (a 304% increase on 2023–24 when it spent \$25,000 on general legal advice). The Council commented that it received an increased number of complex requests requiring legal advice, and it had limited in-house staff and resources as a small agency to manage that volume.

Defence, which consistently spends the most of any agency on FOI training, spent \$149,128 in 2024–25 (a 7% reduction on 2023–24 when it incurred \$138,720 on FOI training). DFAT had the next highest FOI training spend at \$77,586 (a 1,439% increase on 2023–24 when it incurred \$5,041 on FOI training).

### Average cost per FOI request

The overall average cost per request decided was \$3,887, 4% lower than in 2023–24 when it was \$4,040.

Table 20 sets out the average cost per FOI request decided (granted in full, in part or refused) for the last 8 years.

Table 21 shows the agencies whose decisions on FOI requests had an average cost of more than \$10,000 per request decided in 2024–25.

**Table 20: Average cost per request determined**

Year	Requests decided	Total cost (\$)	Total cost (% change)	Average cost/request decided (\$)	Change in average cost/request decided (%)
2024–25	25,211	97,990,498	14	3,887	–4
2023–24	21,347	86,235,699	23	4,040	22
2022–23	21,228	70,328,374	9	3,313	30
2021–22	25,303	64,559,531	5	2,551	11
2020–21	26,680	61,484,795	–4	2,305	6
2019–20	29,358	63,906,111	7	2,177	10
2018–19	30,144	59,844,953	15	1,985	20
2017–18	31,674	52,186,180	17	1,648	25

**Table 21: Agencies with an average cost per FOI request decided more than \$10,000**

Agency	Requests decided	Average cost per request (\$)
Australian Financial Security Authority	38	41,118
NAA	12	26,874
Clean Energy Regulator	38	23,343
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	6	21,589
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	5	21,580
Cancer Australia	8	21,406
Torres Strait Regional Authority	1	19,551
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation	8	18,391
Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility	2	15,953
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	2	15,183
Digital Transformation Agency	20	13,620
DISR	141	13,019
Gene Technology Regulator	2	12,646
Education	58	12,529
Australian Transport Safety Bureau	11	12,420
DEWR	146	11,911
Clean Energy Finance Corporation	2	11,062
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	3	10,698
DCCEEW	316	10,441
Grains Research and Development Corporation	1	10,142
Fair Work Ombudsman	75	10,050
Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority	3	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>13,689</b>



# Part 8

## Impact of the IPS on agency resources



# Impact of the IPS on agency resources

Agencies are required to provide information about the costs of meeting their obligations under the IPS.

The total cost attributable to compliance with the IPS in 2024–25 was \$5,990,361, which is 342% more than 2023–24 (\$1,356,551). This increase followed a 12% increase in the cost attributable to IPS in 2022–23 (\$1,210,393).

The OAIC undertook a review of agencies' compliance with their IPS operations in 2023–24 by way of an agency survey. The OAIC [published its report](#) on that survey on 12 June 2024.

Some agencies have commented in relation to the costs of the IPS in 2024–25 as follows:

- DVA explained that while the overall number of FOI requests received over the 2024–25 period had decreased, the requests had become increasingly complex requiring additional input and consultation with subject matter experts from across the Department. The increase in hours spent through IPS work reflected this. DVA also continued to invest in its reporting capabilities and refine its processes to capture this activity.
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) commented that it has made changes to the type of information it publishes and releases, and the methods behind that, which has seen a substantial increase in the number of hours staff have spent on IPS related work.
- ASIC commented that it previously reported IPS statistics based on FOI Team Disclosure log work, when in fact the IPS is broader than that. Figures have been corrected for this reporting.

## Staff costs

Table 22 shows the total reported IPS staffing – staff numbers and staff hours – across Australian Government agencies compared with 2023–24.

These staff hours are used by the OAIC to calculate the staff costs of the IPS. Table 23 shows components of the OAIC's calculation of those staff costs, resulting in total staff costs attributable to compliance with the IPS in 2024–25 of \$5,980,561.

The 5 agencies that reported the highest number of hours spent on IPS work in 2024–25 all reported spending more hours on IPS work than in 2023–24. These agencies are:

- DVA – an increase of 41,360 hours of IPS work compared with 2023–24
- ACARA – an increase of 16,822 hours of IPS work compared with 2023–24
- Services Australia – 7,080 hours of IPS work, an increase of 200 hours of IPS work compared with 2023–24
- ASIC – an increase of 1,000 hours of IPS work compared with 2023–24, and
- Home Affairs – 900 hours of IPS work, the same number of hours as reported in 2023–24.

## Non-labour IPS costs

Reported IPS non-labour costs for all agencies totalled \$9,800 in 2024–25, a 476% increase on expenditure to 2023–24, when non-labour costs were reported as \$1,700. Only 4 agencies reported any non-labour expenditure on their IPS during 2024–25.

There was a 157% increase in general administrative expenses associated with IPS administration in 2024–25 (\$700 was reported in 2023–24 and \$1,800 was reported in 2024–25).

General legal advice costs associated with the IPS increased from \$1,000 reported in 2023–24 to \$8,000 reported in 2024–25.

No costs were reported in relation to FOI training in 2023–24 (same as 2023–24).

Three agencies reported a total of \$1,800 in general administrative costs associated with IPS compliance (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, National Reconstruction Fund Corporation, and Creative Australia).

ORIC reported \$8,000 on general legal advice costs associated with IPS. ORIC commented that it is a small agency with no dedicated FOI team.

No agencies reported any expenditure on IPS litigation, IPS training or 'other' costs associated with their IPS.

**Table 22: Total IPS staffing – 2023–24 and 2024–25**

Staffing	2023–24	2024–25	% change
Staff numbers: 75–100% time on IPS matters	14	20	43
Staff numbers: less than 75% time on IPS matters	394	401	2
Total staff-hours spent on IPS	19,002	72,961	284
<b>Total staff years<sup>34</sup></b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>284</b>

**Table 23: Estimated staff costs in relation to the IPS in 2024–25**

Type of staff <sup>35</sup>	Staff hours	Salary costs (\$)	Related costs (\$) (60%)	Total staff costs (\$)
IPS contact officers	48,891	2,174,281	1,304,568	3,478,849
SES	453	55,285	33,171	88,457
APS Level 6 and EL 1–2	22,696	1,476,046	885,627	2,361,673
APS Levels 1–5	921	32,239	19,343	51,583
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,961</b>	<b>3,737,851</b>	<b>2,242,711</b>	<b>5,980,561</b>

<sup>34</sup>The OAC calculates the total staff years based on the assumption that 100% of time during a year is 2,000 hours (this is the figure built into the portal).

<sup>35</sup>IPS contact officers are officers whose usual duties include IPS work. The other rows cover other officers involved in IPS work.

# Abbreviations

AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ACMA	Australian Communications and Media Authority
ACQSC	Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
ANU	Australian National University
APRA	Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
ART	Administrative Review Tribunal
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
AUSTRAC	Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
Austrade	Australian Trade and Investment Commission
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Defence	Department of Defence
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DISR	Department of Industry, Science and Resources
DITRDCA	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
DSS	Department of Social Services
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
Education	Department of Education
eSafety	Office of the eSafety Commissioner

Health	Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
Home Affairs	Department of Home Affairs
IC	Information Commissioner
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS Commission	NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
OAIC	Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
OCO	Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman
ORIC	Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
PMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Treasury	Department of the Treasury

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