



Requirements for a valid access application

Remember: You may not need to make an FOI access application at all – before you lodge an application ask the FOI Coordinator at the agency whether the documents you want are already available without the need to use the FOI process.

To make a valid access application under the FOI Act, you should:

- Identify or describe the documents you want. You must give enough information to enable the agency to identify the requested documents.
- Give an address in Australia where notices can be sent. If possible, include your contact details such as telephone number/email address/fax number. This will help the agency to contact you if necessary and will assist in your application being dealt with efficiently.
- Pay the application fee of \$30 if you are seeking information that is not just about you – no application fee is payable for access to personal information that is just about you.

These requirements are set out in [section 12](#) of the FOI Act. If your application does not comply with the requirements of section 12 the agency has to take reasonable steps to help you to change your application so that it complies with those requirements ([section 11](#)).

Tip: If you ask for access to ‘everything’ on a particular subject, the agency may ask you to narrow the scope of your application to reduce the work involved in dealing with it. An agency is permitted to refuse to deal with your application if dealing with it would divert a substantial and unreasonable portion of its resources away from its other operations.

If you have any general enquiries about the FOI process, please see our website or contact our office.

Note: This Information Sheet is intended as a general guide only and should not be viewed as legal advice. The Information Commissioner considers each complaint on its merits and according to the relevant circumstances.

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