



Official

## Freedom of Information (FOI) request

### Notice of Decision

Reference: FOI/2022/070

Dear Darren

I refer to your email of 23 February 2022 in which you made a request for access to documents to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department), under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act).

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a decision on your request for access under the FOI Act.

### Scope of request

You set out the terms of your request for access as follows:

*I request any documents containing the phrase World Economic Forum from the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation from 2008 onwards and to the present day.*

*I request any documents containing the phrase Great Reset from the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation from 2008 onwards and to the present day..*

*I request any documents containing the phrase You will own nothing, and be happy from the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation from 2008 onwards and to the present day..*

*I request any documents containing the phrase One World Government from the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation from 2008 onwards and to the present day..*

*I request any documents containing the phrase New World Order from the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation from 2008 onwards and to the present day...*

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## Authorised decision-maker

I am authorised to make this decision in accordance with arrangements approved by the Department's Secretary under section 23 of the FOI Act.

## Material taken into account

In reaching my decision I referred to the following:

- the terms of your request
- the searches undertaken by the Department regarding your request
- the documents relevant to your request
- the FOI Act (specifically sections 24A and 47G)
- guidelines issued by the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the FOI Guidelines)

## Documents in scope of request

The Department has undertaken searches of its records and has identified 20 documents that fall within the scope of your request.

## Decision

With regard to the documents you have requested that fall within the scope of part of your request, being those documents identified as *containing the phrase World Economic Forum from the World Economic Forum*, I have decided to grant access to 17 documents in full and three documents in part, with irrelevant material deleted under section 22 of the FOI Act.

I have decided to refuse the remainder of your request under subsection 24A(1) of the FOI Act, on the basis that the Department has taken all reasonable steps to find the documents you have requested, and those documents cannot be found or do not exist.

## Reasons for decision

### 1. Section 47G – Business information

Subsection 47G(1) of the FOI Act provides that:

- (1) *A document is conditionally exempt if its disclosure under this Act would disclose information concerning a person in respect of his or her business or professional affairs or concerning the business, commercial or financial affairs of an organisation or undertaking, in a case in which the disclosure of the information:*
- (a) *would, or could reasonably be expected to, unreasonably affect that person adversely in respect of his or her lawful business or professional affairs or that organisation or undertaking in respect of its lawful business, commercial or financial affairs; ...*

Two Guidelines provided by the World Economic Forum (the Forum) detail its business affairs in the form of arrangements for attendees of the Forum. This includes security and health arrangements and specific contact details for attendees and their delegations, which are not publicly available.

The Forum's stated mission is to engage with 'the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas'<sup>1</sup>.

Having reviewed the material, it is my view that the release of this information would or could reasonably be expected to undermine confidence in the Forum's security and health measures and their ability to respond to concerns. This may in turn affect the willingness of leaders to attend the Forum. Given this is the Forum's mission, I am satisfied that the release of documents containing this information would unreasonably interfere with the Forum's business affairs in the form of its security and health operations and result in a reduced engagement with its partners.

Accordingly, I have found that parts of the requested documents are conditionally exempt from release under subsection 47G(1) of the FOI Act,

### ***Public Interest Test***

Section 11A(5) of the FOI Act provides that a conditionally exempt document must nevertheless be disclosed to the applicant unless its disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest. Having found that parts of the requested documents are conditionally exempt under section 47G of the FOI Act, I am now required to apply the public interest test of section 11B of the FOI Act. Section 11B(3) of the FOI Act sets out four factors favouring access, and which must be considered if relevant. I am satisfied that disclosure of the conditionally exempt information may:

- promote the objects of the FOI Act.

Section 11B(4) of the FOI Act sets out four factors that the decision-maker must not take into account when deciding whether access to the document would be contrary to the public interest. I have not taken any of those factors into account in reaching my decision.

The FOI Act does not provide a prescribed set of factors weighing against disclosure, which the decision-maker may consider. However, section 11B(5) requires a decision-maker to have regard to the FOI Guidelines. The FOI Guidelines contain a non-exhaustive list of factors that may, depending on the circumstances, operate against disclosure.<sup>2</sup>

In relation to the parts of the requested documents that I have found to be conditionally exempt under section 47G of the FOI Act, I consider the following factors favour non-disclosure of that material.

- The disclosure could reasonably be expected to prejudice security, law enforcement, public health or public safety. The Forum's Guidelines provide specific health and security contact details for Forum staff, Swiss police and airport staff as well security and health measures. In my view making this information public could be reasonably be expected to prejudice security, law enforcement, public health or public safety in any incident at the Forum.
- Disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the Forum. In my view disclosing these specific purpose contact details could reasonably be expected to increase of contact from non-attendees at the Forum and thereby affecting the Forum's ability to respond to attendee health and security issues. Any real or perceived impact on the Forum's security and health arrangements has the potential to affect confidence that the Forum is able to conduct its business in a safe environment. This may affect the willingness of its partners to attend its meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/about/world-economic-forum/>

<sup>2</sup> 6.22 of the Guidelines

After careful consideration of all relevant factors, I have decided that the factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by the factors against disclosure. Accordingly, I am of the view that disclosure of the conditionally exempt material in the requested documents would be contrary to the public interest.

I have therefore decided that parts of the requested documents are exempt under section 47G of the FOI Act.

## **2. Deletion of irrelevant matter**

Section 22 of the FOI Act provides that exempt or irrelevant information may be deleted from a copy of a document, and access granted to such an amended copy where it is reasonably practicable to do so, unless it is apparent that the applicant would not wish to have access to such a copy.

As advised by the Department on 9 March 2022, it is the Department's policy to withhold:

- any person's signature;
- the names and contact details of Australian Public Service officers not in the Senior Executive Service (SES);
- the mobile or direct numbers of SES officers;
- the names and contact details of Ministerial staff at a level below Chief of Staff.

In accordance with subparagraph 22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act, I have excluded the parts of the requested documents that contain the above details.

## **3. Subsection 24A(1) – Documents cannot be found do not exist**

Subsection 24A(1) of the FOI Act provides that:

An agency or Minister may refuse a request for access to a document if:

- (a) all reasonable steps have been taken to find the document;
- and
- (b) the agency or Minister is satisfied that the document:
    - (i) is in the agency's or Minister's possession but cannot be found; or
    - (ii) does not exist.

The Department conduct searches or its relevant systems for documents from: the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. With the exception of the documents from the Forum containing the phrase 'World Economic Forum' (discussed above), no documents containing the phrases 'World Economic Forum'; 'Great Reset'; 'You will own nothing, and be happy'; One World Government; and 'New World Order' were located.

Accordingly, I am satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to find documents relevant to your request, and that the remainder of the requested documents cannot be found or do not exist. I have therefore decided to refuse the remainder of your request under subsection 24A(1) of the FOI Act.

## Review rights

If you disagree with my decision, you may apply for internal review or Information Commissioner review of the decision. We encourage you to seek internal review as a first step as it may provide a more rapid resolution of your concerns.

### Internal review

Under section 54 of the FOI Act, you may apply in writing to the Department for an internal review of my decision. The internal review application must be made within 30 days of the date of this letter. Where possible please attach reasons why you believe review of the decision is necessary. The internal review will be carried out by another officer within 30 days from the date it is received.

Applications for review should be sent to [foi@pmc.gov.au](mailto:foi@pmc.gov.au).

More information about making a request to the Department is at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/who-we-are/accountability-and-reporting/freedom-information>.

### Information Commissioner review

Under section 54L of the FOI Act, you may apply to the Australian Information Commissioner to review my decision. An application for review by the Information Commissioner must be made in writing within 60 days of the date of this letter.

More information about Information Commissioner review is available at <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews-and-complaints/information-commissioner-review/>.

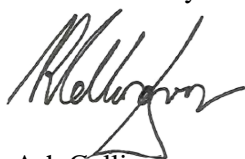
## FOI Complaints

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your FOI request, please let us know what we could have done better. We may be able to rectify the problem. If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you can make a complaint to the Australian Information Commissioner. A complaint to the Information Commissioner must be made in writing.

More information about complaints is available on the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner at <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews-and-complaints/make-an-foi-complaint/>.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your requests, you can contact the FOI and Privacy Section by email at [foi@pmc.gov.au](mailto:foi@pmc.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Ash Collingburn

Assistant Secretary

Global Interests Branch

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

28 April 2022