



FOI 193/16/17 STATEMENT OF REASONS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

1. I refer to the application by [REDACTED] under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act), for access to:

“...An IT inventory of all workstations, servers and mainframes (if applicable) that operate within the department of defence and all applicable sub divisions of the department of defence. Specifically, Brand, hostname, MAC address, IP address, model (eg, IBM OptiPlex 755), ownership (eg, which department is using the resource) and system specifications (RAM memory size, internal and external hard drives etc).”

FOI decision maker

2. I am the accredited officer pursuant to section 23 of the FOI Act to make a decision on this FOI request.

Documents identified

3. I identified two documents as matching the description of the request.

Decision

4. I have decided to partially release two documents in accordance with section 22 [access to edited copies with exempt or irrelevant matter deleted] of the FOI Act, on the grounds that the deleted material is considered exempt under section 33(a)(ii) [Documents affecting the defence of the Commonwealth] of the FOI Act.

Material taken into account

5. In making my decision, I had regard to:
- a. the terms of the request;
 - b. the content of the identified documents in issue;
 - c. relevant provisions in the FOI Act;
 - d. the Guidelines published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the Guidelines); and
 - e. advice from Defence’s Chief Information Officer Group (CIOG).

Reasons for decision

Section 33(a)(ii) – defence of the Commonwealth

6. The Chief Information Officer Group advised that the material contained in the identified documents would detail Defence's operational Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capabilities and would therefore pose a major security concern regarding operational activities pertaining to the defence of the Commonwealth.

7. In deciding that material was exempt under section 33 of the FOI Act, I also considered the mosaic effect. The Guidelines state that:

5.39 When evaluating potential harmful effects of disclosing documents that affect Australia's national security, defence or international relations, decision makers may take into account not only the contents of the document but also the intelligence technique usually known as the 'mosaic theory'. This theory holds that individually harmless pieces of information, when combined with other pieces, can generate a composite – a mosaic – that can damage Australia's national security, defence or international relations. Therefore, decision makers may need to consider other sources of information when considering this exemption.

5.40 The mosaic theory does not relieve decision makers from evaluating whether there are real and substantial grounds for the expectation that the claimed effects will result from disclosure.

8. I found that parts of the documents contained information that, if disclosed, may add to what is already known, or already in the public domain. This could lead to an adversary applying the mosaic effect to information relating to Defence's ICT capabilities and significantly undermine its effectiveness and compromise ICT security.

9. Taking the above into account, I consider that disclosure of the material would, or could reasonably be expected to, cause damage to the defence of the Commonwealth. Accordingly, I consider the material to be exempt under section 33(a)(ii) of the FOI Act.

Further Information

10. I have decided to release one document administratively in conjunction with this request. Defence uses an IBM application called Tivoli Asset Management for IT (TAMIT) to manage its ICT assets. The document explains the specific information held by Defence on each of its ICT assets. As demonstrated on the document, TAMIT does not hold records of MAC address, IP address or system specifications.

11. The scope of this request includes mainframes. Information on Defence's mainframes was released to the applicant in FOI 060/16/17 and has not been reconsidered here.

12. In regards to the documents containing information on computers and servers, I have only provided the first page of each document as the remainder of the documents contain thousands of pages of entirely redacted material.

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Mr Adrian Sancataldo
Accredited Decision Maker
Chief Information Officer Group