



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

Reference: BR1618262

**FOI 265/18/19 STATEMENT OF REASONS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

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

*“... the most recent, significant document canvassing and/or summarising the issue of and extent of possible collaboration between Australian universities and/or Australian educational institutions and the Chinese military and/or entities associated with the Chinese military.”*

**FOI decision maker**

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

**Documents identified**

3. I identified one document as matching the description of the request.

**Decision**

4. I have decided to:

- a. partially release one document 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) (iii) [Documents affecting international relations] of the FOI Act;
- b. remove irrelevant material as referred to in the scope of the request in accordance with section 22(1)(b)(ii) 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. consultation with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and officers within the Department of Defence from Strategic Policy Division, Industry Policy Division and Defence Science and Technology Group.

## **Reasons for decision**

### **Section 22 – Irrelevant material deleted**

6. Upon examination of the document I found that it contained material that did not relate to the scope of the request. I considered that the material would disclose information that would reasonably be regarded as irrelevant to the scope of the request. As such, in accordance with Section 22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act, I decided to remove this material.

### **Section 33(a) (iii) – Documents affecting international relations**

7. Paragraph 5.36 of the Information Commissioners' Guidelines describes international relations as the ability of the Australian Government to maintain good working relations with other governments and international organisations. I have identified information in the document relating to Australia's relationships with foreign governments that is not readily available, and assess that release of this information could reasonably be expected to cause damage to those relationships. Any damage to international confidence and close relationships with other countries would seriously affect Defence's ability to deliver on its obligations to protect Australia's interests. Release of this information is therefore exempt under section 33(a)(iii) of the FOI Act.

### **Clarification/Context Statement**

8. The document identified in this search is a brief prepared for the 2018-2019 Supplementary Budget Estimates. Defence Industry Policy Division conducted a similar search for 2018-2019 Additional Estimates briefs. As a result of this search, I am satisfied that the document identified for the 2018-2019 Supplementary Budget Estimates best met the scope of the request.

**Geraldine**  
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Ms Geraldine Gibson  
Accredited Decision Maker  
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