



Australian Government
Department of Defence

Reference: BS3283281

FOI 374/18/19 - 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:

“...copies of any reports, submissions or review documents dated or created between the years 2011 and 2015 relating to the effects of sea level rise, flooding, coastal erosion and storm surges on Defence military bases/assets.”

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 partially release the 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 47(F) of the FOI Act [Public interest conditional exemptions-personal privacy].

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 document 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).

Reasons for Decision

Conditional Exemption - Section 47F(1) - Personal Privacy

6. Upon examination of the documents, I identified personal information, such as names and signatures, belonging to individuals other than the applicant.

7. When assessing whether the disclosure of personal information is unreasonable, I considered the following factors:

- a. the extent to which the information is well known;

- b. whether the person to whom the information relates is known to be (or to have been) associated with the matters dealt with in the document;
 - c. the availability of the information from publicly accessible sources; and
 - d. the effect the release of the personal information could reasonably have on the third party.
8. I found that the:
- a. specific personal information listed is not well known;
 - b. individuals whose personal information is contained in the documents are not widely known to be associated with the matters dealt with in the documents; and
 - c. information is not readily available from publicly accessible sources.
9. The release of the names and signatures of individuals identified in the document could reasonably be expected to cause harm to their privacy. Taking into account the above factors, I consider that the release of the personal information of individuals other than the applicant would be an unreasonable disclosure of personal information and conditionally exempt under section 47F(1) of the FOI Act.

Public Interest Considerations – Section 47F(1)

10. I have found that the identified documents are conditionally exempt under section 47F(1) of the FOI Act. Section 11A (5) provides that if a document is conditionally exempt, it must be disclosed unless (in the circumstances) access to the document at that time would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.
11. I considered the factors favouring disclosure set out in section 11B(3) of the FOI Act. The relevant factors are that disclosure may promote some of the objects of the FOI Act, as information held by the Government is a national resource and it would allow the applicant access to their own personal information.
12. Paragraph 6.22 of the Guidelines specifies a non-exhaustive list of public interest factors against disclosure. Upon reviewing these factors, I find no factors that would could reasonably be expected to be prejudiced or harmed by the release of this information.
13. I also consider that the passage of time since the production of this report in 2013 is also of relevance. It is likely that in the intervening period there have been changes to the issues and circumstances that led to the development of the report, and so the currency of some of the issues raised and recommendations made may be impacted.
14. It is for those reasons that I find that the public interest factors for disclosure outweigh the factors for disclosure.
15. None of the factors listed in section 11B(4) [Irrelevant Factors] were taken into account when making my decision.

Further Information

16. Some of the documents matching the scope of this request contained a Dissemination Limiting Marker. As the documents are approved for public release the marker has been struck through.

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Accredited Decision Maker
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