



ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Freedom of Information Disclosure Log Publication Coversheet

The following information is provided pursuant to section 28 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

Application Details	
Ref. No.	CMTEDDFOI 2026-115
Date of Application	14 May 2026
Date of Decision	28 May 2026
Processing time (in working days)	10
Fees	N/A
Decision on Access	Full Release
Information Requested (summary)	A copy of a brief titled New FOI request Smart Form sent to the Minister in March 2026.
Publication Details	
Original application	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Published <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Decision notice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Published <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Documents and schedule	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Published <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Decision made by Ombudsman	N/A
Additional information identified by Ombudsman	N/A
Decision made by ACAT	N/A
Additional information identified by ACAT	N/A

From: [CMTEDD FOI](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [CMTEDD FOI](#)
Subject: CMTEDDFOI 2026-115 - Freedom of Information (FOI) request, Y2W6XVR5 [SEC=, DLM=Sensitive: Personal]
Date: Friday, 15 May 2026 3:35:07 PM
Attachments: [Y2W6XVR5.pdf](#)

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

This email is following up on your FOI access application submitted yesterday. Your request has been allocated the following case number: CMTEDDFOI 2026-115.

For context, the smart form was introduced on 28 April of this year to cover all ACT directorates as the ACT Government wanted to create a simple, unified and customer focused digital experience for the Canberra community. This includes making it easier to find, access and understand ACT Government information and services, without the need to understand or navigate the structure of government. A single process to submit FOI requests creates a consistent and easier experience for users.

As you may be aware, prior to this there were different online forms for individual directorates, but this often meant that requests were not going to the right directorate. This resulted in possible delays in actioning as requests needed to be transferred and accepted by the relevant directorate, in line with s57 of the FOI Act.

In relation to the scope of the request, I can advise that we did not receive any complaints that led to the introduction of the smart form and having looked at the scope of your request, I note that there was a brief titled New Freedom of Information (FOI) request Smart Form that was sent to the relevant Minister in March this year that would provide you with a lot of context. Can you please advise if you agree to the scope of your request being limited to seeking a copy of that brief?

Kind regards

CMTEDD Freedom Of Information Team

Phone: 02 6207 7754 | Email: CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au

Corporate | Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | ACT Government
[Level 1, 220 London Circuit, Canberra](#) ACT 2601 | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | act.gov.au

A new [Smart Form](#) has been implemented and is now available for all ACT Government Freedom of Information (FOI) access applications.

From: smartforms@act.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 14 May 2026 4:14 PM
To: CMTEDD FOI
Subject: CMTEDDFOI 2026-115 - Freedom of Information (FOI) request, Y2W6XVR5 [SEC=, DLM=Sensitive: Personal]

Freedom of Information (FOI) request

Form data summary

Applicant name	[REDACTED]
Responsible directorate	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Topic	No match found

Reference code

Y2W6XVR5

For issues or questions relating to SmartForms please [contact the SmartForms team](#).

From: [REDACTED]
To: [CMTEDD FOI](#)
Subject: Re: CMTEDDFOI 2026-115 - Freedom of Information (FOI) request, Y2W6XVR5 [SEC=, DLM=Sensitive: Personal]
Date: Friday, 15 May 2026 4:30:39 PM

Caution: This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

I do indeed agree to the reduction of the application's scope in the interests of obtaining the brief you refer to.

[REDACTED]



Freedom of Information (FOI) request - Submission confirmation

Your submission has been successful. Please keep a copy of this receipt for your records.

Date and time

Reference code

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)

GPO Box 158
Canberra City, ACT 2601

Phone: 6207 7754
CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au

Applicant information

I want to submit this request anonymously

Assistance

Do you need assistance with preparing your request?

Yes

No

Do you need an interpreter?

Yes

No

Applicant details

Title

First name*

Last name

Pronouns

Chosen name

Business/Organisation

Contact details

Please provide at least one method of contact. We use this information to confirm details of the request and deliver information to you once your request is completed.

Phone number

Email address

Address line 1

Address line 2

Suburb

State

Postcode

Help us direct your request

The following information helps us send your request to the most appropriate team who will coordinate and respond to your request.

What type of information are you requesting? *

There are two types of information commonly asked for: personal information and non-personal or general information.

- Personal information refers to your own or another's personal affairs. If you wish to access personal information, you will need to provide proof of identity.

- Non-personal or general information is all the information held by government about how the government undertakes its functions and roles.

Personal information

Non-personal (General) information

What do you know about the information you are requesting?*

I know the Directorate or agency

I know the topic

I am not sure

What is the nature or topic of information you are after*

No match found

Start typing the name of the topic you are requesting information about. If your topic does not appear in the list, you can select "No match found".

Can you briefly describe what you are looking for or what prompted your request?*

I am looking for any correspondence or other confirmation documents which depict the reason for transition from the old FOI system (sans online form) to the new FOI system introduced in ~March this year which allows applicants to use this very form.

An FOI Officer will review your request and direct it to the right Directorate or Agency. The Directorate FOI team will work with you to finalise details. Once confirmed, the team will start working on your request.

Request for

To help us process your request:

- Include enough detail in your application so we can identify what government information you want.
- As an alternative to using fields within the form, you may choose to attach documents or audio recordings.
- You may wish to include a statement on how the release of this information is in the public interest.

Scope of your request

What information are you requesting access to?*

Correspondence, memorandums, briefs, statistical information, or any complaints regarding the old system which directed individuals directly to other agencies.

In the interest of expediency, please note I am not expecting the search to be exhaustive.

Attach additional documents to support your application

Submit application

Timeframes

The Directorate responsible for your application must:

- inform you in writing within 10 working days that it has received your application
- communicate to you about any difficulties/ delays in processing your request
- provide you with a decision on access to the information within 30 working days or less

Requests may take longer than 30 days in situations where an extension has been granted.

If the Directorate must consult a third party, the deadline for providing a decision is extended by 15 working days. The Directorate will notify you if consultation is required.

After you submit your request, the information you supply will be provided to:

- **Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate**
- **cmteddFOI@act.gov.au**



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – NOTICE OF DECISION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 14 May 2026.

Specifically, you sought access to the following information:

Correspondence, memorandums, briefs, statistical information, or any complaints regarding the old system which directed individuals directly to other agencies.

In the interest of expediency, please note I am not expecting the search to be exhaustive.

On 15 May 2026, the CMTEDD FOI team emailed you to see if you would like to amend the scope of your request to a brief titled New Freedom of Information (FOI) request Smart Form that was sent to the relevant Minister in March this year. On 15 May 2026 you agreed to this.

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the CMTEDD Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 days.

Therefore, a decision is due by **29 June 2026**.

Decision on access

CMTEDD has identified one document within the scope of your request.

I have decided to grant **full access** to that document.

Release of documents

The information being released to you is provided at **Attachment A**.

Statement of Reasons

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act a statement of reasons outlining my decisions is below. In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act

- the information that falls within the scope of your request

As a decision maker, I am required to determine whether the information within scope is in the public interest to release. To make this decision, I am required to:

- assess whether the information would be contrary to public interest to disclose as per **Schedule 1** of the Act.
- perform the public interest test as set out in section 17 of the Act by balancing the factors favouring disclosure and factors favouring nondisclosure in **Schedule 2** of the Act.

Exemptions claimed

Schedule 1: Information taken to be contrary to the public interest.

My reasons for deciding not to grant access to the information or components of information found within documents are as follows:

- *No relevant sections identified.*

Public Interest Test

The Act has a presumption in favour of disclosure. As a decision maker I am required to decide where, on balance, public interest lies. As part of this process, I must consider factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure.

In *Hogan v Hinch* (2011) 243 CLR 506, [31] French CJ stated that when ‘used in a statute, the term [public interest] derives its content from “the subject matter and the scope and purpose” of the enactment in which it appears’. Section 17(1) of the Act sets out the test, to be applied to determine whether disclosure of information would be contrary to the public interest. These factors are found in subsection 17(2) and Schedule 2 of the Act.

Schedule 2: Factors to be considered when deciding the public interest.

Taking into consideration the information within scope of your request, I have identified that the following public interest factors are relevant to determine if release of the information contained within these documents is within the ‘public interest’.

Factors favouring disclosure (Section 2.1)

- *Section 2.1(a)(iii) - inform the community of the government’s operations, including policies, guidelines and codes of conduct followed by the government in its dealings with members of the community.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(viii) - reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision.*

I consider both factors to be highly relevant to the material within scope and to carry significant weight in favour of disclosure.

The introduction of the FOI Request Smart Form represents a change in how members of the public and other stakeholders engage with FOI to seek access to government information. As such, it is a development that could reasonably attract public and stakeholder interest.

The information contained within the brief provides background and contextual material explaining the rationale for the introduction of the new Smart Form and disclosure of this

information would reasonably enhance public understanding of why the government has changed to a consolidated online form for these types of requests.

I am satisfied that these factors favouring disclosure carry significant weight. However, these factors are to be balanced against the factors favouring nondisclosure.

Factors favouring nondisclosure (Section 2.2)

- *No relevant sections identified*

Having applied the test outlined in section 17 of the Act, I am satisfied that it is in the public interest to release this document in full.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable for this request because the number of pages released to you is below the charging threshold of 50.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CMTEDD maintains an online record of access applications called a [disclosure log](#).

Your original access application and my decision will be published on the CMTEDD disclosure log. Your personal contact details will not be published.

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is provided to you, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

We recommend using this form [Applying for an Ombudsman Review](#) to ensure you provide all of the required information. Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact the CMTEDD FOI Team by telephone on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Emma Hotham, consisting of the letters 'EH' in a stylized, cursive font.

Emma Hotham

Information Officer

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

28 May 2026



Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Ministerial Brief

To:	Attorney-General	Tracking No.: CMTEDD2026/777
Date:	10/03/2026	
CC:	Chief Minister	
From:	Executive Group Manager, Communications and Engagement, CMTEDD	
Subject:	New Freedom of Information (FOI) request Smart Form.	
Critical Date:	19/03/2026	
Critical Reason:	Normal course of business	

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the information contained in this brief; and
2. Agree to the launch of the new SmartForm.

Noted / Please Discuss

Agreed / Not Agreed / Please Discuss

Tara Cheyne MLA

[Handwritten signature] 10/4/26

Minister's Feedback

Background

1. Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in the ACT Government are currently handled through a variety of methods, which has led to a fragmented and inconsistent experience for members of the community who seek access to ACT Government information through FOI.

2. The recent machinery of government changes have highlighted the inconsistencies between directorates in how community members could initiate a FOI.
3. The development of a single, whole-of-government Smart Form to standardise how FOI requests are managed will improve the community's experience when requesting information.
4. The Digital Consolidation Project (approved by Cabinet and funded for three years between 2022–2025) aimed to provide the community with a consistent user experience of its websites. A single Smart Form for FOI requests contributes to the ongoing success of this project.
5. A new Smart Form will also contribute to delivering an outcome against recommendation 5 in the *Statutory Review of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT)*.

Issues

6. It is intended that the new FOI Smart Form will launch in March 2026.
7. The new form is built using the Smart Forms platform. It strengthens privacy protections, reduces duplication and delivers a user-first experience.
8. It addresses inconsistencies with FOI processes and provides a single point of entry to submit ACT Government FOI requests.
9. The new form is a change in approach for handling the submission of FOI requests.
10. A triage function enables the quick and appropriate redirection of FOI requests to the most appropriate directorates, streamlining the process for everyone involved.
11. Individuals requesting information can be supported by directorate FOI teams if they require assistance with the new form.

Financial Implications

12. Nil financial implications. The form has been developed using existing resources.

Consultation

Internal

13. CMTEDD Communications and Engagement has consulted internally and across directorates throughout the development process.
14. CMTEDD Communications and Engagement will monitor the user experience of the form and make adjustments as required.

Cross Directorate

15. Consultation has taken place with the Freedom of Information Coordinators Network and with directorate Freedom of Information teams on the functionality of the form.
16. Representatives from Communications and Engagement teams across directorates have been involved in the development of the new form.
17. The Smart Forms development team within Access Canberra has assisted with the development of the form.

External

18. Nil. Testing was completed by Directorate FOI teams based on common FOI requests that they receive from members of the public.

Work Health and Safety

19. Nil.

Benefits/Sensitivities

20. The new form will make it easier for the community to request ACT Government information.
21. The single form will allow members of the community to lodge FOI requests with any ACT Government directorate, without needing to understand the structure of government.
22. It replaces multiple legacy processes and offers an improved user experience.
23. A built-in triage process will direct requests to the relevant directorate and can identify emerging topics.
24. Community members can still contact FOI teams directly by email, phone, or post if they experience problems with the form.
25. The centralised collection of data can be used to inform government-wide planning, resourcing, training and proactive disclosure approaches.
26. Processes are in place to ensure ongoing enhancements.

Communications, media and engagement implications

27. There may be some interest in the new approach due to the *Statutory Review of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT)*.
28. CMTEDD Communications and Engagement has prepared talking points relating to the new form.
29. Briefing will be provided to key internal stakeholders including the Coordinated Communications Network.

Signatory Name:	Trish Johnston	Phone:	6207 2644
Action Officer:	Terence Janssen	Phone:	Via Teams