



ACT
Government

Environment, Planning and
Sustainable Development

Phone: 6207 1923
Reference: 17/25899

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Request – Prague Delegation Costs and Itinerary

I refer to your application under section 14 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* (the Act), received by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) on 1 September 2017, in which you requested the following documents:

- “- travel costs for Minister Mick Gentleman and his delegation to Prague in August/September 2017.*
- the minister's itinerary while in Prague and any other country visited during the trip.”*

I am an officer authorised to make a decision in respect of a request for information, under section 22 of the Act.

I am advised that you agreed to the delayed processing of your request until later in the year when the invoices and financial reports for expenditure associated with this delegation became available. Further delays resulted from staffing changes and structure of the Information Management Team. I apologise for the time in which it has taken to provide you with a response and appreciate your patience throughout this process.

Schedule detailing decisions

Please refer to the attached schedule that lists decisions regarding access to all documents, which have been identified as relevant to your request. The terms used on the schedule are either 'Release' or 'Partial release'. Where an exemption is made, a reference will be made on the schedule to the relevant section or combinations of sections of legislation that apply to the decision.

Duplicate documents are identified on the schedule, however where possible I have included only one copy with the released documents.

In addition to the documents released as part of this request, information about Ministerial travel expenses published at <https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/members/entitlement-reporting> may be of interest to you. Reports covering the period of relevance to your request are expected to be published in the following month.

Decision

I note that you have requested the travel costs and itinerary for the Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister Gentlemen's delegation for the Canberra under the EU World Cities Program: Prague Paining - Mission to Prague and Brussels (28 August to 7 September 2017). The government information held by EPSDD pertains to the EPSDD Director-General's involvement as part of that delegation. The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has provided a table of total costings for Minister Gentlemen and the Minister's Senior Adviser for airfare, accommodation and travel in advance of the regular online publication as explained above.

The EU World Cities Program (Program) has facilitated a partnership between Canberra and Prague; other Australian cities involved in this Program that have partnerships with other European cities include Adelaide, Hobart and Melbourne. Funding toward travel and accommodation for Canberra delegates in Prague was provided by the Program for a total of \$12,168. This contribution offset expenditure identified in travel costs associated with the EU Programme in Prague.

I have considered documents that are the travel costs of this delegation to be the following:

1. Tax Invoices
2. Credit card statements
3. A report generated from the Directorate's financial management system, Oracle.

Please note that the tax invoice from CMTEDD (invoice number 20105453, dated 8/9/17) had not included the first listed flight for Mr Ponton, as identified on the American Express Business Travel Account Statement (flight reference 0163919 for \$328.67), and therefore is reduced by that amount.

I have considered documents that are the delegation itinerary to be the following:

1. ACT Delegation to the EU – August 2017
2. Qantas Business Travel Itineraries, and
3. European Union and Singapore: 12 Day Study Tour publication, Ministerial Statement to the Legislative Assembly and letter of intent between Canberra and Prague.

The Directorate has identified 27 documents in its possession that meet the scope of your request, as identified in the schedule attached to this letter.

In accordance with section 21 of the Act, documents may be partially exempt and I have decided to partially exempt some documents under section 41 (documents relating to personal privacy) and section 43 (documents relating to business affairs).

Further information

Foreign delegations provide opportunities to collaborate with global counterparts, share knowledge and promote innovation. The investments of time and effort made by participants facilitate these opportunities. It is a longstanding convention in government that these investments and contributions may be reciprocated and, in part, recognised by a show of gratitude (such as covering the expense associated with an official function).

Personal Privacy

Section 41 of the Act provides:

1. *a document is an exempt document if its disclosure under this Act would involve the unreasonable disclosure of personal information about any person (including a deceased person).*

Some of the documents contain the names and contact details of individuals, which is personal information and therefore exempt.

Business affairs

Section 43 of the Act provides:

1. *a document is an exempt document if its disclosure under this Act would disclose—*
 - (a) *trade secrets; or*
 - (b) *any other information having a commercial value that would be, or could reasonably be expected to be, destroyed or diminished if the information were disclosed; or*
 - (c) *information (other than trade secrets or information to which paragraph (b) applies) 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, being information—*

- (i) the disclosure of which 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; or
- (ii) the disclosure of which under this Act could reasonably be expected to prejudice the future supply of information to the Territory or an agency for the purpose of the administration of a law or the administration of matters administered by an agency.

Some of the documents contain banking and other financial details, which could affect the financial affairs of an undertaking and are therefore exempt.

Review of this Decision

I note that you have requested the travel costs and itinerary for the Minister for Planning and Land. My decision is reviewable under section 59 of the Act. If you wish to seek a review you may write to:

The Director-General
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: EPDFOI@act.gov.au

You have 28 days from the date of this letter to seek a review of my decision or such other period as the Director-General permits.

Online FOI Publication Policy

Please be aware that under the ACT Government's "Online FOI Publication Policy" (the Policy), information released to you under this Freedom of Information Application may be released on the internet.


Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available under the policy. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform our contact officer immediately.

A copy of the policy, with details about what information may be published on the internet, is available online at:

http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/freedom_of_information_online

If you have any queries in relation to this matter please contact EPSDD's Customer Service Centre on 6207 1923 and ask for the Information Management Team.

Yours sincerely



Gary Spencer
Director
Finance, Information and Assets

9 February 2018

