



Ms Mary-Jane Liddicoat



Dear Ms Liddicoat

DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), received by ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) and transferred to Canberra Health Services (CHS) on **Tuesday 9 March 2021**. In accordance with section 57 of the FOI Act, the information you are seeking is in their possession.

This application requested access to:

'I am writing to you on advice from the Australian Department of Health (the Department) to seek clarification on information requested in a Freedom of Information (FOI) request that was sent to the Department.

I am therefore writing to you to on initial advice by the Department of Health to confirm whether you do hold the information requested in the original request to the Department, as shown in attachment "FOI 1937" and pasted again below:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of The Department of Health describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient). Please note that I am using "isolation" in the every-day sense of the word: the act of separating a thing(s) from everything else. I am not requesting records where "isolation of SARS-COV-2" refers instead to:

- the culturing of something,*
- or the performance of an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test),*
- or the sequencing of something.*

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by The Department of Health or that pertain to work done by The Department of Health. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer reviewed study that The Department of Health has downloaded or printed."

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of Canberra Health Services (CHS) under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. CHS was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Thursday 8 April 2021**.

Decisions

ACT Pathology does not have the ability to isolate the virus from patient samples. I am therefore satisfied that in accordance with section 35(1)(b), CHS does not hold any documents relevant to the scope of your request.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CHS maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and documents released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

Ombudsman review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI 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 published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Via email: ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: ombudsman.act.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
Level 4, 1 Moore St
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Further assistance

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email HealthFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nick Coatsworth
Executive Director of Medical Services
Canberra Health Services

22 March 2021