

**Freedom of Information**

How do I access Zoos Victoria documents under FOI?

You can request access to documents held by Zoos Victoria by writing to the FOI Officer and including payment of the application fee.

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FOI Officer

PO Box 74

PARKVILLE VIC 3052



foi@zoo.org.au

How do I pay the FOI application fee?

Submit your FOI request using the form provided on the website.

Zoos Victoria will contact you with the information to make the payment.

What are the fees?

Fees are determined by the FOI Act and the Freedom of Information (Access Charges) Regulations 2014. The application fee is subject to an increase on 1 July every year. For this reason, we will advise you of the statutory fees.

The FOI Act allows us to charge for document access where reasonable. We will tell you if this applies and what the charges will be. Please note that if you are asking for copies of your own personal documents, the application fee and access charges will not apply.

Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large and searching for material is time-consuming. We will advise you if these charges will be more than $50 and ask you to pay a deposit if you want to continue with your request.

Fee Wavier

If payment of the fee would cause you hardship, you can ask for it to be waived by providing evidence such as a photocopy of your current health care card.

Method of Payment

We don’t accept cash for fees. Fees are payable to Zoos Victoria via Electronic Fund Transfer. We will contact you and give you the bank details and a reference number so you can make the payment.

**We will commence the FOI request when we receive your payment.**

What is a document?

Documents include those held in files or records and may consist of electronic mail messages in either paper or electronic format.

‘Document’ is broadly defined under the Freedom of Information Act and may include books, maps, plans, drawings, audio-visual media, photographs and documents that could be produced in discrete form by the use of a computer or other equipment (for example material stored in a database or spreadsheet).

Which documents are exempt under the Freedom of Information Act?

The Freedom of Information Act exempts some types of documents from access, including:

* documents containing information of a kind which is already available for public access (for example, publications)
* records created before 5 July 1978 other than documents which relate to the personal affairs of the applicant
* documents affecting the personal privacy of a third party
* internal working documents, including those documents that are a part of the deliberative processes involved in the functions of an agency, a minister or Government
* documents affecting legal proceedings
* documents relating to trade secrets or other matters of a business, commercial or financial nature
* documents containing material obtained in confidence
* documents where disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

Categories of documents

**The types of documents that we create and maintain include**

* policies, procedures and standards
* briefings and reports
* registers
* correspondence
* applications, licences and permits
* meeting records
* financial records
* audio-visual material

**Documents fall within the following categories:**

* Corporate Administration
* Animal Management
* Wildlife Conservation and Science
* Experience and Learning
* Audits
* Finance
* Freedom Of Information
* Human Resources
* Incident and Emergency Management
* Insurance
* Information Technology
* Legal
* Media Relations
* Publications
* Travel

The above examples are not an exhaustive list and only provide a snapshot of the information available.

How do I make a request?

Use the form provided on our website or you can email us and provide the information requested on our form on the website.

If you ask for documents on behalf of another person about their personal affairs, we may ask you for a signed authority from that person.

If you ask for documents about your personal affairs, we may ask you to provide proof of your identity.

You need to clearly describe the documents you require so that we can locate them. Avoid phrases like "all documents about…[ a topic]”.

Please include a timeframe for your request.

How do we respond?

We aim to provide the cheapest and most accessible form of access to documents. We may refer you to the full range of information available in the public domain.

If your request is unclear or too general, we may ask you to amend it to be well-defined or describe specific documents or a particular timeframe.

We will give you a decision about your request as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after it is received, clarified, or after a deposit is paid unless the time is extended due to the consultation being required.

If we decide not to release some or all of the documents you want, we will give you reasons and tell you how to appeal.

We may suggest that you send your application to another agency or transfer your request as appropriate.

Third-party consultation

The FOI Act obligates an agency to consult with third parties before deciding to release a document. We will be required to consult a third party where the document contains:

* information that is likely to affect Commonwealth-State relations
* a person's business or professional affairs of the business, the commercial or financial affairs of an organisation or undertaking where the disclosure of that information might be unreasonable
* a third party's personal information where disclosing their information might be unreasonable.

You will be notified if consultation is required under the FOI Act and when a decision on your request is now due.

We will consider third parties' comments on the document's release when deciding whether to grant you access to the documents. Where a third party has objected to the release of documents and we have decided to grant access, those documents cannot be provided to you until the third party's right of appeal period has expired. We will keep you informed of these timeframes.

A third party can seek internal review or review by the Information Commissioner of the decision to release the document.

Review by Information Commissioner

You can request a review if you have been unfairly denied document access. You may seek a review of Zoos Victoria’s decision with the Information Commissioner by writing within 28 days of receiving your decision letter to:

**Victorian Information Commissioner
Freedom of Information Reviews**PO Box 24274
Melbourne VIC 3001

1300 842 364
enquiries@ovic.vic.gov.au

 Refer to the Victorian Information Commissioner website for more information about this process.