



ACT
Government

City and Environment

OFFICIAL

Our ref: CED FOI 26-184

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information – Notice of Decision

I refer to your application under section 30 of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 (the FOI Act), received by the City and Environment Directorate (CED) on 23 June 2026. It is my understanding you sought access to the following information:

In the ministerial press release announcing upcoming changes to library hours [1], there is a reference to ‘Libraries ACT visit data [which] shows demand is concentrated on weekdays and Saturdays, and more than 96 per cent of all weekday library visits happen during standard business hours.’

I request a copy of this data, in the most granular form which is consistent with the privacy of its subjects. Ideally this would be number of visitors per hour, per day at each Libraries ACT branch going back to at least January 2023. To avoid doubt, I am not requesting any information which could identify any person. My strong preference is to receive this data in CSV format.

If any statistical model or data visualisations were prepared for and used to inform the decision about the hours changes, I also request a copy of those visualisations, and any data underlying them not within the ambit of my request above.

*[1]:
https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/cheyne/2026/library-hours-to-shift-to-earlier-weekdays-and-full-day-saturdays”*

I thank you for engaging with our office on 6 July 2026 to clarify the scope of your application, in which you amended the scope of your application as follows:

“I am happy to adjust the scope of the request to the period July 2024–February 2026. As regards the Power BI visualisation, just to confirm what we discussed, I am requesting both a copy of the visualisation itself (including any DAX queries or formulas) and the data used to generate the visualisation, which I infer from your description would be a transformed extract of the raw data holdings.”

I also thank you for providing the following context in your application:

“About this part—

“If any statistical model or data visualisations were prepared for and used to inform the decision about the hours changes, I also request a copy of those visualisations, and any data underlying them not within the ambit of my request above”.

Perhaps it will be useful if I clarify the principles behind my request. I’m interested in two things:

1. The specific information artifacts which were used by the Minister as the basis for her decision(or, if the Minister merely accepted a recommendation, the artifacts which were relied on by the person/s who made the recommendation); and
2. The raw data which underlies those artifacts.

Put another way, I'd like to see the data and understand how it was interpreted for the decision-maker. What I was saying on the phone as we cut out was that I don't imagine someone handed the Minister an Excel spreadsheet of footfall data, but rather that she would have been given data visualisations, summary statistics, perhaps a predictive model of future traffic patterns, etc."

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the FOI Act, CED was required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 working days. Under section 41 of the FOI Act, you agreed an additional amount of time to decide your application. Therefore, a decision is due on or by 6 August 2026.

Authority

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

Decision on access

A search for records held by CED has been completed and relevant information has been identified in record and data formats. Where the information is held as data, it has been compiled into a format consistent with your application.

I have decided to:

- grant full access to two records.
- refuse access to one record as I consider the disclosure of the information to be, on balance, contrary to the public interest.

The reasons for my decision are detailed in the *statement of reasons* section below.

While I have refused access to the Power BI dashboard, I have enclosed three images depicting how filters were applied to visualise the data. These images are being released to you outside of the FOI process as a release of information under the FOI Act cannot be limited in functionality.

The records are listed in the schedule at Attachment A. The records being released to you are provided at Attachments B, and C-D.

Statement of reasons

The FOI Act has a pro-disclosure bias, which requires information to be disclosed unless doing so would be contrary to the public interest. As an Information Officer, I am responsible for determining whether disclosure of the information within the scope of your application would be contrary to the public interest.

My assessment begins with Schedule 1 of the FOI Act, which outlines categories of information that are taken to be contrary to the public interest to disclose. If the information does not fall within any of these categories, I must then apply the public interest test under

section 17 of the FOI Act. This test involves weighing the factors favouring disclosure against those favouring nondisclosure, as set out in Schedule 2.

In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the FOI Act
- the information that falls within the scope of your application
- the *Human Rights Act 2004*
- the ACT Ombudsman FOI Guidelines

I confirm that I have not considered any of the factors listed in section 17(2) of the FOI Act, which outlines a list of considerations that must not be taken into account when applying the public interest test.

Schedule 1 – Information taken to be contrary to the public interest

- No relevant sections identified.

Schedule 2 – Public interest test

Factors favouring disclosure (Schedule 2.1)

- *Section 2.1(a)(i) - promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government's accountability.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(ii) - contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.*
- *Section 2.1(a)(viii) - reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision.*

In reviewing the information within the scope of your application, I consider that the requested information relates to a government decision about a service provided, being the opening hours of public libraries. I find disclosure of relevant information promotes open discussion of public affairs and enhances government's accountability, including an advancement in transparency regarding reasons for the decision. I have placed significant weight on these factors.

Factors favouring nondisclosure (Schedule 2.2)

- Section 2.2(a)(xv) - prejudice the management function of an agency or the conduct of industrial relations by an agency.

In reviewing the factors favouring non-disclosure, I find section 2.2(a)(xv) applies to the Power BI dashboard created for internal staff to apply filters and visualise the relevant data. The dashboard is created and hosted within CED web-based intranet platforms, which cannot be made publicly available exposing ACT Government directories, including network drive and online locations, which is likely to prejudice the directorates' ability to effectively maintain cyber security, such as protecting computers, networks, programs, and data from digital attacks, theft, or damage. The security of government information is a management function of CED, encompassing a range of information categories such as sensitive or personal information. In this instance, I have attributed significant weight to this factor.

Balancing the factors

In balancing the factors favouring disclosure against those favouring nondisclosure, I have carefully considered the public interest in promoting transparency, accountability and informed public debate. In one instance, I have found the disclosure of relevant information to likely result in a significant and adverse risk to CED's ability to maintain cyber security.

I acknowledge that disclosure of the Power BI report would advance the factors favouring disclosure. However, I consider the degree of advancement is minimised by the degree of other data visualisation and summary information within the remaining relevant information which was directly relied upon in the decision-making process.

On balance, I find that in the circumstances of this matter, the factors favouring non-disclosure carry greater weight than the factors favouring disclosure for the relevant information. As such, I have decided to withhold the information where the public interest is, on balance, contrary to the public interest.

Consistent with the pro-disclosure intent of the FOI Act, I am satisfied that redacting only the information that is contrary to the public interest ensures compliance with the FOI Act while still providing access to the majority of the information held by CED within the scope of your application.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable for this application because the fee has been waived in accordance with section 107 of the FOI Act.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CED maintains a disclosure log, which is a public record of access applications and decisions. Your original access application and my decision will be published on the CED disclosure log. Your personal contact details will not be published.

ACT Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access application is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek ACT Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the FOI Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is provided to you, or a longer period allowed by the ACT Ombudsman. If you wish to request a review of my decision, you may write to the ACT 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 FOI 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
<https://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Please contact the CED Information Access team if you have any queries in relation to your application via 6207 2987 or CEDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Craig Weller
Information Officer
City and Environment Directorate
5 August 2026