



27 January 2022

Our ref: FOI2022/1



Dear [REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – DECISION FOI2022/1

I refer to your request of **1 January 2022**, under which you sought access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) to:

"Description of Requested Records:

All records in the possession, custody or control of CSIRO that contain **additional details** (listed below) of the so-called "virus isolation" and "whole genome sequencing" procedures/methodologies as CSIRO provides "COVID-19 Research".

Pre-Experimental Details:

- *The Cell Nutrient Solution (storage medium) quantity and dilution that the cell lines are stored in for preparation of the experiment*

Cell Culture - Experimental Group Details:

- *The quantity of material from (allegedly infected) nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab specimens that was added to the cell culture experimental group (per well)*
- *Antibiotics Quantities for the cell culture experimental group (per well)*
- *Antifungals Quantities for the cell culture experimental group (per well)*
- *Fetal Bovine Serum Quantities and dilution for the cell culture experimental group (per well)*
- *The quantity and dilution of the Cell Nutrient Solution (DMEM) used in the experimental group (per well)*
- *The number of wells used in the experimental Group*
- *The number of wells in the experimental group that experienced CPE*
- *Type and quantity of UTM/VTM used in the experimental group (used in the storage of swab specimens from the patient diagnosed with "the virus" - per swab)*
- *Any additional chemicals or components added to the experimental group, with quantities (per well)*

Cell Culture - "Mock Infected" / Control Group Details:

- *The quantity of material from uninfected nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab specimens that was added to the cell culture control group (per well)*
- *Antibiotics Quantities for the cell culture control group (per well)*
- *Antifungals Quantities for the cell culture control group (per well)*
- *Fetal Bovine Serum Quantities and dilution for the cell culture control group (per well)*

- The quantity and dilution of the Cell Nutrient Solution (DMEM) used in the control group (per well)
- The number of wells used in the control Group
- The number of wells in the control group that experienced CPE
- Type and quantity of UTM/VTM used in the control group (used in the storage of control swab specimens from a patient considered free of "the virus" - per swab)
- Any additional chemicals or components added to the control group, with quantities (per well)

"Whole Genome" Sequencing - Purity and Control Details:

- The degree of purity of the "virus" sample used in the sequencing experiment.
- All details of the control group that was used when comparing the results of sequencing:
 - - the total nucleic acid extracted from the "viral lysate" (from the experimental group), versus
 - the total nucleic acid extracted from the non-viral lysate (from the control group).

In summary, please provide all records that include any additional details of the experimental and/or control groups that were used when "isolating and sequencing the virus".

Decision maker

I am an authorised decision maker under section 23 of the FOI Act. This letter sets out my decision and reasons for the decision in relation to your request.

Decision

Despite an extensive search, CSIRO has been unable to identify any document relevant to your request. I must therefore refuse access, pursuant to section 24A of the FOI Act on the basis that the document[s] sought do not exist or cannot be found.

Searches conducted

Searches were conducted by The Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (formerly the Australian Animal Health Laboratory) and relevant staff and it was confirmed that CSIRO does not hold any documents relevant to the scope of your request.

Rights of Review

In accordance with section 26(1)(c) of the FOI Act, a statement setting out your rights of review under the Act is at Attachment A. Since my decision is that no documents exist, an application for review would be limited to a situation where you consider that I have not identified all the documents in the CSIRO's possession that are relevant to your request.

Yours sincerely



Kate Maloney
Senior Legal Counsel
CSIRO

Review rights

You are entitled to seek review of this decision.

Internal Review

Firstly, under section 54 of the FOI Act, you may apply for an internal review of the decision. Your application must be made by whichever date is the later between:

30 days of you receiving this notice; or 15 days of you receiving the documents to which you have been granted access.

An internal review will be conducted by a different officer from the original decision-maker. No particular form is required to apply for review although it will assist your case to set out in the application the grounds on which you believe that the original decision should be overturned. An application for a review of the decision should be addressed to:

FOI Coordinator,
FOI@csiro.au

If you choose to seek an internal review, you will subsequently have a right to apply to the Australian Information Commissioner for a review of the internal review decision.

External review by the Australian Information Commissioner

Alternatively, under 54L of the FOI Act, you may seek review of this decision by the Australian Information Commissioner without first going to internal review. Your application must be made within 60 days of you receiving this notice.

The Information Commissioner is an independent office holder who may review decisions of agencies and Ministers under the FOI Act. More information is available on the Information Commissioner's website www.oaic.gov.au.

You can contact the Information Commissioner to request a review of a decision online or by writing to the Information Commissioner at:

GPO Box 2999
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to Ombudsman or Information Commissioner

You may complain to either the Commonwealth Ombudsman or the Information Commissioner about action taken by CSIRO in relation to the application. The Ombudsman will consult with the Information Commissioner before investigating a complaint about the handling of an FOI request.

Your enquiries to the Ombudsman can be directed to:

Phone 1300 362 072 (local call charge)
Email ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Your enquiries to the Information Commissioner can be directed to:
Phone 1300 363 992 (local call charge)
Email enquiries@oaic.gov.au

There is no particular form required to make a complaint to the Ombudsman or the Information Commissioner. The request should be in writing and should set out the grounds on which it is considered that the action taken in relation to the request should be investigated and identify CSIRO as the relevant agency.