



**THE TREASURY**



NO.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS FOR THE TREASURY INCOMING GOVERNMENT BRIEFS**

The Treasury has received a number of requests for its incoming government briefs under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

Multiple requests have been received for the brief prepared for a returned Labor Government (referred to as the Red Book). These requests have been processed consistent with the FOI Act and the applicants provided with the briefs except to the extent exempted under the legislation.

Following consultations with the Treasurer, and in light of the demonstrated public interest in the Red Book and consistent with the policy intent that material be published where there is a general interest in its contents, the Treasury has decided to publish on its website the information released under FOI in relation to the Red Book. This document can be found at [www.treasury.gov.au](http://www.treasury.gov.au).

Also published in full on the website is the Treasury's brief providing an overview of the Treasury Portfolio and the Related Support Services (referred to as the administration brief). The administration material prepared was identical for both a returning Labor Government and a newly elected Coalition Government. Accordingly, only one administration document has been released.

A number of FOI requests were also received in relation to the brief prepared in the event of a newly elected Coalition Government (the Blue Book). An incomplete draft of the Blue Book existed at the time of these applications. Consistent with the Treasury's long standing policy to protect the confidentiality of advice prepared for a government that is not formed, and consistent with the Treasury's normal administrative practice, the Blue Book was not finalised.

The Treasury takes seriously its policy to protect information prepared for a government that is not formed, noting that the opposition parties did not have the benefit of actually considering and responding to that advice. For this reason, the Treasury will not be publishing the Blue Book. The FOI requests have been processed and submitted to the applicants consistent with the FOI Act.

In making this judgement in relation to the Blue Book the Treasury noted the strong views of the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, that the release of incoming government briefs would contravene the Westminster conventions.

The Treasury