



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

11 July 2024

Ref: MC24-006235

Dear

Thank you for your letter of 11 June 2024 regarding the naming conventions for North Macedonia and use of certain maps and symbols at the opening of the Macedonian Cultural Centre in Melbourne.

Consistent with our respect for the *Prespa Agreement*, and the arrangements agreed by Greece and North Macedonia, the Australian Government in February 2019 adopted the naming conventions set out in the agreement. We encourage all levels of government to use the agreed naming conventions.

I understand that the display of contested maps and the Sun of Vergina symbol at the launch event caused concern for some community members. Nonetheless, the Government's adoption of naming conventions set out in the *Prespa Agreement* does not alter the rights of any persons of either Greek or Macedonian heritage in Australia.

The Government is committed to promoting and supporting respect, acceptance and understanding across the Australian community. All Australians have the right to exercise their freedom of speech, in a manner that respects the rights of others.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Geoff Bowan  
Assistant Secretary  
Eastern and South-East Europe Branch

**From:** [Vivienne Nguyen \(VMC\)](#)  
**To:** [Hakan Akyol \(VMC\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Bwe Thay \(VMC\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: OFFICIAL - Sensitive: Macedonian Festival, nomenclature and related matters [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Sunday, August 13, 2023 8:46:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)

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Thanks Hakan

As .."foreshadowed", this is what our understanding has been and still is as well. I'll leave it with you /John to inform the Hobsons Bay council and the event organiser.

Rgds

Viv

**Vivienne Nguyen AM** (she/her)

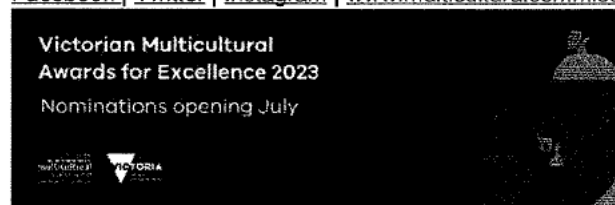
Chairperson

**Victorian Multicultural Commission**

Level 26, 50 Lonsdale Melbourne 3000

**M:** [s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](tel:0392442222) | **E:** [Vivienne.nguyen@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vivienne.nguyen@vmc.vic.gov.au)

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**From:** Hakan Akyol (VMC) <[hakan.akyol@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:hakan.akyol@vmc.vic.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Friday, 11 August 2023 3:19 PM

**To:** Vivienne Nguyen (VMC) <[vivienne.nguyen@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:vivienne.nguyen@vmc.vic.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Bwe Thay (VMC) <[bwe.thay@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:bwe.thay@vmc.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** FW: OFFICIAL - Sensitive: Macedonian Festival, nomenclature and related matters [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi Viv

Received the DFAT advice

Hakan

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**From:** Tim Kane <[Tim.Kane@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Tim.Kane@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Friday, 11 August 2023 3:05 PM

**To:** Hakan Akyol (VMC) <[hakan.akyol@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:hakan.akyol@vmc.vic.gov.au)>

**Cc:** [s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: OFFICIAL - Sensitive: Macedonian Festival, nomenclature and related matters  
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Hi Hakan

Thanks for your emails and for our telephone conversation earlier this week about the matter below. My apologies for the delay in this response.

As foreshadowed, colleagues in DFAT Canberra have provided the advice below. As mentioned, the advice is similar to that previously provided by Andrew in December last year.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need anything else.

Kind regards and best wishes for the weekend,

### s 22(1)(a)(ii)

- *Acknowledge that the name change remains a sensitive issue*
  - *the Australian Government's adoption of the naming conventions under the Prespa Agreement does not alter the rights of any persons in Australia of either Greek or Macedonian heritage.*
- *We are aware there has been controversy in the past regarding the use of a flag with a Vergina Sun symbol by a local government official as well as by members of the public. We realise that is a sensitive and long-standing issue across communities.*
- *We consider the Prespa Agreement offers the best prospect of strengthening security and prosperity for the people of North Macedonia and the region*
  - *thanks to the new nomenclature, North Macedonia has joined NATO (2020) and is seeking to start talks to join the European Union*
  - *Australia now refers to the government as the 'Government of North Macedonia' and to the people and language of North Macedonia as 'Macedonian'*
    - *Australia has been consistent in being aligned with the names used by the United Nations.*
- *The Australian Government is committed to maintaining our open and cohesive society*
  - *our society is enriched by the contributions of our multicultural population and we welcome the active contribution to our society by all Australians.*

The Australian Government's use of the naming conventions outlined in the Prespa Agreement has not changed. This information is reflected in the advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, namely:

- The official name of the country. "Republic of North Macedonia"; Short name: "North Macedonia".
- Nationality (citizenship): Macedonian/citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia.  
Official language: "Macedonian language".

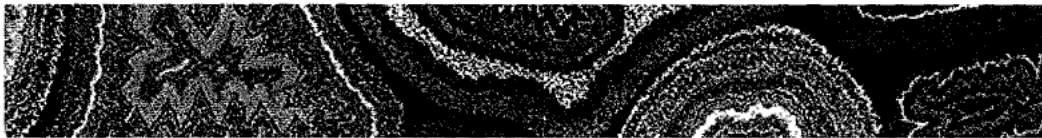
- Country codes: MK and MKD.
- The adjective "Macedonian" **is to be used** when **relating to ethnic and cultural identity of the people**, our language, history, culture, heritage, territory and other attributes. Such terms in this context are distinctly different from those used and related to the region of Macedonia in Greece

(\*blue colour is in the original\*)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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State Director  
Victoria State Office  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Level 14 | 55 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) e s 22(1)(a)(ii).@dfat.gov.au



© Kim Hill, *Among Women* (2011)

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.*

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**FOI FOI**

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**From:** FOI FOI  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 October 2024 10:32 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) (DPC)  
**Cc:** FOI FOI  
**Subject:** RE: OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE: FOI consultation - 2024/25-18 - DFAT [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** LEX 11598 documents.pdf

**Categories:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**OFFICIAL**

**DFAT reference: LEX 11598**

Dear s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thank you for consulting the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on this FOI request received by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (VIC DPC) and apologies for missing the deadline.

We have identified information in Document 12 that we consider is exempt under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic) (the Act) and we submit should not be released.

We have marked up the information that we seek removed in blue redactions.

The exemptions relate to the following:

- Section 29(1) of the Act – a document is exempt if disclosure would be contrary to the public interest; and disclosure would prejudice relations between the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth or between the State of Victoria and any other State or Territory
  - The identity of the third party organisation that initially reached out for advice. The department considers it is important to protect organisations that reach out for assistance in relation to sensitive community matters. To release this information could reasonably impact small organisations willingness to seek advice from the department, and subsequently the departments' ability to collaborate effectively with our State partners. Further, the department considers that the information provided to VIC DPC in the course of a consultation on an FOI request to be confidential, unless otherwise agreed between the parties.
  - Page 6 – the full paragraph. The department considers that the disclosure of the department's processes could impact upon the way we operate in the future. Further, the department considers that the information provided to VIC DPC in the course of a consultation on an FOI request to be confidential, unless otherwise agreed between the parties.
- Section 33(1) of the Act – a document is an exempt document if its disclosure under this Act would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information relating to the personal affairs of any person.
  - Pages 9-10 – This includes the identity of the a/g Assistant Secretary (see As set out within the documents, the subject matter of the documents has been a sensitive matter for many people in the Australian community. We consider that in these circumstances, that our DFAT officer's identity should not be disclosed, to prevent the potential for members of the community to target them with any grievances. Further, the department considers that the information provided to VIC DPC in

the course of a consultation on an FOI request to be confidential, unless otherwise agreed between the parties.

Please let us know if you require further details regarding the application of the exemptions, or if your decision maker otherwise decides to release any of the information that the department has sought to be exempt.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this consultation further. I am available to discuss today, or s 22(1)(a)(ii) from tomorrow.

Kind regards,  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Director | Freedom of Information Section  
Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dpc.vic.gov.au  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2024 11:41 AM  
**To:** FOI FOI <foi@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE: FOI consultation - 2024/25-18 - DFAT

Dear s 22(1)(a)(ii)

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has received a request for documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic) (**the Act**). The applicant seeks access to:

*All emails, briefing papers and notes, ministerial papers and advice, memos, ministerial exchanges between the DPC, VMC and all Ministerial offices regarding the Macedonian Cultural Festival from Nov 18 2022 through to and including September 2 2024.*

*This FOI request includes all third party written exchanges between the DPC and DFAT, DPC and VMC, DPC and VHROEC and DPC and HBCC(Hobsons Bay City Council) regarding the public event the Macedonian Cultural Festival from Nov 18 2022 through to and including September 2 2024.*

In the course of handling this request, the department has identified documents containing information communicated by DFAT. Copies of the following documents are attached:

- **Document 9** – Email titled: *RE: FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955)*
- **Document 9A** – LEX 10955 – Documents (DPC VIC) – Marked-up version
- **Document 12** – Email notifying DPC of release of the documents

Please note that we will be notifying the applicant that in accordance with section 14 of the Act, Document 12A is publicly available on the [FOI disclosure log | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(dfat.gov.au\)](#).

The purpose of this email is to seek your views as to whether disclosure of the document/the information contained in the document should occur.

Under section 29(1), a document is exempt if disclosure:

- would be contrary to the public interest; and
- disclosure would:
  - prejudice relations between the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth or between the State of Victoria and any other State or Territory

When considering whether to apply the exemption in section 29(1), an agency must notify relevant third parties that the agency has received a request for the document and obtain the third party's views about whether the document or information should be disclosed.

Please note that our preliminary assessment is to exempt personal affairs information under section 33(1), and exempt content originally redacted in the marked-up documents under any either sections of the Commonwealth FOI Act under section 29(1)(a).

Please let us know whether or not you support the application of these exemptions, and provide reasons. For the exemption to apply, disclosure must be contrary to the public interest and would prejudice relations between Victoria and the Commonwealth (or any other State or Territory).

While I will take your views into consideration in order to make an informed decision, under this section DFAT does not have any review rights if you object to disclosure or disagree with a decision to release information.

If no response is received by **COB Monday 30 September**, I will proceed to make a decision based on the information available to me.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Many thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Freedom of Information and Privacy Officer  
Office of the General Counsel, Justice and Public Administration  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
1 Treasury Place, Melbourne, VIC 3000



[LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#)



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.



We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

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**From:** [FOI FOI](#)  
**To:** [FOIDPC \(DPC\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955)  
[SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 25 June 2024 6:04:29 PM  
**Attachments:** [LEX 10955 - Documents \(DPC VIC\).pdf](#)

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**DFAT Ref: LEX 10955**

Dear Colleagues

Following on from the previous email, please see the amended documents for consultation, which now also includes Document 22.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Assistant Director | Freedom of Information Section  
Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** FOI FOI  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 5:45 PM  
**To:** FOIDPC (DPC) <foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955)  
[SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**DFAT Ref: LEX 10955**

Dear Colleagues

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (department) is currently processing a request under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) seeking access to the following:

- A) *Emails, notes, texts, ministerial briefings and other documents regarding the Macedonian Cultural Festival November 2022 and November 2023 at the Commonwealth Reserve [Williamstown] Victoria. During the period 1st of October 2022 and 28th of May 2024.*
- B) *Third party documents and written advice to and from DFAT regarding the*

*Macedonian Cultural Festival November 2022 and November 2023 at the Commonwealth Reserve Williamstown Victoria. During the period 1st of October 2022 and 28th of May 2024.*

C) *Departmental and Ministerial briefings re the Prespes agreement. 1st of January 2019 and 28th of May 2024.*

D. *Any instructions to Federal and State government agency's regarding the outcome of the Prespes agreement and the status of the Slav Macedonian prefix January 2019 - 28th of May 2024.*

The department has identified the **attached** documents falling within the scope of the request which contains information that relates to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC VIC).

Under [section 26A of the FOI Act](#), consultation is required where documents requested under the FOI Act may affect Commonwealth-State relations. This consultation is being conducted on the basis that your jurisdiction may reasonably wish to contend that:

- the documents are exempt under [section 47B of the FOI Act](#) (Commonwealth-State relations), and
- access to the documents would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Further information regarding [section 47B](#) and balancing the [public interest](#) are available on the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website](#).

### **Opportunity to make a submission**

We seek your views as to whether or not the attached documents (or parts of the documents) contain information that you consider should be exempt from disclosure.

Specifically, do you believe that release of one or more of the documents could adversely affect Commonwealth-State relations. If so, please provide your reasons so that the department can make an informed decision about whether or not to grant access to the information to the FOI applicant. In addition, please provide any information you consider the disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

If it is your view that release of one or more of the documents should not be disclosed, please consider whether deletion of any specific information from the documents would address your concerns. You may wish to mark-up (highlight) the specific information of concern within the documents.

Please note that it is not sufficient to simply assert that the release of the documents should not be disclosed. You need to provide the department with reasons about why disclosure of the information could adversely affect Commonwealth-State relations and why disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

While your comments will be given careful consideration, the final decision about whether to release the documents rests with the decision maker in our agency.

If the decision maker decides to grant access to any documents where you have opposed the release of particular information, you will be given written notice of that decision and will be provided with the opportunity to seek review of the decision before the documents are released to the FOI applicant.

### **Disclosure log**

Please be aware that if documents are released, they will be published on this [department's Disclosure Log](#) or made public by the applicant.

### **How to make a submission**

Please send us your comments in writing **by COB Tuesday 9 July 2024**.

If the department does not receive a response from you by this date, the decision maker in our agency will assume you do not object to the release of the documents.

Should you require any further information, please contact me on the below details.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | Freedom of Information Section  
Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** FOI FOI  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]  
**Date:** Thursday, 25 July 2024 10:44:19 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[LEX 10955 - Documents.pdf](#)

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Dear s 22(1)(a)(ii)

We will be releasing the documents at 16:00 today to the applicant.

For your information we have attached a copy of the full document pack to be released (less the parts that include personal information of the FOI Applicant).

Thank you

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | Freedom of Information Section  
Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**OFFICIAL**

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) dpc.vic.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 11, 2024 9:59 AM  
**To:** FOI FOI <foi@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: [follow up] FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
H

Apologies again for our delay with this.

I confirm that there are no objections to the proposed disclosure of the documents.

Just one note, could we please request that <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup> phone number be redacted on page 16 as it has been elsewhere.

Please get in touch if there are any issues.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

| Manager, Freedom of Information and Privacy | Office of the General Counsel  
binet | Level 2, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne Victoria 3002

[www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au)

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.



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OFFICIAL

**From:** FOIDPC (DPC)

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 10, 2024 11:05 AM

**To:** FOI FOI <[foi@dfat.gov.au](mailto:foi@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: [follow up] FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

H

Apologies for our delay in responding, I am just waiting on a final response from the program area. Hopefully it will come today.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Manager, Freedom of Information and Privacy | Office of the General Counsel  
Department of Premier and Cabinet | Level 2, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne Victoria 3002

[www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au)

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**From:** FOI FOI <[foi@dfat.gov.au](mailto:foi@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 10, 2024 9:10 AM

**To:** FOIDPC (DPC) <[foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: [follow up] FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**FOI request: LEX 10955**

Dear Colleagues

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this consultation further.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | Freedom of Information Section  
Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** FOI FOI

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 6:01 PM

**To:** FOIDPC (DPC) <[foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955)

[SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**DFAT Ref: LEX 10955**

Dear Colleagues

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Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | Freedom of Information Section

Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** FOI FOI

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 5:45 PM

**To:** FOIDPC (DPC) <[foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:foidpc@dpc.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** FOI - Consultation (DPC VIC) – 26A Commonwealth-State relations (LEX 10955)  
[SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

**DFAT Ref: LEX 10955**

Dear Colleagues

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (department) is currently processing a request under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) seeking access to the following:

- A) *Emails, notes, texts, ministerial briefings and other documents regarding the Macedonian Cultural Festival November 2022 and November 2023 at the Commonwealth Reserve [Williamstown] Victoria. During the period 1st of October 2022 and 28th of May 2024.*
- B) *Third party documents and written advice to and from DFAT regarding the Macedonian Cultural Festival November 2022 and November 2023 at the Commonwealth Reserve Williamstown Victoria. During the period 1st of October 2022 and 28th of May 2024.*
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- D) *Any instructions to Federal and State government agency's regarding the outcome of the Prespes agreement and the status of the Slav Macedonian prefix January 2019 - 28th of May 2024.*

The department has identified the **attached** documents falling within the scope of the request which contains information that relates to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC VIC).

Under [section 26A of the FOI Act](#), consultation is required where documents requested under the FOI Act may affect Commonwealth-State relations. This consultation is being



conducted on the basis that your jurisdiction may reasonably wish to contend that:

- the documents are exempt under [section 47B of the FOI Act](#) (Commonwealth-State relations), and
- access to the documents would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Further information regarding [section 47B](#) and balancing the [public interest](#) are available on the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website](#).

### **Opportunity to make a submission**

We seek your views as to whether or not the attached documents (or parts of the documents) contain information that you consider should be exempt from disclosure.

Specifically, do you believe that release of one or more of the documents could adversely affect Commonwealth-State relations. If so, please provide your reasons so that the department can make an informed decision about whether or not to grant access to the information to the FOI applicant. In addition, please provide any information you consider the disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

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Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | Freedom of Information Section  
Public Interest Law Branch | Regulatory and Legal Policy Division

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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