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Submission NO 143
Spec 1.4

FAXED
7-4-00

Mr G Fenlon MLA
Chair
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative
Review Committee
Parliament House, George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Fenlon

I refer to your letter of 7 February 2000 regarding your Committee's review of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* ("the Act") and the Discussion Paper No. 1 that you forwarded to me.

You have invited a further submission from this Department in relation to any matters arising out of the previous submissions to the review or otherwise falling within the review's terms of reference.

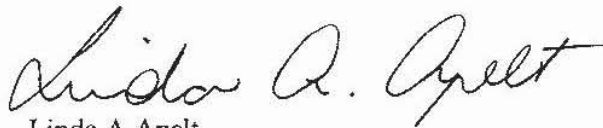
As noted in my previous submission, this Department has found that the Act has achieved many of its objectives. However, some difficulties have been experienced, particularly in relation to dealing with large applications, which, in a number of cases, have required the use of substantial Departmental resources.

I note that the Committee has observed that Queensland is currently the only Australian jurisdiction without some form of charge for processing FOI requests, and has canvassed the possible introduction of processing charges (pages 39-40 of the Discussion Paper). Having regard to the resource implications for the Department in dealing with FOI applications, the concept of introducing processing charges is supported.

At the same time, support is also given to the concept of the waiver or reduction of fees and charges where this is appropriate in the public interest (page 40 of the Discussion Paper). In this regard, I note that many of the clients and organisations who deal with this Department have limited funds. In some cases the organisations receive funding for their administration from the Department or other government sources.

Thank you for the further opportunity to comment on the review of the Act. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to telephone Mr Boyd Backhouse, Manager, Legal Services on 3225 8634, who will be happy to assist.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda A. Apelt".

Linda A Apelt
Director-General
Department of Housing

7 / 4 / 2000