



Application for Grant of Authorisation

(Information Act, s.81)

Applicant:	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
Subject:	Assistance to Australian Red Cross International Tracing Service
Date of Decision:	3 October 2005

Decision and Reasons for Decision

1. I have decided to grant an authorisation under s.81 of the *Information Act* to allow the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) to depart from Information Privacy Principles 1 and 2 in order to assist the International Tracing Service conducted by the Australian Red Cross (the ARC). The scope of the grant, and the terms and conditions of the grant, are set out in the Authorisation that appears at the end of this document.
2. The ARC runs an International Tracing Service, primarily aimed at re-establishing contact between family members (and others with close connections) who have been separated as a result of war, internal disturbance, natural or other disaster.
3. DPI proposes to assist the ARC by using information from its “MOVERS” database to identify and contact individuals in the Northern Territory to inform them that someone based overseas who has lost contact with them wants to re-establish contact. The “MOVERS” database records, amongst other things, personal information collected in the course of the registering of vehicles and the licensing of drivers.
4. The ARC would provide DPI with the name, date of birth and country of origin details of individuals with whom contact has been lost. DPI would then search for matches on its database. In the event of a match, a letter would be sent to the individual informing him or her that someone wants to re-establish contact, and inviting the individual to contact the ARC. The details of the proposed practice (including a draft letter to individuals) are set out in the application by DPI dated 21 June 2005.

5. DPI is bound by the Information Privacy Principles (the IPPs) in the *Information Act*, which control the way in which it collects and handles personal information. The proposed practice would involve collection of information about people who are being sought (name, date of birth, country of origin) and use of personal information about people who match the search criteria (name, date of birth, address).
6. The Information Commissioner can grant a public sector organisation an authorisation to collect, use or disclose personal information in a way that would otherwise be contrary to IPPs 1, 2 and 10. In making a decision about whether or not to grant an authorisation, the Commissioner takes into account the public interest and privacy interests.
7. This application is very similar to an application made by the Power and Water Corporation dated 29 December 2004 (the PowerWater application). On 20 June 2005, I granted Authorisation No. 1 of 2005 in response to that application. DPI has had access to the PowerWater application and relies on the content of that application in support of its application.
8. The issues involved in this case are essentially identical to those addressed in the PowerWater application. I rely on, but do not propose to repeat here, my reasons for decision in that case. I do not consider that any slight differences in the proposed practice by DPI would cause me to come to a different conclusion in this case.
9. For the reasons discussed in my decision dated 20 June 2005 in relation to the PowerWater application, I have decided to grant an authorisation to DPI in the terms that follow.

Grant of Authorisation – No. 2 of 2005

I grant an authorisation under s.81 of the *Information Act* in the following terms:

Organisation	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
Authorisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To collect, use and disclose personal information for the purposes of assisting the Australian Red Cross International Tracing Service, subject to the terms and conditions set out below and otherwise in a manner that substantially complies with the application dated 21 June 2005 (the “authorised practice”). 2. To disclose personal information collected for the purpose of the authorised practice to organisations with a similar grant of authorisation, for the purpose of reduction of interference with the privacy of individuals.
Terms and conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DPI will maintain a register that will record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the names and dates of birth of individuals who have been contacted under the authorised practice; • details of any complaints made by, or on behalf of, individuals who have been contacted. 2. DPI will not attempt to contact any individual under the authorised practice more often than once in a 3 year period. 3. DPI will not attempt to contact any person who objects to further contact. 4. DPI will, prior to 30 September 2007, make a report to the Information Commissioner on the effectiveness and impact of the authorised practice. The report will include numbers of contacts, details of any positive outcomes, of any complaints made, and of any adverse effects on individuals. 5. DPI will, prior to 30 September 2010, make a report to the Information Commissioner on the effectiveness and impact of the authorised practice. The report will include numbers of contacts, details of any positive outcomes, of any complaints made, and of any adverse effects on individuals.
Length of authorisation	Until 30 September 2010, or earlier termination by the Information Commissioner.
Date	3 October 2005

NOTE: This authorisation only extends to departures from IPPs 1 and 2 as stated above. The organisation remains bound by the IPPs in all other respects. The authorisation does not allow departure from any other restrictions or requirements that bind the organisation.

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Peter Shoyer
Information Commissioner
Northern Territory