

## **Guidance for Consulting with the Requester**

### **Why do it?**

Often a requester knows what information they want but does not know how to word it. This can lead to requests that are broadly worded and captures a large volume of information or is otherwise complex. In these instances, it is highly recommended that you consult the requester.

The benefits of consultation include:

- the opportunity to confirm exactly what information the requester wants
- explaining any difficulties there might be in locating or preparing the information and allowing the requester to consider amending or refining the scope of the request
- informing the requester if there are likely to be any delays.

While a requester is not required to give you a reason for seeking information it can be useful to understand why they want it or what their interest is.

### **How to do it**

Consultation can be done verbally or via email. In most circumstances, it will be easiest to just pick up the phone and talk to the requester. This is usually quicker, and you can suggest the documentation that is most likely to provide them with the detail or information they are seeking. For example, following a recent call to a requester the scope of the request was reduced from more than 50 documents to three.

After a verbal conversation, it is good practice to email the requester outlining your understanding of the request and ask that they confirm your understanding is correct.

### **The impact of re-scoped requests on timeframes**

The 20-working day response time starts from the date we receive confirmation from the requester of the rescoped request. This is provided you sought clarification within seven working days of receiving the request, otherwise the original timeframe still stands.

### **Consulting the media**

If the requester is from the media, talk to your Strategic Communications account manager.