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FOR ATTENTION OF:	Onshore / offshore Program Delivery, Program Management, VSC
CC:	Overseas Immigration Coordination, AS INOGB, ECS
IMPORTANCE:	High
ACTION REQUIRED:	For information
SUBJECT:	Fact Sheet (JUN25): Removal of officer names from departmental correspondence
DEADLINE:	From 1 July 2025
AUTHORISED BY:	s. 22(1)(a)(ii), Director Global Delivery Coordination

Background

The removal of officer names from ECS departmental correspondence will occur during the June Release 2025, on 1 July 2025. Attached is a Fact Sheet for your information.

Action

If you experience any issues or your signature blocks are not working after the change, please email your concerns to **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)** [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au) so we can follow up.

Kind Regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director - Global Delivery Coordination
Immigration Network Operations and Governance Branch
Immigration Operations, Immigration Group
Department of Home Affairs

E: **s. 22(1)(a)(ii)** [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

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The Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force acknowledge the Traditional Custodians throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and the community. We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and to their Elders past and present.

Fact Sheet – Removal of immigration officer names from correspondence

What is changing from 1 July 2025?

As a measure to mitigate personal safety risks for officers, correspondence templates will be modified, removing officers' names from all[^] visa and citizenship related correspondence signature blocks.

[^] Exclusion apply for some Citizenship templates with specialised signature blocks, they are:

- *Approval of Citizenship by Conferral*
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
- *Citizenship Appointment Letter*
Assistant Secretary Citizenship Program Delivery & position number
- *Citizenship Appointment Letter – Offshore*
Assistant Secretary Citizenship Program Delivery & position number

What are the effects on staff?

Whilst impacts are minimal, staff should be aware of the changes and understand where and when signature blocks include an officer's name.

How will clients be affected? How will clients be advised?

Clients will receive the same correspondence content related to their application without visibility of the officer's name.

There is no need to inform clients or external stakeholders.

What systems are affected?

System affected by this change can be summarised as:

ECS:

- modify correspondence templates (automated and manual letters) to remove officer names

Is training available?

It is important that staff are aware of this change and provide correspondence as required in their work procedures. Additional training needs are not anticipated.

Where can I get additional information?

If more information about this change becomes available, it will be published on the [JUN25 InfoHub](#) (SharePoint) page.

Where required verbal updates will be provided in the June 2025 release teleconferences. The schedule for the teleconference series will be published on the [JUN25 InfoHub](#) (when available).

If further detail or support is required, or you wish to be added to the teleconferences list, please contact the support centre by email at [s. 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\) @homeaffairs.gov.au](#)

[illegible]**OFFICIAL****OFFICIAL**

FOR ATTENTION OF: Immigration Delivery Managers in Australia and Overseas, Immigration Program Managers, Regional Executive Officers
(Offshore)

CC: Overseas Network Management, Overseas Regional Directors, Program Branch Heads, AS INOG, Immigration Capital Programs, Migration Legal Policy, VSC, Division Heads (RHSD, CMAD, MTVD, ICSD, CCCRD, ICOD, Regional Programs), GM Immi Ops Office, Executive Officers and Support Teams

IMPORTANCE: High

ACTION REQUIRED: For information and action

SUBJECT: Preparing for the systematic removal immigration officer names from
departmental correspondence (ECS, IRIS and
s. 47E(d))

DEADLINE: Friday 21 February 2025

AUTHORISED BY: s. 22(1)(a)(ii), A/g Director Global Immigration Delivery Coordination

Background

We are working with a number of ICT and Immigration Group teams to comprehensively

remove immigration officer names from all immigration-related correspondence, retaining only s. 47E(d) position numbers. This will help enhance the safe working experience for immigration officers across our global network. s. 47E(d) position numbers are important in identifying decision makers and their actions within departmental IT systems.

Because most correspondence is produced and issued through computer-assisted processes, a staged, comprehensive systems change is being prepared. Workarounds for officers to manually remove names are not comprehensive and may significantly impact the productivity of immigration delivery teams globally.

We are making changes to several systems in two phases:

Phase 1 – IRIS and s. 47E(d): Officer names will be removed from IRIS and s. 47E(d) s. 47E(d) by the end of February 2025.*

Phase 2 – ECS: We are working to have changes made in the Enterprise Correspondence System (ECS) in the earliest available systems change release, which is **June 2025**. This would allow for sufficient system analysis, development, and testing, while avoiding disrupting other critical system changes.

Please note that officers and their actions will continue to be identifiable within departmental systems after these changes.

* Please note that following IRIS system changes, some IRIS users may still need to manually remove their names from emails or other local templates used to create and send client correspondence.

FAQs

s. 47E(d)

s. 47E(d)

What about emails to clients?

If manually creating and/or sending an email or letter, you should consider applying the same principle – include only the officer's position number and omit all forms of the officer's name.

What about client interviews?

Client interview protocols are out of scope for this change. Therefore, there is no change to client interview protocols at this time.

We will provide further advice when IRIS and s. 47E(d) changes are made, and prior to ECS changes later in the year.

If you have any further questions please contact us at
s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

Thanks,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director - Global Delivery Coordination
Immigration Network Operations and Governance Branch

Immigration Operations, Immigration Group

Department of Home Affairs

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

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Acknowledgement of Country Signature Block Graphic 2022





Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Minute

To: Michael Willard, Group Manager Immigration Operations Group

Cc: s. 22(1)(a)(ii), Acting Assistant Secretary, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Branch

Date: 4 December 2024

Ref No: EC24-001384

Removing immigration officer personal identifiers from decision records and related client correspondence

Timing

At your earliest convenience.

Purpose

To seek your consideration of the removal of departmental officer personal identifiers from immigration client correspondence, including decision records, to mitigate risks to the personal safety of officers, s. 47E(d)

Background

Current use of personal identifiers in client correspondence

1. Currently, officer personal identifiers are included in correspondence¹ generated manually using the Enterprise Correspondence Service (ECS) and s. 47E(d) as well as in letters automatically generated by ECS (visa grant notifications). The identifiers are generally first name and position number.³

¹ For the purposes of this minute, and referenced legal advice, 'correspondence' is taken to include decision records and other related client correspondence.

² The Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division uses ECS for some client correspondence, but has implemented s. 47E(d) for the generation of standard decision records in the Humanitarian program.

³ If there is no first name, the surname and position number are shown. No ECS letters include both the first and surname of officers.

Policy requiring decision maker names

2. Under policy, "all notifications should include contact details for the case officer/delegate, including name, position number, phone number, fax number and email address."⁴ This procedural instruction was last updated in November 2016.

3. s. 42(1)

Changing risk environment

4. Departmental policy regarding client notifications, and its support for officer personal safety, appears not to have kept pace with changes in the risk environment. It also no longer aligns with the department's digital client communication practices and channel management approach.
5. Client notification policies are also inconsistent with other Procedural Instructions (eg. *Use of Social Media and Other Online Services*⁵) which specifically require officers not to disclose their identity nor their role in the Department. s. 47E(d)
6. In recent years, an increasing number of officers in multiple locations have reported that their personal safety is at risk or has been threatened due to the requirement to include their name and position number on departmental correspondence. See Attachment A for examples.

The Department's duty of care towards officer health and safety

s. 42(1)

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⁴ Procedural Instruction: Notification requirements LS-1818, General guidance for all notifications.

⁵ ADD2023/4972914.

⁶ s. 42(1)

s. 42(1)

Manual workarounds: resource implications and operational risks to program delivery

11. Officers can manually edit and remove their personal identifiers from any manual correspondence produced by ECS or s. 47E(d) e.g. refusal decisions, requests for

s. 42(1)

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information, visa cancellations, natural justice letters, notices of intention to cancel letters and refund refusals.

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12. Since mid-2023, several overseas posts have applied their discretion to remove the names of larger cohorts of officers from such correspondence type, as a temporary and partial risk mitigation measure. s. 42(1)

13. However, visa grant decisions are very often automatically sent by the ECS system. Therefore, the officer's personal identifiers are included and cannot be removed without a resource intensive workaround before sending. In New Delhi for example, manual removal of officer identifiers results in 75 fewer Visitor and 10 fewer Student visa finalisations per day. This means that the manual removal of personal identifiers is not a workable, scalable solution to manage the risk to officer safety.

Proposed solution: system changes

14. s. 42(1)

15. Given that manual workarounds are not feasible, the Department recommends that the preferred option s. 47E(d) is to make system changes to system-generated correspondence to remove officer names and replace these with s. 47E(d) identifiers (position number).

16. s. 47E(d)

17. Due to the number and complexity of changes required in the department's Enterprise Correspondence Service to deliver this solution, a high volume of testing is required to reduce the associated risks. The earliest possible implementation of system changes would be in the major release in March or June 2025. Accommodating the change in March 2025 will require planned priority work to be delayed, including correspondence to support the Skills in Demand visa. Delivery as part of the June 2025 release will ensure adequate analysis, development and testing of the required changes can be completed without disrupting other in-flight critical work.

18. Changes to the s. 47E(d) system are more straightforward, and do not need to wait for a scheduled release.

19. In the meantime, officers can manually amend some ECS correspondence (e.g. that which is not fully automatically generated and sent). This will result in slower visa processing and would be implemented where more immediate action is deemed appropriate due to assessed higher personal safety risks for a specific officer or cohort of officers. A simple workaround also exists for individual officers to remove their name from s. 47E(d) correspondence they produce.

s. 42(1)

Consultation

- FAS Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division (Note feedback at Attachment E which essentially recommends extending the proposed changes to another correspondence system and wider variety of correspondence)
- FAS Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Division
- FAS Immigration Programs Division
- FAS Cancellation and Case Resolution Division
- Group Manager Immigration Compliance Group.
- Migration, Citizenship and International Law Branch in Legal Group.
- Immigration Capital Program (Client Correspondence team) in Service Design and Delivery Programs Division.
- Merits Review and Border Visas Policy Section in Immigration Programs Division.
- A-based at a selection of overseas posts (Bangkok, New Delhi, Colombo and Pretoria).
- FAS Service Design and Delivery Program Division provided advice on ECS technical solution implementation options.
- Delivery and Operational Systems Support Section provided advice on s. 47E(d) technical solution implementation options.

Recommendation

We recommend that you:

1. **Agree** to the preferred option of making critical priority system changes to include the delegate's position number as the only personal identifier in all immigration-related correspondence.

Agreed

2.

s. 47E(d)

3. **Note** that June 2025 is the earliest recommended implementation date for the critical priority systems change to the Enterprise Correspondence System, with earlier changes possible to correspondence generated through s. 47E(d)

Noted

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Steph, s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – s. 47E(d)



Steph McManus
AS Immigration Network Operations and Governance

Michael Willard
Group Manager Immigration
Operations

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
4 December 2024

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
12 December 2024

Contact Officer: s. 22(1)(a)(ii), Assistant Director, Global Immigration Delivery
Coordination

Division/branch Immigration Network Operations and Governance Branch, Immigration
:
Operations Group

Phone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Attachments:

Attachment A – Examples of actual personal safety risk to immigration officers,
ADD2024/4867298

s. 42(1)

Attachment E – additional suggestions from Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement
Division consultation

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Attachment E

Additional suggestions provided by Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division

During consultation, representatives of the Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division (RHSD) suggested that officer personal identifiers should also be omitted from the following departmental correspondence and processes:

1. s. 47E(d) – This system is used to generate and send electronic correspondence by Humanitarian program delivery officers. This may be considered a part of the department's correspondence production solution, alongside the ECS system.
 - a. Therefore, we recommend that any decision to amend the automated inclusion of officer personal identifiers in correspondence be applied to the Humanitarian program's s. 47E(d) solution.
2. Non-Disclosure Certificates (NDCs) - The Merits Review & Border Visas Policy Section recommends that NDCs pose a low risk to the personal safety of departmental officers. NDCs are provided by the department to the Administrative Review Tribunal, and are only very rarely provided to external clients. Furthermore, the signatory for NDCs is not necessarily the decision maker for the associated application and so that signatory may be distanced from associated application decisions. Therefore, we are not making recommendations to change identification of officers in NDCs.
3. Interviewer identification protocols – The personal identification of officers during the conduct of any client interviews is likely unavoidable due to the nature of the interviewing process, particularly during in-person and video interviews. Therefore, we are not making recommendations to change interviewer identification protocols at this time, in this minute.