

Ref: EIR2026-014

19 May 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

We refer to your request for the following information:

“Please provide all the environmental monitoring data examined in “review of environmental monitoring data for Christmas Island (CI) 1957-1958” including the fish sampling data excluded from the 1993 Clare Report.

Please confirm whether the fish sampling data referred to above has been requested or disclosed previously, through a Freedom of Information Request, in litigation or other.”

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).

We can confirm that AWE holds information in scope of your request. However we are withholding the information under Regulation 12(4)(b).

Regulation 12(4)(b) is a qualified exception that allows a public authority to refuse an EIR request when the circumstances falls within scope of this part of the legislation. The [ICO guidance](#) explains that this includes requests that impose a disproportionate cost or burden on the public authority, in a way closely aligned with section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

We will now set out our reasoning for applying this exception.

AWE recognises and supports the importance of transparency regarding the historic nuclear tests and the associated environmental monitoring data. While acknowledging the significant public interest in this information, public authorities may refuse requests where compliance would result in an unreasonable diversion of staff time and resources.

Importantly, a significant amount of the environmental monitoring data is already in the public domain and accessible at The National Archives as well as through other sources. In addition, AWE is in the course of releasing environmental information through the release of the records on the Merlin database which is due to conclude in September 2026. To comply with your request in full would require extensive searching, collation and review to identify, locate, retrieve and extract the relevant information across a large volume of records and systems – including assessing when each record has been previously published or otherwise released in the public domain. Based on our assessment, this work would take approximately 162 hours to complete.

AWE has therefore assessed that while it is acknowledged there is a significant public interest in transparency around the information requested, this is outweighed by the burden that compliance with this

specific request would cause given the scale, age and diffuse nature of the request and the fact that the information will be released to the public through other avenues. This means that, on balance, the public interest favours maintaining the exception under Regulation 12(4)(b).

In line with our duty to provide advice and assistance under regulation 9 of the EIR, we can advise that the information records which relate to this request either have already been released or are scheduled for future release.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Regulation 18 of the EIRs you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team