

Think tank warned over climate information requests

RIGHT-WING think tank the Institute of Public Affairs has received a warning from the Department of Climate Change after it submitted more than 750 freedom-of-information requests in four months.

The institute, which strongly opposes carbon pricing, has made more than 95 per cent of FOI requests lodged with the department since April.

The department last week wrote to the institute's director of climate change policy, Tim Wilson, and asked that he stop submitting requests so it could deal with the backlog.

If the volume of applications continued the department would consider whether dealing with Mr Wilson's requests was an unreasonable diversion of resources — a step that could lead to him being considered a vexatious applicant.

It is believed Mr Wilson submitted about 440 information requests on one day in late July and more than 140 on one day last week.

A government source said it took about 39 hours of staff time to process each application.

"He is conducting a political campaign against the govern-

ment's policy on climate change and this is coming at significant cost to taxpayers," the source said.

Mr Wilson said he had agreed to stop lodging applications while his requests were processed.

He said he was chasing information on a policy that was probably the "most significant negative transformation of the Australian economy in its history".

"I have put in a lot of requests and I don't dispute that. People need to know the truth about the carbon tax," he said. "I'm sorry the government doesn't like scrutiny, but it needs to be honest with the Australian people." **ADAM MORTON**