




Via email: 

Dear 

#### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUEST**

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Education Directorate (the Directorate) on 10 March 2022, in which you are seeking information access to:

*'a copy of the most recently completed Performance Audit for Cleaning Services in ACT Public Schools.'*

On 18 March your office revised the scope to:

*'1. A copy of the "Performance Audit for Cleaning services in ACT Public Schools", completed by June 30th, 2018 via FM Contract Solutions (ABN 56 609 597 140).*

*2. A copy of the internal audit that is currently being finalised.'*

As confirmed by email with your office on 21 March 2022, this request will need to be processed in two stages, with the first stage being due 19 April 2022, and the second stage to be arranged at a future date as it is dependent on the finalisation of the internal audit. I am advised that the second report is not likely to be finalised until around mid-May; however, I will advise you when it becomes available. This letter addresses the first stage of your request.

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

The Education Directorate is required to provide a decision on the first stage of your access application by 19 April 2022.

### **Decision on access**

Searches were completed for relevant records and one record was identified that falls within the scope of your request.

I have decided to grant partial access to this record with deletions applied. It is provided at Attachment A.

My access decision is detailed further in the following statement of reasons.

### **Material considered**

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- the FOI Act, particularly sections 16, 17 and 50, and schedule 2;
- the content of the records that fall within the scope of your request;
- the views obtained through the third party consultation process and
- the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

### **Reasons for decision**

I have considered the records that are relevant to your request in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Records that are partially released under the Act have had deletions applied in accordance with Section 50 of the Act. Deletions have been applied to information that would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest to disclose in accordance with the public interest test set out in Section 17 of the Act. Section 50 provides for information that is contrary to the public interest to be deleted from the records, enabling the remainder of the record to be released.

The public interest test requires the identification of factors favouring disclosure and non-disclosure, the balancing of those factors, and a decision whether, on balance, disclosure of the information would be contrary to the public interest.

I have decided that the factors favouring disclosure, as listed at Schedule 2.1 of the Act, are that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to:

- *promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance government's accountability* (Schedule 2, 2.1(a)(i));
- *contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest* (Schedule 2, 2.1(a)(ii));
- *inform the community of the government's operations, including the policies, guidelines and codes of conduct followed by the government in its dealings with members of the community* (Schedule 2, 2.1(a)(iii));
- *ensure effective oversight of expenditure of public funds* (Schedule 2, 2.1(a)(iv)); and
- *reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision* (Schedule 2, 2.1(a)(viii)).

I have decided that the applicable factors favouring non-disclosure in the public interest, as listed at Schedule 2.2 of the Act, are that the information could reasonably be expected to:

- *prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy or any other right under the Human Rights Act 2004 (Schedule 2, 2.2(a)(ii)); and/or*
- *prejudice the trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person (Schedule 2, 2.2(a)(xi)).*

I have considered the factors favouring disclosure and the factors favouring non-disclosure.

I place significant weight on the positive contribution of open discussion of public affairs, contributing to informed debate on important issues and the factors that underpin transparency of government processes, particularly as they relate to expenditure of public monies and government operations. As such, most of the information is fully released.

Personal information of individuals has been deleted as I have concluded that the individual's right to privacy has a higher standing of public interest not to disclose, than the public interest in disclosing this information. This relates to the names of the supplier's personnel.

Similarly, information relating to business affairs of persons or organisations such as the supplier and cleaning contractors, has been deleted from the records, as I have decided that they have a right to have their business information protected. This includes the contracted auditor's proprietary operational methodology in the report at Appendices 2 and 3, and the names of the cleaning contractors. I have decided that it would be prejudicial to their business interests if this information was to be released and this outweighs the public interest that would arise from release of the information.

### **Charges**

There is no charge associated with this request, in line with section 107(2)(e) of the Act.

### **Online publishing – disclosure log**

Under section 28 of the Act, the Directorate maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. Information about your request, my decision and records released to you in response to your access application will be published in the Directorate's disclosure log between three and 10 working days after a decision on access has been provided to you. Your personal information will not be published.

You may view the Directorate's disclosure log at [https://www.education.act.gov.au/about\\_us/freedom\\_of\\_information/disclosure-log](https://www.education.act.gov.au/about_us/freedom_of_information/disclosure-log).

### **Ombudsman review**

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in the Directorate's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman  
GPO Box 442  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: [actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au)

**ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review**

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision.

Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal  
Level 4, 1 Moore St  
GPO Box 370  
Canberra City ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6207 1740  
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

If you have any queries concerning the Directorate's processing of your request, or would like further information, please contact the Directorate's FOI team on 02 6205 0720 or email [EducationFOI@act.gov.au](mailto:EducationFOI@act.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Paula Murray  
Information Officer  
19 April 2022