



Via email: [Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUEST

I refer to your application under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act) received by the Education Directorate (the Directorate) on 14 April 2022, in which you sought access to:

Date sent to MO	TRIM number	Title
10.02.22	REC22/34351	SIGNED_MWB 11.2.2022
18.02.22	REC22/34350	SIGNED_MWB 18.2.2022
23.02.22	REC22/34349	SIGNED_MWB 25.2.2022
01.03.22	REC22/22296	CAVEAT BRIEF - Update - Haz Mat works Dec_Jan 2021 school holidays
01.03.22	REC22/23915	Arrangements brief Campbell PS Min visit 3 March
04.03.22	REC22/34353	SIGNED - MWB 04 March 2022
04.03.22	REC22/23352	Major Education Projects
04.03.22	REC22/23354	School Maintenance and Infrastructure Upgrades
04.03.22	REC22/23357	Managing Hazardous Materials in schools
04.03.22	REC22/24148	Ventilation in Schools
04.03.22	REC22/23361	Auditor-General Report - Repairs and Maintenance

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.

A decision on your access application was required to be provided by 17 May 2022, in line with section 40 of the Act.

Decision on access

Searches were completed for relevant records and 11 records were identified that fall within the scope of your request.

In summary, I have decided to grant:

- full access to one record,
- partial access to five records with deletions applied, and
- non-release of five records.

Included as Attachment A to this decision is the schedule of relevant records. This provides a description of each record that falls within the scope of your request and the access decision for each of those records. The records released to you are provided at Attachment B.

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 Act, particularly sections 16, 17 and 50, and schedules 1 and 2;
- the content of the records that fall within the scope of your request; 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.

Information that is publicly available

In accordance with sections 43(1)(d) and 45(a) of the Act, information within the scope of your request that has been addressed in a previous FOI application has not been provided because it is publicly available on the Directorate's website. It has been referenced in the Schedule and information provided about where it can be sourced on the Directorate's Disclosure Log.

Contrary to the public interest information

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 '*contrary to the public interest information*' in accordance with definition at section 16 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.

Information taken to be contrary to the public interest to disclose

A number of the records contain information that is taken to be contrary to the public interest to disclose under Schedule 1 of the Act and it has been deleted. This relates to information subject to legal professional privilege in accordance with Schedule 1, 1.2. In addition, information prepared for deliberation by Cabinet is not released in accordance with Schedule 1, 1.6. As the information is not purely factual and the outcome of Cabinet's deliberation has not been published, the exclusions at Schedule 1, 1.6(2) do not apply.

Information, the disclosure of which would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest

The public interest test set out at section 17 of the Act is used to decide whether disclosure of information would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest. The 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 applicable factors favouring disclosure, as listed at Schedule 2.1 of the Act, are that the released 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)); 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, is 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));
- *prejudice security, law enforcement or public safety* (Schedule 2, 2.2(a)(iii), and
- *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 have placed 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. As such, most of the information is fully released.

Information relating to third parties or that could enable individuals to be identified has been deleted as I have concluded that disclosure would be prejudicial to an individual's right to privacy and that this has a higher standing of public interest not to disclose, than the public interest in disclosing the information.

Similarly, information relating to the business affairs of other organisations has been deleted as references to them relate to unresolved matters. This information has been deemed to have a stronger weighting favouring non-disclosure in the public interest.

I have also decided to delete information relating to security incidents at schools as disclosure may identify vulnerabilities of these significant public assets, which could lead to increased incidents and disruption to school communities, including the delivery of education services. Non-disclosure of this information carries stronger weight than the public interest that would be served by its disclosure, particularly in the context of other information released about these incidents.

Charges

There is no charge associated with this request, in line with section [REDACTED] 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 the 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.

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

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.

Yours sincerely



Paula Murray
Information Officer

17 May 2022