

Mr Robert Hogan
By email: harveyr35@aol.com

14 April 2022

Dear Mr Hogan

Right to Information – Overseas Visits 2016/2017

I refer to the application for assessed disclosure of information made by you under the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Tas) (RTI Act) dated and received on 21 March 2022.

I am a delegated officer of the University of Tasmania (the University) with power to make decisions in relation to applications for assessed disclosure under the RTI Act. I have now come to my decision and outline it below.

1. Background

On 22 March 2022, I confirmed acceptance of your request for waiver of the application fees. I also sought further clarification of your request to which you responded on 23 March and provided you with an acceptance of part of your application on 14 April 2022 as follows:

records relating to overseas visits/tours by UTAS officers to the UniversCities conference and overseas universities, as reported in UTAS' annual reports for 2016 and 2017.

2. Scope of the request

In order to define the scope of your request, I have considered the nature of the information requested, the relevant material that may fall within the scope of the request, as well as taking into account the following information in making my decision:

- The nature of the content of the documents that may fall within the scope of your request;
- The RTI Act; and
- The guidelines and manual issued by the Tasmanian Ombudsman under section 49 of the RTI Act.

3. Decision

This section outlines my decision and the reasons for my decision in relation to the accepted part of your request for information.

I have considered your request and the information referred above and can confirm my view that disclosure of the overseas travel itineraries and travel costs for UTAS officers is in the public interest and may be released. I requested this detail from the University's Finance and Procurement divisions and have received their responses.

Please refer to Attachment 1 for a copy of the relevant travel itinerary for the Vice-Chancellor including the purpose for travel. Specifically, the UniverCities conference and university city travel you have referred to is detailed in the itinerary under the dates for November 2016. While this itinerary is specific to the Vice-Chancellor, it will apply to any of the University officers who accompanied the Vice-Chancellor for the UniverCities trip and therefore covers the records of the relevant overseas visits you have requested.

I can confirm the total cost of travel under the itinerary at Attachment 1 was \$94,455.75.

I note in your email of 23 March in response to my queries on scope, you requested a variety of further records relating to these overseas trips including a breakdown of visit costs and minutes of meetings in which the visits were discussed. I have been informed through my investigations that this level of detail is unavailable.

5. Conclusion

In making each of these decisions, I am exercising powers delegated to me by the Vice-Chancellor of the University under section 24 of the RTI Act.

Under sections 43 and 44 of the RTI Act, you have the right to seek a review of my decision. Under section 43, you have the right to seek an internal review within 20 working days from the date this notice is given. The request for such a review should be sent in the first instance to the Vice-Chancellor, as Principal Officer of the University. This may be done by sending your application to Vice.Chancellor@utas.edu.au.

Under section 44 of the RTI Act you may, following the completion of an internal review, seek a review of the decision by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman may be contacted on:

Phone: 1800 001 170

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Yours faithfully



Brendan Parnell

Right to Information Officer

Attachment 1

Vice-Chancellor		
Country travelled to	Month of travel	Purpose of travel
Indonesia, Malaysia, and China	April 2016	<p>Indonesia – Agreement signing with LPDP, Indonesian Endowment Fund. Provides sponsorship opportunities for Indonesian students to study at UTAS.</p> <p>Malaysia -Agreement signing with partner university, Malaysian University of Science and Technology.</p> <p>China – Australia Week in China, trade mission. Participated in the ‘International Education’ stream of this program with federal ministers, delivered public lecture at University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, agreement signing with Shandong University Weihai, launch the joint Sino-Australia Westa College, and attend the 110th anniversary of partner Southwest University.</p>
(Austria) Czech Republic, Italy, (Switzerland), Germany, United Kingdom, and USA	August – September 2016	<p>Purpose of the Mission was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View universities’ systems, specifically the community college model. Look at the student experience including student accommodation. Examine Associate Degrees, Schools’ Outreach. Examine the overall Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) build at universities. sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Scripps Institution of Oceanography, a specialist Institute of UCSD, La Jolla in California; and Further develop discussions in relation to the MoU. <p>Austria – transit point to Brno, Czech Republic. Visit to Mendel University, Brno, campus design for Arts and STEM buildings.</p> <p>Italy – Visit to the University of Bologna, case study of campus design.</p> <p>Switzerland – transit point to access Freiburg Germany. Visit to Freiburg university, to examine the role of technical campuses in Germany, associate degree structures. In Germany also visited Bremen University.</p> <p>United Kingdom - Meetings with partner universities including King’s College, London for the formation of a partnership agreement, host an alumni function.</p> <p>United States of America – visits to key institutions for discussions relating to understanding community colleges and the pathway programs into universities – Scripps, UCSD, Arizona State, University of North Carolina.</p>
Hungary, (Switzerland), Germany and UK	November 2016	<p>The purpose of the Mission was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the opportunity for the University and the Hobart City Council to collaboratively explore university cities and how strong partnerships between universities and cities can create social, cultural and economic benefits and act as catalysts for regional rejuvenation and growth. <p>Hungary - Delegates attended the Academic Cooperation Association Annual Conference 2016 UniverCities – Higher education institutions and their habitat in Budapest, Hungary 20-22 November.</p> <p>Switzerland – transit point to Freiberg, Germany- Following the conference, the mission travelled to Freiburg, Germany to further explore the concept of university cities through dialogue with civic and university partners and potentially investigate opportunities for civic relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freiburg City, exemplifies the ‘university city’ concept and best practice in sustainability, innovation, regional development and urban renewal. <p>United Kingdom – Visit to Cambridgeshire, England, illustrates how city deals can bring together university infrastructure programs and the leveraging of national policy priorities and funding opportunities.</p>
France and UK	January – February 2017	<p>Purpose of this mission was to identify strategic opportunities in France, develop the strategic partnership with King’s College London, introduce Hon Angus Taylor</p>

