

Mr Robert Hogan  
3 McLachlan Crescent,  
Weetangera, ACT, 2614

By email: harveyr35@aol.com

13 March 2026

Dear Mr Hogan

**Right to information application internal review – 22 December 2025**

Thank you for your 22 December 2025 application for internal review of the 9 December 2025 decision made by Ms Tracey Jacques about your 30 August 2025 application for information under the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Tas) (**RTI Act**).

I am a delegated officer of the University of Tasmania with power to make decisions in relation to applications for assessed disclosure under the RTI Act. I have conducted an internal review of your application in accordance with section 43 of the RTI Act. The outcome of that review is set out below

**Relevant Information**

As part of the internal review, I undertook the following steps:

- reviewed the scope of the original application, the searches originally requested and undertaken, and the information identified and assessed for disclosure;
- reviewed the initial decision, including information disclosed and information assessed as exempt;
- conducted further enquiries with relevant University staff regarding whether any additional material exists that may comprise relevant information for the purposes of the RTI Act;
- reconsidered the application of exemptions and the public interest test to relevant information previously assessed; and
- assessed additional information discovered for disclosure under the RTI Act.

In relation to your contentions concerning section 45(1)(e) of the RTI Act (sufficiency of searching), I specifically reviewed the adequacy of the searches undertaken in response to your application, including whether reasonable steps were taken to identify all relevant information.

I then considered all relevant information taking the following into account:

- the RTI Act, specifically in relation to the original application: sections 35, 36, 37 and the public interest test in section 33 and Schedule 1, noting the matters irrelevant to the assessment of the public interest at Schedule 2;
- discussion with relevant University officers and staff;
- the guidelines and manual issued by the Tasmanian Ombudsman under section 49 of the RTI Act; and
- decisions of the Tasmanian Ombudsman, including the decisions referred to in your internal review request, and other relevant decisions, which I have had regard to for guidance on the interpretation and application of the RTI Act.

## Decision

### Sufficiency of Searching

While the original application sought “all records” within scope, no messages of the type you describe in your internal review application ie “messages, such as WhatsApp messages and text messages, of a work nature on both personal and work devices” were identified through those searches. To address this issue, I issued further enquiries to confirm whether any SMS, WhatsApp, or similar messaging records existed that fell within the scope of your application. No additional records were identified as a result of those enquiries. Accordingly, I am satisfied that there are no messages of the kind you describe that fall within the scope of this RTI application.

Your internal review application also contended that there were “very large gaps in documentation” which you attributed to insufficiency of searching. In reconsidering the adequacy of the searches undertaken, I had regard to the approach outlined in *Meg Webb and Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management* (Ombudsman review decision, May 2025<sup>1</sup>), which emphasises that the question is whether reasonable steps were taken to identify information within scope, rather than whether additional documents might theoretically exist. As part of the internal review, I examined the original search requests, records of searches undertaken, file notes of discussions with relevant staff and the material identified in response. I confirmed that appropriate staff were identified, that searches were conducted in accordance with the agreed scope of the application, and that the results were properly assessed. I also personally verified with relevant staff that searches were thorough and that all records identified were provided for assessment.

As a result of the additional searches I requested, some further records relating to the conflict of interest management were identified and are included at Annexure 1 with my decision. These documents have been assessed in accordance with the reasoning detailed below.

Having regard to all of the above, I am now satisfied that all reasonable steps to identify information within the scope of your application have been taken, and that all records identified as falling within scope have now been provided and assessed.

### Assessment for disclosure

Your internal review application requested reconsideration of exemptions applied under sections 35 (internal deliberative information) and 37 (information relating to the business affairs of a third party), and a number of exemptions applied under section 36 (personal information of a person), together with the application of the public interest test under section 33 and Schedule 1 of the RTI Act. In reconsidering these matters and in assessing the additional information I found, I have had regard to the Tasmanian Ombudsman’s decisions identified in your internal review request, as well as other relevant decisions, which are referenced where applicable below.

I have assessed the additional information and reviewed the initial decision in respect of the relevant exemptions as follows:

#### *Section 35 - internal deliberative information, subject to the public interest test*

Following a further review of the relevant material, I maintain that the exemption under section 35 of the RTI Act has been correctly applied on previously assessed records and I have also applied a partial exemption to the new information not previously disclosed. You raised specific concerns regarding email correspondence between the Vice-Chancellor and the Chancellor (Document 40M, your Attachment 3 page 24), as well as email correspondence from General Counsel Jane Beaumont to the Vice Chancellor Rufus Black relating to a meeting with Deloitte on the cost benefit model related to the UTAS STEM Business Case (Document 107M, your Attachment 3 page 2) and attached some related University documents. These materials have been reconsidered and the new information listed at Annexure 1 have been considered in detail as part of this internal review.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/813225/Meg-Webb-and-Department-of-Police,-Fire-and-Emergency-Management.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/813225/Meg-Webb-and-Department-of-Police,-Fire-and-Emergency-Management.pdf)

### Internal deliberative information

Section 35 provides an exemption for internal deliberative information, including opinions, advice, and recommendations prepared by officers of a public authority, and records of consultations or deliberations between officers of public authorities (and, where applicable, Ministers). The exemption applies where the information forms part of the deliberative processes relating to the official business of a public authority.

The interpretation of section 35 has been considered in *Re JE Waterford and Department of Treasury (No 2)*<sup>2</sup>, where the Tribunal confirmed that deliberative process material encompasses an agency's "thinking processes" — that is, the process of reflection, evaluation, and consideration that precedes decision-making. The exemption is intended to protect the integrity of internal discussions and to allow public authorities to engage in candid deliberation without the risk that premature disclosure will distort or inhibit those processes.

The material over which the exemption is maintained comprises internal working drafts and internal communications created as part of developing and refining positions prior to any settled or final outcome. As summarised above, this includes but is not limited to the following records mentioned in your internal review request:

- email between the Vice-Chancellor and the Chancellor dated 25 May 2025 (Document 40M), an internal working draft prepared for potential circulation, which bears similarities to a later communication but contains sufficient differences to demonstrate that it was an earlier working draft rather than a final version.
- email correspondence dated 19 November 2024 (Document 107M): internal correspondence relating to preparation for an upcoming meeting with Deloitte in connection with the UTAS STEM Business Case, in which the cost-benefit model and associated evaluative content form part of the University's internal deliberative process. The email attached two documents, being a University draft cost benefit model overview and a University draft executive summary document marked as a 'working draft', both of which were also excluded on the basis of both s35 and s37;

The material in question forms part of an iterative deliberative process and reflects internal assessment and developing viewpoints, rather than any finalised decision or concluded position. For example, 19 November 2024 email (Document 107M) notes that the documents are a current version but contemplate that a further updated version will follow shortly thereafter. Another example is that the version of the Briefing Note attached to the calendar appointment email at Annexure 1 (eg Documents 130S and 133S) are clearly internal drafts for discussion, where the final version of the Briefing Note was disclosed in Ms Jacques' original decision

As observed by the Ombudsman, section 35 protects internal exchanges that allow options to be explored, assumptions to be tested, and thinking processes to develop prior to the settling of a final direction or decision (*Snell and Department of Premier and Cabinet (Ombudsman review decision, January 2025)* at [34]<sup>3</sup>).

Section 35(2) of the RTI Act provides that purely factual information is not exempt. Consistent with this provision, factual material has been released where disclosure would not reveal the substance of internal deliberations. However, in the original decision, the attachments to the email dated 19 November 2024 (Document 107M) contain a substantial amount of material derived from estimates, assumptions and variable inputs for a consultative process. In those circumstances, it was considered that only limited portions of the covering email could be extracted and released. The interpretations in the attachments (business case and executive summary) cannot be said to be purely factual information rendering the exemption not applicable. It is a record of deliberations

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<sup>2</sup> *Re Waterford and Department of Treasury (No 2)* (1985) 5 ALD 588.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/796723/Final-Decision-Snell-and-DPAC.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/796723/Final-Decision-Snell-and-DPAC.pdf)

only, much of it in draft form for the purpose of a deliberative process, and was not purely factual in nature. I have also applied this approach to the new information that I assessed (Annexure 1).

Further, section 35(3) excludes final decisions, orders, or rulings from exemption. Where final versions of documents exist and can be disclosed without revealing deliberative content, they have been assessed and released or otherwise proactively disclosed via publishing on the University website. For example, see information on the Southern Transformation which includes the UTAS Stem Business Case here: <https://www.utas.edu.au/about/campuses/southern-transformation/building-our-hobart-university-presence-since-2007>).

Having regard to the nature of the material and the relevant authorities, I am satisfied that the application of section 35 to the remaining information is appropriate and consistent with the requirements of the RTI Act.

#### Public interest test (Section 33)

As part of this internal review, I have reconsidered the public interest test in relation to the information exempted under section 35 (both the information previously assessed and additional information disclosed and partially exempted at Annexure 1). In doing so, I have taken into account the mandatory considerations in Schedule 1 of the RTI Act, together with the broader context in which the information was created and I have not taken into account those factors detailed in Schedule 2. Parliament's inclusion of section 35 reflects a recognition that there are circumstances in which it is in the public interest to protect internal deliberative processes. This includes circumstances where disclosure would reveal early thinking processes or multiple draft iterations of documents, rather than settled or final positions.

In assessing whether disclosure would be contrary to the public interest, I considered the importance of protecting the University's ability to engage in candid and robust internal deliberations, particularly in relation to complex strategic matters such as major infrastructure planning, funding proposals, and engagement with external stakeholders. The ability of officers to test ideas, refine drafts, and seek internal input without concern that preliminary views will be publicly disclosed is central to effective governance and sound decision-making.

I also considered the likely effect of disclosure in this case, including whether release of the information would meaningfully advance transparency or accountability, as distinct from exposing incomplete or provisional material that does not reflect the University's final position. In my view, disclosure of the material at issue would primarily reveal internal working assumptions, draft formulations, and evaluative commentary that formed part of an iterative process, rather than providing reliable insight into the ultimate basis for any decision.

When dealing with draft documents, recent decisions of the Ombudsman have consistently found that, unless there are compelling reasons, early working drafts are usually exempt under section 35, as it would be inappropriate for numerous slightly different drafts of a document to be released as a standard practice (*Snell and Department of Premier and Cabinet* (January 2025) at [33]<sup>4</sup>; *Rebecca White and Premier of Tasmania* (Ombudsman review decision, April 2024)<sup>5</sup>).

In applying the public interest test, I had regard to the following matters:

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/796723/Final-Decision-Snell-and-DPAC.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/796723/Final-Decision-Snell-and-DPAC.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/757925/R2309-028-Final-decision-White-and-Premier.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/757925/R2309-028-Final-decision-White-and-Premier.pdf)

#### Factors in favour of disclosure

- The general public interest in information being accessible, which is always relevant and generally weighs in favour of disclosure (matter (a)) (eg see *Kiera Salerno and Tasracing Pty Ltd* (Ombudsman review decision, March 2025<sup>6</sup>).

#### Factors against disclosure

- Whether disclosure would prejudice the University's ability to obtain frank and candid input from staff and advisers in the future, including during the development of complex proposals and evaluations (matter (n)).
- Whether disclosure would harm the business or financial interests of the University or another person or organisation, including the University's ability to manage negotiations, strategic risks, and reputational considerations in a competitive higher education environment (matter (s)).

On balance, I am satisfied that, in this case, the factors against disclosure carry greater weight.

#### *Section 36 – Personal Information of a person, subject to the public interest test*

Following a further review of the relevant material, I maintain the application of the exemption under section 36 of the RTI Act to personal information contained in the original decision and have applied the exemption in relation to Document 126S at Annexure 1. I have considered all section 36 exemptions, including but not limited to those documents specifically identified in your internal review application

#### Personal information

Section 36 applies where information would involve the disclosure of the personal information of a person other than the applicant. "Personal information" includes information or an opinion that identifies, or could reasonably identify, an individual.

In this matter, the information assessed as prima facie exempt under section 36 consists primarily of:

- direct email addresses;
- direct telephone numbers; and
- identifying details associated with those contact details.

A person's identity is apparent where information explicitly includes their name or identity. Common examples include emails that include a person's name in the text, documents referring to a person by their full name, or email addresses that incorporate a person's name.

A person's identity is reasonably ascertainable where it could reasonably be determined from the information, even if not expressly stated. This includes circumstances where partial contact details, role information, or contextual cues would allow identification of an individual.

Deloitte was consulted during the original decision-making process and identified that some information constituted personal information of its employees. Having considered those views, the original decision determined to release the relevant emails in part, with personal identifiers such as full names withheld. I am satisfied that this approach appropriately balanced the views provided by Deloitte with the requirements of the RTI Act, and I therefore uphold the original decision. More broadly, I consider the initial decision took care to redact only those elements of email addresses, some titles, and telephone numbers that would disclose personal information, while leaving intact non-identifying content necessary to understand the nature and context of the communications. I have applied this same approach to the personal information in Document 126 at Attachment 1.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/803758/Ms-Salerno-and-Tasracing-External-Review-Final-Decision-R2402-008.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/803758/Ms-Salerno-and-Tasracing-External-Review-Final-Decision-R2402-008.pdf)

### Public Interest Test

I have reconsidered the public interest test in relation to the personal information exempted under section 36, having regard to the mandatory matters and competing factors in Schedule 1 of the RTI Act and not taking into account those factors detailed in Schedule 2.

#### Factors favouring disclosure

- There is an inherent public interest in government information being accessible (matter (a)). This consideration is always engaged and weighs in favour of disclosure, reflecting the objects of the RTI Act (see *Thomas Bade and Huon Valley Council* (Ombudsman review decision, December 2024<sup>7</sup>)).

#### Factors weighing against disclosure

- Against those considerations, disclosure of personal information may adversely affect the interests of individuals (matter (m)). The Ombudsman has consistently recognised that releasing personal information can constitute an unreasonable intrusion into privacy and will often weigh against disclosure in section 36 cases (see *Gerry Willis and Department of Health* (Ombudsman review decision, December 2023<sup>8</sup>)).
- I also considered whether disclosure would prejudice the University's ability to obtain similar information in the future (matter (n)). Where information arises from candid communications or internal reporting, disclosure of identifying personal information may deter individuals from engaging openly or providing information voluntarily. This factor therefore weighs against disclosure in appropriate cases (see *Peter Jacobson and Department for Education, Children and Young People* (Ombudsman review decision, October 2024<sup>9</sup>)).

In *Meg Webb and Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management* (Ombudsman review decision, May 2025<sup>10</sup>), the Ombudsman found that the names of public authority employees are not, of themselves, exempt personal information. However, the Ombudsman made clear that direct contact details not normally released to the public remain exempt ([73]). Consistent with that approach, I have maintained redactions over direct email addresses and telephone numbers of University staff.

In *Kiera Salerno and TasRacing Pty Ltd* (Ombudsman review decision, March 2025<sup>11</sup>), the Ombudsman found that the names of security personnel constituted personal information, and that release would be contrary to the public interest, while position titles could be disclosed without undue impact on individual interests ([81]–[86]). This decision reinforces the need to assess carefully whether disclosure of identifying information would unjustifiably intrude on personal privacy.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/793888/Final-Decision-Bade-and-HVC.pdf.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/793888/Final-Decision-Bade-and-HVC.pdf.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/738439/R2202-116-Final-decision-Willis\\_53220\\_53329.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/738439/R2202-116-Final-decision-Willis_53220_53329.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/787057/R2212-009-Peter-Jacobson-and-DECYP-Final-Decision.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/787057/R2212-009-Peter-Jacobson-and-DECYP-Final-Decision.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/813225/Meg-Webb-and-Department-of-Police,-Fire-and-Emergency-Management.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/813225/Meg-Webb-and-Department-of-Police,-Fire-and-Emergency-Management.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/803758/Ms-Salerno-and-Tasracing-External-Review-Final-Decision-R2402-008.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/803758/Ms-Salerno-and-Tasracing-External-Review-Final-Decision-R2402-008.pdf)

### Partial release of University staff names in one document

In light of the above authorities, I have determined that in one document, being the 24 May 2025 email (Document 41M, your Attachment 3 page 20), it is appropriate to disclose the names of certain University staff members where:

- the individuals were acting in an official capacity;
- their identities are already publicly associated with their roles; and
- disclosure of their names would not expose them to unwarranted intrusion or harm.

This information is at Annexure 1.

In all other instances, I am satisfied that disclosure of names, email addresses, or telephone numbers would not materially advance public understanding of the issues and would disproportionately affect individual privacy. I have also applied this approach to Document 126S (Annexure 1).

As above, third-party consultation was undertaken during the original decision-making process, including consultation with Deloitte. Deloitte identified certain information as personal information. I have taken those views into account, together with the statutory framework and Ombudsman guidance. I uphold the original decision to release information in part while withholding identifying personal details, as this strikes an appropriate balance between transparency and privacy.

On balance, I am satisfied that disclosure of the remaining exempted personal information would be contrary to the public interest. Accordingly, I maintain the application of section 36 and have applied a partial exemption to Document 126S (Annexure 1), subject to the limited additional disclosure for Document 41M (Annexure 1) described above.

### *Section 37 - information relating to the business affairs of a third party, subject to the public interest test*

Following a further review of the relevant material, I maintain that the exemption under section 37 of the RTI Act has been correctly applied.

The information exempted under section 37 relates to the business affairs of a third party, Deloitte. It consists of information generated in the course of Deloitte's engagement by the University and reflects Deloitte's proprietary consultancy methodologies, analytical approaches, and professional frameworks.

Although the exempted information appears across different documents and formats, it has been assessed collectively by reference to its substance rather than its location or form. In each case, the information touches upon, concerns, or is connected with Deloitte's commercial activities and the manner in which it delivers consultancy services to its clients.

### Business affairs of a third party

Section 37 protects information relating to the business affairs of a third party where disclosure would disclose a trade secret or would be likely to expose the third party to competitive disadvantage.

Information will relate to the business affairs of a third party if it touches upon, concerns, or is connected with that party's commercial activities. It is not necessary for the information itself to have intrinsic commercial value (*Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd and Department of Natural Resources and Environment* (Ombudsman review decision, April 2023<sup>12</sup>) at [38]).

In this case, the information exempted under section 37 records and reflects Deloitte's analytical modelling, assumptions, and professional methodologies developed and applied in the course of providing consultancy services to the University. This includes Deloitte's approach to structuring,

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/706299/Final-decision-Woolnorth-and-DPIPWE-28-4-2023.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/706299/Final-decision-Woolnorth-and-DPIPWE-28-4-2023.pdf)

analysing, and interpreting information, as well as the application of professional judgment in developing and refining analytical tools.

Although some of the information appears within correspondence or working documents, disclosure would nonetheless reveal substantive aspects of Deloitte's consultancy framework and analytical methodology. I am satisfied that the information relates to Deloitte's business affairs for the purposes of section 37.

#### Competitive disadvantage

Section 37(1)(b) applies where disclosure would be likely to expose a third party to competitive disadvantage. The meaning of "competitive disadvantage" was considered by Porter J in *Forestry Tasmania v Ombudsman* [2010] TASSC 39<sup>13</sup>, where his Honour explained that the disadvantage must be one characterised by competition and involves an assessment of the likely impact on the third party's position in the market.

Disclosure of the exempted information would provide competitors with insight into Deloitte's consultancy methodologies, analytical frameworks, and professional approaches that are not generally available outside Deloitte. This would enable competitors to replicate or adapt those methodologies without incurring the cost, expertise, and investment involved in their development.

I am satisfied that disclosure of the information would be likely to expose Deloitte to competitive disadvantage within the meaning of section 37(1)(b). Accordingly, the information is prima facie exempt under section 37 of the RTI Act.

#### Public Interest Test

In applying the public interest test to the information exempted under section 37, I have had regard to the mandatory considerations in Schedule 1 of the RTI Act, together with the broader context in which the information was created and provided to the University.

#### Factors favouring disclosure

- There is a general public interest in government information being accessible and in disclosure that supports transparency and accountability (matter (a)).
- Disclosure may weigh in favour of the public interest where it informs public understanding of decision-making or enhances scrutiny of how the University engages with external consultants (matter (c)).

In taking the above factors into account, I have also considered that the information exempted under section 37 does not concern the substance of any final decision made by the University. Rather, it concerns the proprietary analytical tools, modelling approaches, and professional frameworks of a third-party consultant engaged to support the University's deliberative processes. Disclosure of this information would not materially advance public understanding of the University's decisions, nor would it enhance scrutiny of the outcomes ultimately reached.

#### Factors weighing against disclosure

- Significant weight must be given to the protection of the legitimate commercial interests of third parties that engage with public authorities (matter (w)). As recognised in *Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd and Department of Natural Resources and Environment* (Ombudsman review decision, April 2023<sup>14</sup>), information may attract protection under section 37 even where it does not itself have intrinsic commercial value, if it nevertheless relates to the business affairs of a third party and disclosure would cause harm.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/tas/TASSC/2010/39.html>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/706299/Final-decision-Woolnorth-and-DPIPWE-28-4-2023.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/706299/Final-decision-Woolnorth-and-DPIPWE-28-4-2023.pdf)

- I also considered whether disclosure would be likely to expose the third party to competitive disadvantage (also matter (w)). As explained in *Forestry Tasmania v Ombudsman* [2010] TASSC 39<sup>15</sup>, competitive disadvantage is concerned with the impact of disclosure in a competitive market, including whether competitors would gain a negotiating or commercial advantage. In this case, disclosure would provide competitors with insight into Deloitte's consultancy methodologies and analytical approaches that are not generally available, placing Deloitte at a competitive disadvantage.
- Further, disclosure would be likely to prejudice the University's ability to obtain similar information in the future (matter (n)). Public authorities must be able to engage external consultants and receive candid, methodologically robust assistance without exposing those consultants to commercial harm. Routine disclosure of proprietary tools and analytical frameworks would discourage third parties from providing detailed or innovative support, to the detriment of informed public-sector decision-making.

Balancing these considerations, I am satisfied that the public interest in disclosure is outweighed by the public interest in protecting the commercial interests of third-party consultants and preserving the University's ability to engage effectively with them. Disclosure of the exempted information would therefore be contrary to the public interest within the meaning of section 33 of the RTI Act.

### **Other matters**

University Council's formal endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's appointment to the board of Deloitte is as per the 27 June 2025 minutes which are published on the University's website: <https://www.utas.edu.au/about/governance-leadership-and-strategy/governance/university-council>. Those minutes also document the agreement that the Vice-Chancellor would take annual leave to attend Deloitte Board meetings. In relation to the remuneration, I am advised that the Vice-Chancellor will be donating the remuneration he receives from the Deloitte appointment to the University for philanthropic purposes.

In your application for internal review, you noted that the briefing note associated with the conflict of interest management plan (Ms Jacques' original decision letter, pages 162–163 of Attachment 2) was not signed. The formal process for approval of the conflict of interest management plan was actioned in the University's electronic conflict of interest management system once the details had been informally agreed. I can advise that the electronic form was appropriately lodged by the Vice Chancellor Rufus Black on 16 September 2025 and approved by the Chancellor Alison Watkins on 21 September 2025.

Where I have not responded separately to a particular comment raised in your application for internal review letter (including but not limited to comments at Attachment 3), the matter has been addressed through my reconsideration of the application of RTI Act sections 35, 36 and 37 above, no further records exist within scope, or the issue falls outside the scope of this internal review.

### **Review rights**

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

If you are not satisfied with my decision, you may within 20 working days of receiving this notice of decision seek external review by writing to the Ombudsman whose contact details are as follows:

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/tas/TASSC/2010/39.html>

Ombudsman Tasmania  
GPO Box 960  
HOBART TAS 7001

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

Tel: 1800 001 170

Website: [http://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/right to information](http://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/right_to_information)

Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L Whelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Linda Whelan  
**Right to Information Officer**

## Annexure 1 – Additional information for disclosure

Bookmark	Date	Notes	Internal review decision
41.M.	24 May 2025	Revised decision	Affirmed initial decision to exempt some of the personal information under S36 but upon review, have decided to disclose names of senior University staff within the body of the email.
126S	26 May 2025	New information: email correspondence between University Secretary Sally Paynter and University Chancellor Alison Watkins.	Partial exemption s36 – personal information; s35 – internal deliberation
130S	23 May 2025	New information: email between University Secretary Sally Paynter and Vice Chancellor Rufus Black	Email disclosed in full. Draft Briefing Note attachment – exempted in full - s35- internal deliberative.
133S	23 May 2025	New information email correspondence between University Secretary Sally Paynter and Vice Chancellor Rufus Black .	Email – Partial exemption s36 – personal information. Draft Briefing Note attachment – exempted in full – s35 – Internal deliberative.