Canberra Institute of Technology
RTO Code 0101 | CRICOS No. 00001K

Our reference: CIT FOI 2026–013

[redacted]

By email: [redacted]

Dear [redacted],

DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION – CIT FOI 2026-013

I refer to your access application made under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act) on 17 June 2026. In your application, you sought access to the following information:

> "*I seek access to official internal financial reports, final spreadsheets, or final executive briefing summaries regarding your institution's internal budgetary management from the financial years **2021–22, 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25**.*
>
> *Specifically, the scope is restricted to the following items:*
> 1. *Final internal ledger summaries or allocation reports detailing financial budgetary allocations provided to each major division, department, and internal sub-department.*
> 2. *Aggregate budget tracks or project briefs detailing corporate expenditure caps, non-consultancy expenses, and third-party contractor financial allocations.*
> 3. *Final financial variance analysis reports or end-of-year reconciliations detailing the aggregate **"actual spend"** against the original budgeted profile for each sub-department.*
>
> *To prevent an administrative burden and ensure this request is processed efficiently, I explicitly exclude the following material from the scope of my request:*
> - *Draft financial tables, working notes, duplicate copies, or automated system receipts.*
> - *Personal signatures, phone numbers, or private contact info of staff*".

Following a preliminary assessment of your application, CIT contacted you on 24 June 2026 and on 29 June 2026 to seek further clarifications on the scope of your application. In your email dated 1 July 2026, you revised the scope of your application as follows:

1. *provide budgetary allocations at the departmental level*
2. *I am seeking end of year reconciliation reports of actual spending (as opposed to allocated budgets) from each division/department over the time period requested.*
3. *Please amend this request to minutes of briefs approval for external contractor hire during this period*

The timeframe for the amended request remained the same.

Authority
I am a Senior Executive Officer appointed as a CIT Information Officer to make decisions about access to government information, in accordance with Section 18 of the FOI Act.

Timeframes
Your application was received on 17 June 2026. In accordance with section 40 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), CIT was required to make a decision on an access application within 30 working days. The original due date for a decision on your application was 29 July 2026.

Following a preliminary assessment of your application and seeking of further clarifications which you provided on 1 July 2026, the statutory timeframe for deciding your application was extended and the revised due date for a decision is 3 August 2026.

Document Search and Material Considered
CIT undertook reasonable and thorough searches of records held by CIT to identify and locate documents within the scope of your request. A total of 284 pages of documents were identified as falling within the scope of your access application. Documents identified as falling within the scope of your application include departmental budget allocation reports; operating statements and financial performance reports; end-of-year financial reconciliation and variance reports detailing actual expenditure against budget; and briefs and approval documents relating to the engagement and extension of external contractors.

Some identified documents consist of broader organisational matters that are unrelated to the scope of your access application. This information was assessed as being outside the scope of your access application and has been removed from the released documents. Duplicates have also been removed.

Notes regarding the Financial Information
To assist in understanding the released information, CIT notes the following:

- CIT changed financial reporting systems during 2024. As a result, financial information for 2022 and 2023 is presented differently from information produced for 2024 and 2025.
- In the legacy financial system, revenue items are recorded as negative values reflecting their accounting treatment as credits, while expenses are recorded as positive values reflecting their accounting treatment as debits.
- CIT underwent an organisational restructure during 2023. This resulted in changes to reporting structures and the allocation of some expenditure items between business areas.
- Changes to accounting treatment and financial presentation were implemented during the relevant period, including the treatment of leave adjustments, workers compensation costs, depreciation and other corporate allocations.
- Variations between years should therefore be considered in the context of these reporting, organisational and accounting changes.

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Decision
I have decided to grant access in full to some documents and partial access to others identified as falling within the scope of your application. Other documents contain information that has been redacted because it either:

- comprises personal information relating to CIT staff below the Senior Executive Level, and personal details of a third party of which the disclosure I consider would be contrary to the public interest.
- disclosure could reasonably be expected to prejudice the competitive commercial activities of an agency.
- falls outside the scope of your access application.

A schedule of all documents is included as **Attachment A.** All response documents are included as **Attachment B**.

My statement of reasons for this decision is below.

Statement of Reasons
In reaching my decision on your access application, I have taken the following into account:

- Your access application.
- The provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.
- The ACT Ombudsman FOI Guidelines.
- *Information Privacy* Act 2014
- The documents which fall within the scope of your request.

As the decision maker I am required to decide if release of the documents found to be within the scope of your request are within the public interest. I have reviewed the documents within the scope of your request and am satisfied that none of the information contained in the documents falls within Schedule 1 of the FOI Act.

As the information contained in the documents are not exempted from release in accordance with Schedule 1 of the FOI Act, I am required to consider the factors favouring disclosure and non-disclosure as found in Schedule 2 of the FOI Act.

Section 17(1) of the FOI Act sets out the test, to be applied to determine whether disclosure of information would be contrary to the public interest. Taking into consideration the information contained in the documents, I have identified the following public interest factors are relevant to determine if release of the information contained within these documents is within the 'public interest.

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Factors favouring disclosure:
I consider that the following factors favouring disclosure apply in relation to these documents:

- promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance government accountability (Schedule 2.1(a)(i)).
- contribute to positive and informed debate on important matters of public interest (Schedule 2.1(a)(ii)).
- ensure effective oversight of expenditure of public funds (Schedule 2.1(a)(iv)).

In reviewing the information identified as being within the scope of your access request, I note that documents which relate to the allocation and expenditure of public money, including departmental budget allocations, financial performance reporting, expenditure reconciliations, and the approval of contractor and labour-hire engagements have been identified.

I consider that disclosure of this information would promote transparency and enable members of the public to better understand the financial arrangements operating within CIT, including how budgetary decisions are implemented, how expenditure is tracked against approved budgets and how financial performance is assessed and reported.

The disclosure would also assist the community to understand the basis upon which decisions relating to contractor engagements and staffing arrangements were made. The records demonstrate the governance and approval processes applied by CIT when considering workforce requirements and the engagement of external resources. Providing access to this information promotes accountability for decisions involving the use of public funds and enables public scrutiny of the processes applied by CIT.

Factors favouring non-disclosure:
In reviewing the documents considered to be within the scope of your request, I have identified the following factor in favour of non-disclosure:

- prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy (Schedule 2.2(a)(ii)).
- prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person (Schedule 2.2(a)(xi)).
- prejudice the competitive commercial activities of an agency (Schedule 2.2(a)(xiii).

Having reviewed the information, I consider that disclosure of the personal information could reasonably identify individuals in particular roles which would impact their right to privacy. This information includes names, contact details, employment-related information and other identifying particulars, including information about leave arrangements and selection committee rankings. I consider that individuals have a reasonable expectation that such personal information will be handled in accordance *Information Privacy Act 2016* and not be publicly disclosed.

In addition, some documents contain information concerning external contractor engagements and pay rates staffing arrangements, financial estimates, supplier pricing information, commercial

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methodologies and operational business information relating either to CIT or third-party providers. I consider that disclosure of this information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the business affairs of the affected third parties by revealing commercially valuable information relating to pricing structures, commercial arrangements and resource costings.

I also consider that disclosure of certain commercial information could reasonably be expected to prejudice CIT's competitive commercial activities. CIT operates within a competitive vocational education and training environment and engages with external suppliers and service providers in commercial markets. The release of detailed commercial information, costing methodologies and information in relation to course delivery and revenue could reasonably be expected to diminish CIT's ability to obtain value for money outcomes in future contract negotiations or would give competitors a commercial advantage.

After balancing the relevant public interest factors for and against disclosure, I consider that the public interest is best served by the partial release of documents. Accordingly, I have removed information that I consider would be contrary to the public interest to disclose, or that falls outside the scope of your request.

Charges
You have not been charged for this request.

Disclosure Log
Section 28 of the FOI Act requires publication of access applications and any information subsequently released on CIT's disclosure log at:
https://cit.edu.au/about/freedom of information/disclosure log. This decision will be published on the disclosure log 3 – 10 days following the date of this letter.

Review Rights
You may apply to the ACT Ombudsman to review my decision under Section 73 of the *FOI Act 2016*. An application for review must be made in writing within 20 days of the date of my decision.

You may submit a request for review of my decision to the ACT Ombudsman by writing in one of the following ways:

Email (preferred): actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au
Post: The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

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More information about ACT Ombudsman review is available on the ACT Ombudsman website at: http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/improving-the-act/freedom-of-information.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Riley
Executive Branch Manager, Audit, Risk and Corporate Governance
CIT Information Officer
Canberra Institute of Technology

1 August 2026

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