



Decision and Reasons for Decision

Citation:	<i>United Firefighters' Union Queensland and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services [2021] QICmr 3 (5 February 2021)</i>
Application Number:	314808
Applicant:	United Firefighters' Union Queensland
Respondent:	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Decision Date:	5 February 2021
Catchwords:	<p>ADMINISTRATIVE LAW - RIGHT TO INFORMATION - REFUSAL OF ACCESS - CONTRARY TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST INFORMATION - application for access to identification numbers assigned to job applicants for use during Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recruitment process - whether the identities of successful recruitment candidates are reasonably ascertainable - definition of 'personal information' in section 12 of the <i>Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)</i></p> <p>ADMINISTRATIVE LAW - RIGHT TO INFORMATION - REFUSAL OF ACCESS - CONTRARY TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST INFORMATION - application for access to identification numbers assigned to job applicants for use during Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recruitment process - whether disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest - whether access to the information may be refused under section 47(3)(b) of the <i>Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)</i></p>

REASONS FOR DECISION

Summary

1. The applicant applied¹ to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (**QFES**) under the *Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)* (**RTI Act**) for access to certain identification numbers used by QFES during its recruitment processes (**ID Numbers**).² The applicant requested the ID Numbers that QFES assigned to all candidates who participated in five particular firefighter recruit training courses³ (**trainees**). The applicant only sought the list of ID Numbers and corresponding course number for each of the five courses, and specified that '[n]o identifying details are requested. ... We seek for all other details to be redacted'.
2. QFES decided to release the five course numbers, but refused access to the five lists of ID Numbers on the ground that disclosure of this information would, on balance, be

¹ Access application dated 28 June 2019.

² In the applicant's access application, these ID Numbers are referred to as '*nexus application ID numbers*'. Throughout the external review, the applicant has used the term nexus numbers when referring to these ID Numbers.

³ That is, the '*last 5 Firefighter recruit courses*' occurring in the period '*1 January 2018 to 28 June 2019*'.

contrary to the public interest.⁴ QFES based this refusal of access on prejudice to the protection of an individual's right to privacy⁵ and the public interest harm that it considered would arise from disclosure of personal information.⁶

3. The applicant applied to the Office of the Information Commissioner (**OIC**) for an external review, submitting that ID Numbers '*cannot be properly classified as personal in nature*⁷ and therefore disclosure of them would not be contrary to the public interest.
4. For the reasons set out below, I find that access to the five lists of ID Numbers may be refused as disclosure of them would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Background

5. The ID Numbers that are the subject of the applicant's access application are five-digit numbers allocated by QFES to individuals when they lodge an application for a position as a firefighter. QFES uses these ID Numbers to identify candidates during the recruitment process. They are not used beyond the recruitment process. Once candidates accepted as trainees complete their recruit training courses, they are issued with new employee numbers which are used throughout their employment with QFES.⁸
6. Significant procedural steps relating to the external review are set out in the Appendix.

Reviewable decision

7. The decision under review is QFES's decision dated 2 August 2019.

Evidence considered

8. Evidence, submissions, legislation and other material considered in reaching this decision are referred to in these reasons (including footnotes and Appendix).⁹
9. Throughout the review, the applicant expressed concern that OIC did not provide it with copies of QFES's submissions and raised procedural fairness concerns in this regard.¹⁰
10. The fair hearing aspect of procedural fairness requires that, before a decision that will deprive a person of some right, interest or legitimate expectation is made, the person is entitled to know the case against them and to be given the opportunity of replying to it.¹¹ This does not mean that the person is entitled to access copies of all relevant material. Rather, the person must be provided with adequate information about the material that is credible, relevant and significant to the adverse finding to be made, so that the person can be given the opportunity to make effective representations to the decision-maker.¹²
11. During the review, the applicant has been informed of the entirety of QFES's submissions considered relevant to the issues determined in this decision.¹³ Given this, I am satisfied that the applicant has been provided with all necessary information to make effective representations and, accordingly, has been afforded procedural fairness.

⁴ Under section 47(3)(b) of the RTI Act.

⁵ Schedule 4, part 3, item 3 of the RTI Act.

⁶ Schedule 4, part 4, section 6(1) of the RTI Act.

⁷ External review application dated 30 August 2019 at [7](a).

⁸ As noted at [11], [12] and [18] of the applicant's external review application dated 30 August 2019.

⁹ The applicant and QFES both made written submissions to OIC during the review. To the extent those submissions are relevant to the issues for determination in this review, I have considered them in these reasons.

¹⁰ Dated 15 May 2020, 18 September 2020 and 25 November 2020.

¹¹ *Kioa v West* (1985) 159 CLR 550 (*Kioa*) at 584 per Mason J.

¹² *Kioa* at 629 per Brennan J.

¹³ Specifically, by OIC's preliminary view dated 4 September 2020 and OIC's letter dated 11 November 2020.

Information in issue

12. QFES located five spreadsheets¹⁴ – one for each of the five recruit training courses of interest to the applicant. Each spreadsheet records information about the trainees, row by row. QFES released a small amount of information on each spreadsheet – namely, the relevant course number¹⁵ and headings for each column of information.¹⁶
13. For each spreadsheet, QFES deleted the information about the trainees in *all* of the columns *except* for the column which listed the trainees' ID Numbers. QFES considered that the deleted information was irrelevant,¹⁷ as it constituted details which the access application specified be redacted. The applicant does not contest this aspect of QFES's decision¹⁸ and the deleted columns of information are not in issue.
14. The **Information in Issue** comprises the five lists of the trainees' five-digit ID Numbers,¹⁹ as set out in the remaining column of each of the five spreadsheets.

Issues for determination

15. Noting that the Information in Issue is simply five lists of five-digit numbers, each of which is associated with a particular course, OIC explored whether the review could be resolved on the basis that the applicant was informed of how many trainees participated in each course.²⁰ The applicant advised that it was not interested in this proposal.²¹
16. Therefore, the issue to be determined is whether access to the Information in Issue may be refused on the ground that its disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest under the RTI Act. As part of determining this issue, it is necessary to determine whether the Information in Issue comprises the '*personal information*' of the trainees.

Would disclosure of the Information in Issue be contrary to the public interest?

Relevant law

17. The primary object of the RTI Act is to give a right of access to information of Queensland government agencies unless, on balance, it is contrary to the public interest to give access.²² The RTI Act is administered with a pro-disclosure bias.²³
18. The right of access is subject to some limitations, including the grounds on which access may be refused.²⁴ Relevantly, access may be refused where disclosure would, on

¹⁴ Totalling 22 pages.

¹⁵ That is, Recruit Courses 104-19 to 108-19.

¹⁶ That is, the heading for the column listing the trainees' ID Numbers, as well as the headings for columns listing other types of information about the trainees. The headings for the other columns vary between recruit courses, but generally relate to information including gender, title, first name, last name, mobile phone, email address, suburb, state, location offered, the results of assessments and interview, drivers' license details, first aid qualifications, medical results, and background information regarding culture, ethnicity, language and disability.

¹⁷ Section 73 of the RTI Act.

¹⁸ External review application dated 30 August 2019 at [21].

¹⁹ Parts of five of the 22 pages.

²⁰ Given OIC's obligation to identify and promote opportunities for early resolution of review in section 90(1) of the RTI Act.

²¹ Letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020 at page 2.

²² Section 3 of the RTI Act.

²³ Section 44 of the RTI Act.

²⁴ Section 47 of the RTI Act.

balance, be contrary to the public interest.²⁵ Various factors are relevant to deciding the balance of the public interest²⁶ and the steps that a decision-maker must take are:²⁷

- identify any irrelevant factors and disregard them
- identify relevant public interest factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure
- balance the relevant factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure; and
- decide whether disclosure of the information in issue would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Findings

19. Throughout the external review, the applicant's submissions²⁸ focussed on its position that the Information in Issue does *not* comprise personal information.²⁹ These submissions were primarily directed at establishing that the personal information harm factor³⁰ is not relevant. They also formed the basis for the applicant's position that the privacy factor³¹ and management function factors³² are not relevant.³³
20. Otherwise, the applicant's submissions regarding the issue of whether access to the Information in Issue may be refused on the ground that its disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest are confined to the following comments:

*[T]he purpose for which our client has requested the information is irrelevant to the question of whether it is contrary to the public interest to disclose the information.*³⁴

...

*If you are not so satisfied, the [applicant] submits that the factors favouring disclosure outweigh the factors favouring non-disclosure and it is in the public interest to disclose the information.*³⁵

Irrelevant factors

21. The applicant has submitted *'[t]he purpose for which our client has requested the information is irrelevant to the question of whether it is contrary to the public interest to disclose the information'*.³⁶
22. Section 49(3) of the RTI Act requires that irrelevant factors be identified and disregarded when deciding the balance of the public interest.³⁷ Schedule 4, part 1, item 3 of the RTI Act provides that *'[d]isclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to result in mischievous conduct by the applicant'* is an irrelevant factor. In terms of this irrelevant factor, the Information Commissioner has previously observed:³⁸

²⁵ Section 47(3)(b) of the RTI Act.

²⁶ Schedule 4 of the RTI Act lists factors that may be relevant when deciding whether disclosure of information would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest. This list is not exhaustive and therefore, other factors may also be relevant in a particular case.

²⁷ Section 49(3) of the RTI Act.

²⁸ Dated 15 May 2020, 18 September 2020 and 25 November 2020.

²⁹ See submissions set out at [43]-[46] below.

³⁰ Schedule 4, part 4, section 6(1) of the RTI Act.

³¹ Schedule 4, part 3, item 3 of the RTI Act.

³² Schedule 4, part 3, item 19 and part 4, section 3(c) of the RTI Act.

³³ At 2. and 3. of letter to OIC dated 25 November 2020.

³⁴ Page 2 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

³⁵ Paragraph [22] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

³⁶ Page 2 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

³⁷ Specifically, section 49(3)(a) and (d) of the RTI Act.

³⁸ *Helping Hands Network Pty Ltd and Department of Education, Training and Employment* (Unreported, Queensland Information Commissioner, 30 October 2012) (**Helping Hands**) at [66], citing *State of Queensland v Albietz* [1996] 1 Qd R 215 at 219 where de Jersey J (as he then was) observed that *'the Freedom of Information Act does not confer any discretion on the Information Commissioner, or the Supreme Court, to stop disclosure of information because of any particular motivation in the applicant'*. As concluded in *Helping Hands*, I consider that de Jersey J's observations apply equally to the RTI Act. See also the Victorian Supreme Court decision in *Victoria Police v Marke* [2008] VSCA 218, in which Weinberg JA noted at [66] *'[the FOI Act] does not, in the normal course, contemplate that the motives of the person seeking access to a document should be scrutinised and characterised as either worthy or unworthy. These are value judgements, which are likely to be highly subjective, and have no*

An access applicant's motives for seeking access to information are irrelevant to a consideration as to whether access should be granted to requested information. Speculation as to the identity of a particular access applicant, the access applicant's reasons for lodging an application, and any intended use of the information are not generally matters to be taken into account in assessing the balance of the public interest.

23. The purpose for which the applicant seeks the Information in Issue is, as the applicant submits, an irrelevant factor when deciding the balance of the public interest. Accordingly, in my below application of the public interest test, I have not taken into account anything the applicant may do with the Information in Issue. Further, for sake of completeness, I confirm that I have not taken into account any other irrelevant factors. In making this decision, I have, as set out below, only taken into account relevant public interest factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure.³⁹

Factors favouring disclosure

24. The applicant submitted that *'the factors favouring disclosure outweigh the factors favouring non-disclosure'*,⁴⁰ but did not raise any specific public interest factors that it considers favour disclosure of the Information in Issue. Nevertheless, I have considered all factors favouring disclosure listed in schedule 4, part 2 of the RTI Act and otherwise.⁴¹
25. QFES must be accountable and act transparently in its recruitment of firefighters. However, given that the Information in Issue comprises simply five lists of five-digit numbers, I am unable to identify how disclosure of the Information in Issue could reasonably be expected to reveal reasons or background information regarding QFES's recruitment processes and decisions, or otherwise enhance QFES's accountability. I do not consider that the Information in Issue could reveal why QFES selected the trainees to participate in the five recruit training courses, how QFES assessed their performance during the five courses, or the reasons for QFES's subsequent decisions regarding their employment and placement. Accordingly, I afford the factors regarding enhanced accountability⁴² and information regarding government decisions⁴³ very low weight.
26. Based on the information before me, I am unable to identify any other relevant public interest factors favouring disclosure of the Information in Issue. I cannot see how disclosure of five lists of five-digit ID Numbers could, for example, inform the applicant of QFES's operations,⁴⁴ allow or assist inquiries into possible deficiencies in QFES's conduct,⁴⁵ reveal or substantiate such deficiencies,⁴⁶ or contribute to the administration of justice for the applicant or any other person.⁴⁷ Having considered the entirety of the factors listed in schedule 4, part 2 of the RTI Act and public interest considerations generally, I am satisfied that no further factors favouring disclosure are relevant.

place in a scheme that is designed to ensure the proper accountability of government.' Again, I consider these observations apply equally to the RTI Act. Further, see *Rylsey Enterprises Pty Ltd and Cassowary Coast Regional Council* [2015] QICmr 13 at [14]-[16] and *Taxi Council of Queensland Inc and Queensland Police Service* [2016] QICmr 16 (27 April 2016) at [22]-[25].

³⁹ The applicant has also submitted that its intended use of the Information in Issue is irrelevant to the question of whether the Information in Issue falls within the statutory definition of personal information, and therefore the personal information harm factor cannot apply. This submission is addressed below in my discussion of this factor.

⁴⁰ Paragraph [22] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

⁴¹ Noting that the factors favouring disclosure in schedule 4, part 2 of the RTI Act are non-exhaustive, given the wording of section 49(3)(b) of the RTI Act, which states *'identify any factors favouring disclosure that applies in relation to the information ... , including any factor mentioned in schedule 4, part 2'* (my emphasis).

⁴² Schedule 4, part 2, item 1 of the RTI Act.

⁴³ Schedule 4, part 2, item 11 of the RTI Act.

⁴⁴ Schedule 4, part 2, item 3 of the RTI Act.

⁴⁵ Schedule 4, part 2, item 5 of the RTI Act.

⁴⁶ Schedule 4, part 2, item 6 of the RTI Act.

⁴⁷ Schedule 4, part 2, item 17 of the RTI Act.

Factors favouring nondisclosure

27. The personal information harm factor,⁴⁸ privacy factor⁴⁹ and management function factors⁵⁰ arise for consideration. I will consider each of them in turn.

Personal information harm factor

28. Nearly all the applicant's submissions address its position that the Information in Issue does *not* comprise personal information, and therefore the personal information harm factor is not relevant and cannot be considered when balancing the public interest.
29. The personal information harm factor⁵¹ provides that:

Disclosure of the Information in Issue could reasonably be expected to cause a public interest harm if disclosure would disclose the personal information of a person, whether living or dead.

Do the ID Numbers comprise the 'personal information' of the trainees?

30. Yes, for the reasons set out below.

Relevant law

31. For the purpose of the RTI Act, the term 'personal information' is defined as follows:⁵²

*information or an opinion, including information or an opinion forming part of a database, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, **about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained**, from the information or opinion.*

(my emphasis)

32. Given this definition, the following questions are relevant when determining whether information is a particular individual's personal information under the RTI Act:⁵³
- Can an individual be identified from the information in issue?
 - If so, is the information in issue *about* that individual?
33. In terms of question a), it is necessary to consider whether an individual's identity is "apparent" from the information in issue. Information about an individual which includes their name will ordinarily be identifying. Further, information other than a name, such as a photograph or a detailed identifying description, may also identify an individual.⁵⁴
34. Where an individual's identity is *not* "apparent" from the information in issue, it is necessary to consider whether their identity "can reasonably be ascertained". Here, not only the information in issue itself needs to be considered. It is also necessary to consider whether the identity of the individual may be reasonably ascertained through *additional*

⁴⁸ Schedule 4, part 4, section 6(1) of the RTI Act.

⁴⁹ Schedule 4, part 3, item 3 of the RTI Act.

⁵⁰ Schedule 4, part 3, item 19 and part 4, section 3(c) of the RTI Act.

⁵¹ Schedule 4, part 4, section 6(1) of the RTI Act.

⁵² See schedule 5 of the RTI Act which refers to section 12 of the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) (**IP Act**).

⁵³ *Mahoney and Ipswich City Council* (Unreported, Queensland Information Commissioner, 17 June 2011) (**Mahoney**) at [19].

⁵⁴ *Mahoney* at [20].

*information.*⁵⁵ In *Mahoney*,⁵⁶ the Right to Information Commissioner found that this depends on a number of factors such as:

- how available the additional information is
- how difficult it is to obtain
- how many steps are required to identify the individual
- how certain the identification will be
- whether it will identify one specific individual or a group of people; and
- whether the recipient of the information can use it to identify the individual.

35. When the answer to question a) is yes (because it is determined that the individual's identity is "apparent" or "can reasonably be ascertained"), it is also necessary to consider question b) – that is, whether the information in issue is *about* the individual.

Question for determination

36. The applicant's access application, external review application and submissions, and QFES's decision and submissions, all proceed on the basis that the Information in Issue is *about* the trainees. Therefore question b) is not a live issue in this review.

37. In terms of question a) – whether an individual can be identified from the Information in Issue – the applicant considers that trainees' identities are not "apparent" from viewing this information on its own.⁵⁷ Similarly, QFES's decision and submissions proceed on the basis that no trainee's identity is apparent from the Information in Issue alone. Given each ID Number is simply a five-digit number, I too am satisfied that no individual's identity is "apparent" from the Information in Issue.

38. Therefore, the second limb of question a) – whether an individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" from the Information in Issue – arises for consideration.

Parties' submissions

39. Generally, in terms of the question of whether an individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" from the Information in Issue:

- the applicant submits that *"there is no possible way any individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" from the [Information in Issue] being disclosed"*,⁵⁸
- whereas QFES submits that, through a process of cross-referencing with other information available to the applicant, the identities of trainees can be reasonably ascertained from the Information in Issue, and this in turn would enable assessment information and scores to be linked to particular trainees.⁵⁹

40. I will now set out the parties' submissions regarding whether the identity of an individual may be reasonably ascertained from the Information in Issue in conjunction with *additional information*.

⁵⁵ *Mahoney* at [21], cited with approval at [15]-[16] of *Marchant and Queensland Police Service* (Unreported, Queensland Information Commissioner, 10 September 2013), which found that the date and reasons for police callouts to a women's hostel were not the personal information of approximately 16 women resident at the time, as their identities were not reasonably ascertainable from that information.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Sixth last paragraph on page 3 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

⁵⁸ Submission to OIC dated 15 May 2020 at page 3.

⁵⁹ Submission to OIC dated 4 February 2020.

41. In terms of QFES's firefighter recruitment processes and the parties involved in those processes, the applicant submitted:⁶⁰

The recruitment process for a QFES firefighter includes:

- (a) Initial medical assessment;*
- (b) beep test;*
- (c) online application form;*
- (d) cognitive ability test;*
- (e) supervised testing;*
- (f) Queensland Physical Abilities Test (QPAT);*
- (g) state panel interview;*
- (h) psychological assessment;*
- (i) integrity checks and referee reports;*
- (j) medical assessment;*
- (k) criminal history check; and*
- (l) if successful, invited to commence recruitment training.*

There are various people who are involved in the recruitment process for QFES, including:

- (a) [QFES's] Talent Acquisition Team;*
- (b) a selection panel, which is only involved between steps (f) and (g) and steps (k) and (l) above [selection panel members];*
- (c) an interviewing panel which conducts the state panel interviews [interview panel members]; and*
- (d) individual firefighters who facilitate the QPAT [QPAT assessors].*

42. Both the applicant and QFES have provided submissions about the information QFES provides *during* firefighter recruitment processes to QPAT assessors, interview panel members and selection panel members. These submissions are set out at [43]-[45] below respectively. The applicant and QFES have also provided submissions about the "new starter data" QFES provides to the applicant *after* a trainee has completed their recruit training course. These submissions are set out at [46] below.

43. In terms of the information provided to **QPAT assessors**:

- i. The applicant initially submitted:⁶¹

... while firefighters who facilitate the QPAT and state panel interviews deal individually with candidates, they are exposed to so many candidates that it would be impossible to remember any of the identification numbers for candidates that they encounter.

- ii. The applicant then submitted:⁶²

They are not provided with, and therefore could not keep, any documents that record individual candidates' [ID Numbers] alongside their names or other information from which their identity could "reasonably be ascertained".

- iii. QFES submitted:⁶³

Over 135 firefighters assist with the facilitation of the QPAT, all of which are current in-service firefighters and station officers. They are provided with an assessment form that includes the applicants [sic] name and their [ID Number]. Whilst these forms are provided to the [Talent Acquisition Team], who are present to facilitate the assessment, the Lead Assessor and UFUQ representative present record their own information and have requested copies of the forms. Important to note the Lead Assessor is the UFUQ Brisbane Region Firefighter delegate.

⁶⁰ External review application dated 30 August 2019 at [13]-[14].

⁶¹ External review application dated 30 August 2019 at [16].

⁶² Last paragraph on page 3 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

⁶³ Email from QFES dated 5 June 2020.

iv. The applicant then submitted:⁶⁴

It does not appear that QFES submitted that the UFUQ representatives were provided with the forms or allowed to take them. There does not appear to be any evidence upon which you could reasonably conclude that UFUQ now "has access to information" that would enable it to connect candidate's names with their [ID] Numbers.

The absence of evidence, in our submission, means that little weight should be given to this aspect of the QFES's submission.

44. In terms of the information provided to **interview panel members**:

i. The applicant initially made the submissions set out at [43.i.]. above.

ii. QFES submitted that:⁶⁵

- *Interview panels include a Senior Officer as chair, station officer, firefighter and independent/non-uniformed QFES staff member. Interviews are conducted locally and involve local staff. Whilst a union representative does not sit on a panel, the firefighters and station officers that do are/could be unions [sic] members. We have had members of the UFUQ State Committee of Management (SCM) and their delegates on panel as panel members.*
- *Interview panel members are provided with the applicants [sic] name and CV/Resume and their [ID Number] is recorded on all the forms completed during the interview process. Whilst all forms are returned to the TA [Talent Acquisition] team, there is no assurance panel members have not taken their own notes. Should a panel member record any information relating to an applicant they interview which they were then to take from the process, TA would only be aware of this if another panel members [sic] was to advise us.*

iii. The applicant then submitted:⁶⁶

This submission appears to be entirely speculative. There is no evidence that any interview panel member who is or has been a UFUQ member has recorded information relating to any applicant. There is also no evidence that any such information is now available to the UFUQ. As such, there is no basis for the QFES submission that any such information could now be used by the UFUQ in conjunction with the [ID] Numbers to identify an applicant.

The UFUQ respectfully submits that your decision should not be based upon speculative submissions for which there is no supporting evidence.

45. In terms of the information provided to **selection panel members**:

i. The applicant submitted:⁶⁷

The selection panel is provided with a table which contains de-identified information, including:

- (a) [ID Number];*
- (b) results for cognitive ability tests;*
- (c) details of previous employment with an emergency services entity or the Australian Defence Force;*

⁶⁴ Paragraphs [9] and [10] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

⁶⁵ Email from QFES dated 5 June 2020.

⁶⁶ Paragraphs [17] and [18] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

⁶⁷ External review application dated 30 August 2019 at [15] and [16], and similar submissions at paragraphs numbered 3. and 4. and third last paragraph on page 3 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

- (d) current employer;
- (e) position title;
- (f) level of education and tertiary qualifications; and
- (g) once interviews have been completed, feedback from members of the interviewing panel.

No member of the selection panel ever receives details including the name, age, gender, date of birth, medical conditions, religion, race or religion [sic] of an individual candidate (with good reason).

ii. QFES submitted that:

- A representative of the UFUQ is a State Selection Panel member and is present during all selection making processes.⁶⁸
- The panel is typically comprised of minimum 7 QFES operational staff, their position/rank range from firefighter through to Station Officer and typically include representation from each region, a representative from training, an Assistant Commissioner as the chair of the panel, and the UFUQ representative. Worth noting the firefighters and station officers are typically UFUQ members too.⁶⁹
- The panel are provided with what we refer to as a Selection Sheet, this has all the candidate's assessment outcomes/scores (aptitude scores, interview results and supporting comments, psychological assessment results), the residential suburb, their preferences for employment locations and supporting comments and has their [ID Number] on it. The [ID Number] is the only form of candidate reference on this form. Data has been provided to panel members before and requests made that any printed sheets are returned to QFES; however, we do not have any absolute guarantee this has happened or way of policing it. Panel members have been observed making their own notes during selection panel processes and taking information away with them.⁷⁰

iii. The applicant submitted:⁷¹

It appears to be accepted by QFES that the selection panel members are not provided with candidates' names, but rather their [ID] Number, residential suburb, preferred employment location, etc. The UFUQ submits that this is not information that could reasonably be used to identify the candidate, even in conjunction with other information that may already be known to the UFUQ.

...

Further, there does not appear to be any evidence that any UFUQ selection panel member took away any information that would enable the UFUQ to identify a candidate if used in connection with the [ID] Numbers.⁷²

The absence of evidence, in our submission, means that little weight should be given to this aspect of the QFES submission.

46. In terms of the new starter data QFES sends to the applicant after the completion of a recruit training course:

i. The applicant submitted:⁷³

⁶⁸ Email from QFES dated 4 February 2020.

⁶⁹ Email from QFES dated 5 June 2020.

⁷⁰ Email from QFES dated 5 June 2020.

⁷¹ Paragraphs [12] and [14]-[15] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

⁷² This point was reiterated at 1. of letter to OIC dated 25 November 2020.

⁷³ Second paragraph on page 5 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

... once a candidate has completed the recruit training course, they are issued with a new six (6) digit employment number which they retain for the duration of their employment with the QFES, including for payroll purposes. We are instructed that by the time 'new starter' data for recruit courses is sent to the UFUQ, the course participants have already been assigned new employment numbers, which are different to their [ID] Numbers. It is given to the union with the 'new starter' data so that the union may have an opportunity to have a membership discussion with employee. [ID Numbers] are not contained in the 'new starter' data that is provided to the union. If they were, our client would not have made the RTI application in the first place.

- ii. QFES submitted⁷⁴ that the new starter data includes the full name, ID Number, region, rank, station, employment type, home address, postal address, postcode, mobile telephone number, home telephone number, date of birth and private email of each successful trainee.
- iii. The applicant then submitted:⁷⁵

In terms of the new starter data, QFES submits that the information provided to the UFUQ includes a range of personal information but does not include the [ID] Numbers relating to the identified new starters.

There does not appear to be any basis to conclude that the release of the [ID] Numbers to the UFUQ could be used in conjunction with the new starter information to identify the candidates to whom the disclosed [ID] Numbers were assigned.

47. The applicant has also made a submission in the alternative – that, even if the applicant had access to such information, disclosure of the ID Numbers would not disclose information from which the trainees' identities could "reasonably be ascertained" because their identities would already be "known".⁷⁶

Analysis

48. The applicant's submission in the alternative⁷⁷ contends that, where the applicant holds information which it may use to identify a particular trainee, the trainee's identity is not "apparent" – rather, it is "known"; and then concludes that, because the individual's identity is already "known", it cannot be "reasonably ascertained". As noted above,⁷⁸ question a) requires consideration of two issues – whether an individual's identity is "apparent" from the information in issue, and whether it "can reasonably be ascertained". While the applicant accepts that trainees' identities are not "apparent" from viewing the five lists of ID Numbers,⁷⁹ it appears to make some distinction between "known" and "apparent". I consider that this distinction is artificial, and that the trainees' identities are neither "apparent" nor "known" from viewing the Information in Issue. Given this, I consider that the applicant's submission, that a trainee's identity cannot be "reasonably ascertained" if it is already "known", is misconceived. *Mahoney's* factors regarding whether an individual's identity can be "reasonably ascertained"⁸⁰ address precisely the type of circumstances envisaged, but miscategorised as "known", by the applicant.

49. I will now consider the applicant's main submission. In summary, the applicant's position is that⁸¹ individuals involved in QFES's recruitment of firefighters – including

⁷⁴ Email from QFES dated 13 August 2020.

⁷⁵ Paragraphs [19] and [20] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

⁷⁶ Fourth last paragraph on page 3, fourth last and second last paragraph on page 4, and fourth last paragraph on page 5 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020, and paragraph [13] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020.

⁷⁷ Noted in the preceding paragraph [47].

⁷⁸ At paragraphs [31]-[35].

⁷⁹ Sixth last paragraph on page 3 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

⁸⁰ Noted at [34] above.

⁸¹ Except for QFES's Talent Acquisition Team which does not include any representatives and/or members of the applicant.

representatives and/or members of the applicant – ‘are not provided with, or allowed to retain, material that would enable them to match an individual’s [ID] Number with their name or other information from which their identity could “reasonably be ascertained”⁸² and there is ‘an absence of evidence’ to suggest otherwise.⁸³ On this basis, the applicant contends that no *additional information* is available to it, and therefore no trainee’s identity “can reasonably be ascertained” from the Information in Issue in conjunction with additional information, as contemplated by the *Mahoney* factors.

50. Having carefully considered both parties’ submissions at [42]-[45] above, I am satisfied that during QFES’s firefighter recruitment processes, including the processes involving the trainees:
- a. **QPAT assessors** are provided with information on the trainee’s QPAT form, including the candidate’s ID Number and name
 - b. **interview panel members** are provided with the candidate’s ID Number, name and curriculum vitae / resume; and
 - c. **selection panel members** are provided with information including the candidate’s ID Number, current employment details, prior emergency services or defence employment, level of education and tertiary qualifications, residential suburb, preferred station and assessment outcomes / scores.
51. I am also satisfied that representatives and/or members of the applicant frequently, if not routinely, participate in QPAT assessment, interview panel and selection panel processes – and, in such instances, are therefore provided with the above information.
52. To the extent that any representatives and/or members of the applicant retained information provided to them in their capacity as QPAT assessors, interview panel members or selection panel members in the five recruitment processes involving the trainees, I consider it reasonable to expect that the applicant has access to *additional information*. Further, I consider it reasonable to expect that:
- a. If the additional information was provided to a QPAT assessor or interview panel member, and therefore includes the ID Numbers and names of relevant trainees⁸⁴ – ID Numbers as they appear in the Information in Issue could be connected with particular trainees in only one step, namely reference to the additional information.
 - b. If the additional information was provided to a selection panel member, and therefore includes the ID Numbers and information *other* than the names of relevant trainees⁸⁵ – ID Numbers as they appear in the Information in Issue could be connected with particular trainees in several steps. These steps would involve identifying unique information⁸⁶ or unique combinations of information⁸⁷ within the information provided to the selection panel member, and then cross referencing

⁸² Fourth last paragraph on page 5 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020. See also paragraphs numbered 3. and 4. and third last paragraph on page 3, last paragraph on page 3 and first paragraph on page 4, last paragraph on page 4 and first paragraph on page 5 of letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020.

⁸³ Paragraphs [9]-[10], [12]-[15], and [17]-[20] of letter to OIC dated 18 September 2020 and 1. and 3. of letter to OIC dated 25 November 2020.

⁸⁴ As noted at [50.a.-b.] above.

⁸⁵ As noted at [50.c.] above.

⁸⁶ For example, a residential suburb if the additional information indicates that only one trainee resides in that suburb, or a former employer if the additional information indicates that only one trainee’s work history includes that employer.

⁸⁷ For example, a residential suburb and former employer, if the additional information indicates that only one trainee both resides in that suburb and has worked for that employer.

such information against information in the new starter data⁸⁸ or otherwise available to the applicant.⁸⁹

- c. After taking the steps at a. and b., the applicant could then eliminate the connected ID Numbers from its calculations and repeat the steps noted at b., thereby potentially connecting further ID Numbers as they appear in the Information in Issue with other trainees. Moreover, the applicant could then repeat this process to connect further trainees to their ID Numbers.
 - d. Having connected particular trainees to their ID Numbers, the applicant could then, via further cross referencing, potentially connect some trainees with other information about them. In this regard, the applicant has submitted that selection panel members receive information including '*results for cognitive ability tests [and] ... feedback from members of the interviewing panel*'⁹⁰ and QFES has submitted that they receive information including '*assessment outcomes/scores (aptitude scores, interview results and supporting comments, psychological assessment results) ... and supporting comments*'.⁹¹ Further, I note that if QPAT assessors or interview panel members retained notes regarding their considerations, the other information may also include observations regarding a trainee's performance in the QPAT or interview.
53. The applicant submitted that the purpose for which it seeks the Information in Issue is irrelevant to the question of whether Information in Issue is "personal information",⁹² as well as being irrelevant to the question of whether disclosure would be contrary to the public interest,⁹³ but did not elaborate on this contention. I am satisfied that there is nothing in the RTI Act or otherwise to preclude me from considering the potential for the cross referencing of the Information in Issue with other information when examining the issue of whether an individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" from the Information in Issue. Indeed, consistent with the factors in *Mahoney* noted at [34] above, I consider that the issue of whether an individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" from additional information available to an applicant necessitates consideration of such matters.
54. The applicant also submitted that there is an '*absence of evidence*' that its representatives or members retained any information provided to or recorded by them in their capacity as QPAT assessors, interview panel members or selection panel members in the five recruitment processes involving the trainees.⁹⁴ In effect, this submission contends that, without direct evidence that additional information is available to the applicant, I cannot be satisfied that any trainees' identities could be "reasonably ascertained" upon disclosure of the Information in Issue.
55. I note that any direct evidence that the applicant's representatives and/or members retained relevant information would, most likely, be in the possession of the applicant, rather than QFES. Further, while I note the applicant's submissions about not receiving, recording and/or retaining such information, and that these submissions would have been made with awareness of obligations under the RTI Act,⁹⁵ I also recognise that they

⁸⁸ I accept QFES's submissions that, for each successful trainee, the new starter data provided to the applicant consists of the information set out at [46] above.

⁸⁹ For example, information personally observed by a former trainee/now employed firefighter's manager or colleague who is representative and/or member of the applicant, such as information divulged during typical workplace conversations.

⁹⁰ As noted at [4545.i.] above.

⁹¹ As noted at [45.ii.] above.

⁹² Letter to OIC dated 15 May 2020 at page 2.

⁹³ As noted at [21] above.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Including section 177(1) of the RTI Act, which provides that it is an offence to provide false or misleading evidence.

are somewhat equivocal, given the alternative submission advanced by the applicant.⁹⁶ In these circumstances, I am satisfied that an absence of direct evidence from QFES that representatives and/or members of the applicant retained information provided to them in the five recruitment processes involving the trainees cannot necessarily be equated with a conclusion that no such information was retained.

56. I also note that imposing a requirement that there be direct evidence of the additional information elevates the standard upon which I need to be satisfied beyond that required by the RTI Act and the factors set out in *Mahoney*. It is important to bear in mind that the test regarding whether an individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" is not one requiring direct or conclusive evidence of identification. The test is whether the identity of the individual to whom information relates is *reasonably ascertainable* from that information.⁹⁷ As the Australian Information Commissioner has noted in considering a similar statutory definition,⁹⁸ where any uncertainty exists as to whether information comprises personal information, prudence dictates erring on the side of caution.⁹⁹
57. With this in mind, and taking into account my findings at [50]-[52] relevant to the *Mahoney* factors,¹⁰⁰ while I do not wish to overstate the likelihood of identification, I consider it reasonable – and not 'irrational, absurd or ridiculous'¹⁰¹ – to conclude that ID Numbers as listed in the Information in Issue could be identified as the ID Numbers of particular trainees. Accordingly, in terms of the second limb of question a) – whether an individual's identity "can reasonably be ascertained" from the Information in Issue – I consider that the identities of the trainees to whom the ID Numbers as they appear in the Information in Issue relate *are* reasonably ascertainable from the Information in Issue.
58. Given this conclusion, I find that the ID Numbers as listed in the Information in Issue comprise the personal information of the trainees.
59. It follows that I am satisfied that disclosure of the Information in Issue would disclose the personal information constituted by the ID Numbers themselves. However, I am satisfied that disclosure of the Information in Issue would, in combination with the course numbers that have already been released by QFES, reveal further personal information about trainees – namely, which of the five courses of interest to the applicant they participated in. Further, I am satisfied that disclosure would, in conjunction with additional information available to the applicant, also reveal sensitive recruitment information about some trainees, as noted at [52.d.]. In these circumstances, I find that disclosure of the Information in Issue could reasonably be expected to give rise to a public interest harm by disclosing the personal information of persons other than the applicant.¹⁰²
60. Given the ID Numbers are simply five-digit numbers, disclosure of the ID Numbers themselves as listed in the Information in Issue arguably constitutes a relatively low public interest harm. However, I consider that disclosure of which of the five recruit training courses particular trainees participated in would constitute somewhat greater public interest harm. Moreover, I consider that disclosure of the information noted at [52.d.] regarding particular trainees – particularly '*results for cognitive ability tests [and] ... feedback from members of the interviewing panel*' and '*assessment outcomes/scores (aptitude scores, interview results and supporting comments, psychological assessment*

⁹⁶ Noted at [47] above.

⁹⁷ *Nine Entertainment Co Holdings Ltd and Queensland Police Service* [2018] QICmr 54 (20 December 2018) at [20].

⁹⁸ Section 6(1) of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

⁹⁹ 'What is 'personal information'', Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Guide, May 2017: <<https://www.oaic.gov.au/agencies-and-organisations/guides/what-is-personal-information>> (last accessed 27 January 2021).

¹⁰⁰ That is, my findings regarding the availability of additional information to the applicant, the steps required to identify particular trainees and the certainty with which they would be identified.

¹⁰¹ *Attorney-General's Department v Cockcroft* (1986) 64 ALR 97 at 106.

¹⁰² Schedule 4, part 4, section 6(1) of the RTI Act.

results) ... and supporting comments' – would result in high public interest harm. While the disclosure of information of this nature about a particular trainee may be, to some extent, relatively less likely, the consequences of the disclosure of such sensitive personal information are substantial. Consequently, I consider that the personal information harm factor warrants significant weight.

Privacy factor

61. The privacy factor¹⁰³ is relevant when:

Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy.

62. In terms of privacy considerations, QFES submitted:¹⁰⁴

Candidates did not provide permission through the privacy collection and release of information statements for the release of their information for this purpose, permission provides for use in the selection process only.

63. In response, the applicant submitted:¹⁰⁵

... It is respectfully submitted that the QFES submission pre-supposes that the [ID] Numbers are 'personal information' that might be subject to a privacy collection and release of information statement. For the reasons set out in detail in our previous correspondence, we respectfully submit that the [ID] Numbers are not 'personal information'. The [ID] Numbers are not "information collected from them [being the candidates] by government agencies" as suggested in your correspondence. To the contrary, they are numbers generated by QFES and assigned to candidates for the express purpose of protecting their privacy and the neutrality of the selection process. As such, release of the [ID] Numbers could not reasonably be considered to prejudice or have the potential to prejudice the protection of the affected candidates' rights to privacy.

64. As set out above in my consideration of the personal information harm factor, I am satisfied that the ID Numbers as listed in the Information in Issue comprise the personal information of the trainees. Applying terminology sometimes used in privacy law, I am satisfied that the 'motivated intruder test'— that is, an assessment of whether a reasonably competent motivated person with no specialised skills could succeed in re-identifying the information – is satisfied.¹⁰⁶ I also note that, in recruitment processes, the privacy principles apply not only to information collected from a candidate. They also apply to information about the candidate collected from other sources.¹⁰⁷

65. The concept of 'privacy' is not defined in the RTI Act. The right to privacy can, however, essentially be viewed as the right of an individual to preserve their 'personal sphere' free from interference from others.¹⁰⁸ Even if I am wrong in finding that the five lists of ID

¹⁰³ Schedule 4, part 3, item 3 of the RTI Act.

¹⁰⁴ Email to OIC dated 4 February 2020.

¹⁰⁵ At 2. of letter to OIC dated 25 November 2020.

¹⁰⁶ In the context of privacy law, ascertaining an individual's identity from de-identified data is termed 're-identification', and the additional information combined with the data to achieve re-identification is termed 'auxiliary information'. Examples of auxiliary information include public datasets and information, including social media; non-public datasets, for example, a business's customer database; and personally observed information, for example, overhearing a conversation or witnessing an event. See OIC's Guideline 'Privacy and de-identified data' at <<https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/guidelines/for-government/guidelines-privacy-principles/anonymity/privacy-and-de-identification>> (accessed on 27 January 2021).

¹⁰⁷ See OIC's Guideline: 'Public service recruitment and Information Privacy' at <<https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/guidelines/for-government/guidelines-privacy-principles/applying-the-privacy-principles/public-service-recruitment-and-information-privacy>> (accessed 27 January 2021).

¹⁰⁸ Paraphrasing the Australian Law Reform Commission's definition of the concept in 'For your information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice' Australian Law Reform Commission Report No. 108 released 12 August 2008, at paragraph 1.56. Cited in *Balzary and Redland City Council; Tidbold (Third Party)* [2017] QICmr 41 (1 September 2017) at [28].

Numbers that comprise the Information in Issue fall within the IP Act's definition of personal information, and therefore wrong in concluding that the personal information harm factor applies and should be afforded significant weight, I consider that the parties' agreement that the ID Numbers in the Information in Issue are *about* the trainees¹⁰⁹ is sufficient for me to be satisfied that the factor favouring nondisclosure regarding prejudice to the protection of individuals' right to privacy¹¹⁰ applies. In this regard, I am satisfied that the disclosure of information that is agreed to be *about* a restricted number of trainees could reasonably be expected to prejudice the protection of affected trainees' right to privacy.

66. There is a strong public interest in ensuring that government protects the privacy of citizens, and members of the public are generally entitled to expect that information collected from them by government agencies will be handled appropriately, only used or disclosed for the purposes for which it was collected – in this case, for identifying candidates as part of a recruitment – and not subject to routine and unconditional disclosure to others. In this regard, I stress that disclosure of the information does not have to give rise to a reasonable expectation of prejudice to the *right* to privacy itself; rather, it need only give rise to a reasonable expectation of simply prejudice to the *protection* of that right to privacy.
67. Given these considerations, I afford significant weight to this factor favouring nondisclosure with respect to all trainees whose ID Numbers appear in the Information in Issue.

Management function factors

68. The management function factors state:¹¹¹
- *Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the management function of an agency ...*
 - *Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to cause a public interest harm if disclosure could –*
...
(c) *have a substantial adverse effect on the management or assessment by an agency of the agency's staff.*

69. In terms of QFES's management functions, QFES submitted:¹¹²

Of concern is ... potential reduction in (or perception of) the credibility and integrity of the blind process if applicant data can be released to anyone outside of the selection process.

70. In response, the applicant submitted:¹¹³

The [ID] Numbers are not 'applicant data' that could lead to the identification of any individual candidate, therefore release of the [ID] Numbers could not reduce or have the potential to reduce the credibility or integrity of the 'blind process'. There is no evidence that the UFUQ could use the [ID] Numbers to connect those numbers to the individual candidates to whom they relate. As we have previously submitted, your decision should not be based upon speculative submissions about how the [ID] Numbers might be used for which there is no supporting evidence. We respectfully agree with your assessment that this factor should be given little weight.

¹⁰⁹ As noted at [36] above.

¹¹⁰ Schedule 4, part 3, item 3 of the RTI Act.

¹¹¹ Schedule 4, part 3, item 19 and part 4, section 3(c) of the RTI Act.

¹¹² Email to OIC dated 4 February 2020.

¹¹³ At 3. of letter to OIC dated 25 November 2020.

71. The public interest will favour nondisclosure of information that could be reasonably be expected to prejudice the management function of an agency¹¹⁴ or, have a substantial adverse effect on the management of its staff.¹¹⁵ While I accept that disclosure of the five lists of ID Numbers in the Information in Issue may reasonably be expected to reduce the credibility and integrity of the blind recruitment process to a degree, I do not consider that this would deter future applicants from applying to QFES for a position as a firefighter. It may, potentially, result in staff requests and/or management decisions to take further steps to protect and enhance blind processes are protected (for example, putting in place processes to ensure that all assessors and panel members return information referred to at [50] above and any notes that they have taken regarding such information; and engaging with the applicant about how further information of interest to the applicant may be provided to it without prejudicing the protection of particular trainees' right to privacy). In these circumstances, I consider that any prejudice to QFES's management function would be minimal, and therefore I afford these factors favouring nondisclosure low weight

Balancing the relevant public interest factors

72. In summary, I consider that the Information in Issue is the personal information of the trainees, and therefore both the personal information harm factor and the prejudice to the protection of the right to privacy factor warrant significant weight. Given the nature of the information and the particular circumstances of this external review, I consider these factors warrant significant weight which, along with the low weight warranted by the management function factors, outweigh the accountability and transparency factors favouring disclosure.
73. Even if I am wrong in concluding that the five lists of ID Numbers constitute personal information, and therefore wrong in concluding that the personal information harm factor applies and warrants significant weight, I still consider that the prejudice to the protection of the right to privacy factor warrants significant weight. Given this, I remain of the view that this factor, along with the low weight warranted by the management function factors, outweighs the accountability and transparency factors favouring disclosure.
74. In either instance, on balance, I am satisfied that the public interest weighs against disclosure of the five lists of ID Numbers and access to this Information in Issue may be refused under section 47(3)(b) of the RTI Act.

DECISION

75. For the reasons set out above, I affirm the decision under review and find that access to the Information in Issue may be refused on the ground that its disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.¹¹⁶
76. I have made this decision as a delegate of the Information Commissioner, under section 145 of the RTI Act.

A Rickard
Assistant Information Commissioner
Date: 5 February 2021

¹¹⁴ Schedule 4, part 3, item 19 of the RTI Act.

¹¹⁵ Schedule 4, part 4, item 3(c) of the RTI Act.

¹¹⁶ Under section 47(3)(b) of the RTI Act.

APPENDIX

Significant procedural steps

Date	Event
30 August 2019	OIC received the external review application.
3 September 2019	OIC notified the applicant and QFES of receipt of the external review application and asked QFES to provide relevant procedural documents. QFES provided OIC with the requested documents.
30 September 2019	OIC notified the applicant and QFES that the external review application had been accepted and asked QFES to provide a copy of the documents considered by QFES in its decision under review. OIC received the requested documents from QFES.
25 November 2019	OIC provided the applicant's representative with an update by telephone, discussed an informal resolution proposal, and requested confirmation that the applicant agreed to OIC providing a copy of the submission accompanying its external review application to QFES.
19 December 2019	OIC wrote to the applicant's representative requesting confirmation that the applicant agreed to OIC providing a copy of its submission to QFES and a response to the informal resolution proposal.
7 January 2020	OIC received confirmation from the applicant's representative that it agreed to OIC providing its submission to QFES.
21 January 2020	OIC wrote to QFES, providing a copy of the applicant's submissions, advising that OIC did not have sufficient information to reach a view, and requesting submissions addressing why QFES's decision was justified. OIC also provided the applicant with an update on the status of the review.
4 February 2020	OIC received a written submission from QFES.
28 April 2020	OIC received confirmation from QFES that it agreed to the informal resolution proposal first canvassed on 25 November 2019. OIC wrote to the applicant requesting further submissions in response to QFES's submission and a response to the informal resolution proposal.
15 May 2020	OIC received a written submission from the applicant, including advice that it did not agree to the informal resolution proposal.
29 May 2020	OIC wrote to QFES requesting information about its recruitment processes.
5 June 2020	OIC received a written submission from QFES.
30 July 2020	OIC wrote to QFES requesting information about the new starter data.
13 August 2020	OIC received a written submission from QFES.
4 September 2020	OIC conveyed a written preliminary view to the applicant. In doing so, OIC informed the applicant of QFES's submissions dated 5 June 2020 and 13 August 2020 relevant to OIC's view.
18 September 2020	OIC received a further written submission from the applicant.
6 October 2020	OIC confirmed to the applicant that the next steps would be a decision.
11 November 2020	OIC wrote to the applicant to inform the applicant of further submissions from QFES dated 4 February 2020 relevant to OIC's view and this decision.
25 November 2020	OIC received a further written submission from the applicant.
3 December 2020	OIC confirmed to the applicant that QFES's further submissions were received on 4 February 2020 and the next step would be a decision.