Office of the Information Commissioner
Queensland

Follow-up of Report No. 2 of 2014-15

Review of universities' implementation of recommendations

Compliance with Right to Information and Information Privacy

Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland

Report No. 3 to the Queensland Legislative Assembly for 2016-17

The Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) thanks the universities for their cooperation throughout the review process and for the courtesy displayed towards the officers undertaking the assessment. In undertaking this follow-up review, OIC recognises the commitment of the business units and their desire for continuous improvement in right to information and information privacy.

Copies of this report are available on our website at www.oic.qld.gov.au and further copies are available on request to:

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November 2016

Mr Mark Furner MP
Chair
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Mr Furner

I am pleased to present *Follow-up of Report No. 2 of 2014-15: Review of universities'
implementation of recommendations — Compliance with Right to Information and
Information Privacy: Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; University of
Queensland and University of Southern Queensland*. This report is prepared under
section 131 of the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld) and section 135 of the *Information
Privacy Act 2009* (Qld).

It follows up on the progress of the universities in implementing the recommendations
made in the original compliance review.

In accordance with subsection 184(5) of the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld), I request
that you arrange for the report to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the next sitting
day.

Yours sincerely

JS Mead
A/Information Commissioner

Table of contents

1 Executive summary

In November 2014, we (the Office of the Information Commissioner) tabled '*Compliance Review – Queensland Universities: Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland. Review of universities' compliance with the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld).*'

The report assessed the extent to which the four universities were complying with the requirements of the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld) (RTI Act) and *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) (IP Act).

Our original review focused on the:

- universities' culture of openness and engagement with the community
- leadership within each university to promote proactive release of information and good information governance
- accountability and performance measurement
- strategies adopted to maximise disclosure of information
- compliance with specific legislative requirements.

We found that overall, while performance was strong and the universities were progressing well in meeting their legislative obligations under the RTI Act and IP Act, there were opportunities for improvement.

We made 13 recommendations in the report to assist the four universities in taking up these opportunities. Of these recommendations, 10 applied to all four universities, and three applied to a specific university, making a combined total of 43 recommendations. This review follows up the progress of the universities in implementing these recommendations.

1.1 Conclusions

We are pleased to report that the four universities have fully implemented 40 of the 43 recommendations we made in the original review. Their greater maturity in right to information (RTI) and information privacy (IP) practices strengthens their accountability and transparency.

"An open and accessible [information release] regime promotes more open government and better community interaction. The more valuable information that the public can access and reuse to build knowledge and empower the community, the healthier the Queensland society, economy and environment will become." (Solomon Report[1]).

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[1] *The Right to Information – Reviewing Queensland's Freedom of Information Act*, June 2008, accessible at www.rti.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/107632/solomon-report.pdf.

Figure 1A shows the implementation status of recommendations by university.

Figure 1A

Our assessment of the implementation status of recommendations

University	Total	Status		
		Fully implemented	**Implementation in progress**	**Partially implemented**
Griffith University	11	9	0	2
Queensland University of Technology	11	11	0	0
University of Queensland	10	10	0	0
University of Southern Queensland	11	10	1	0
TOTAL	**43**	**40**	**1**	**2**

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

As a result of implementing our recommendations, the universities are able to meet their RTI and IP obligations more efficiently and effectively.

Their increased ability to manage information as a strategic asset means the universities can exploit the information they hold to its fullest extent.

We noted that the universities better used strategies for informal release of information, such as publication schemes and administrative access schemes. They are putting information into the community faster and are positioning legislative access as the 'last resort' in seeking government information. The universities' information asset registers will assist the community to discover the information universities hold. They will also enable the universities to readily identify data that they could publish.

The four universities have also improved the quality of their RTI and IP awareness training and broadened its application. This will help staff and decision-makers to manage, share and use information appropriately.

They have explicitly recognised the value of two-way community engagement to better understand the information needs of their stakeholders.

Together, these improvements demonstrate the universities' commitment to a culture of openness and transparency.

1.2 Reference to agency comments

We provided each university with a copy of this report and a request for comments. We have considered the universities' views in reaching our follow-up review conclusions and have represented them to the extent relevant and warranted in preparing this report. The comments received are in the appendix of this report.

2 Context

2.1 Background

Queensland public universities are agencies for the purposes of the RTI and IP Acts.[2]

We commenced a compliance review of Griffith University (Griffith), Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the University of Queensland (UQ) and the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) in late 2013. The resulting *Compliance Review – Queensland Universities: Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland. Review of universities' compliance with the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld).[3]* was tabled in Parliament on 27 November 2014.

Our original review reported that overall, the universities' performance was strong and that each university presented particular strengths in different areas.

While the review did not find any significant instances of non-compliance with specific legislative requirements, we identified several opportunities for improvement. The report made 13 recommendations. The universities accepted all recommendations, except one recommendation that QUT did not accept. The universities agreed to implement all accepted recommendations by March 2016.

2.2 Follow-up process

In June 2016, we asked the four universities to provide a progress report on the implementation status of each recommendation and the actions they took to address the recommendations. We also requested that the universities provide evidence supporting their response.

We assessed the progress reports and supporting evidence, and where necessary, performed risk-based checks to gain assurance on the universities' actions and implementation of the recommendations.

Figure 2A shows the ratings we used to assess the implementation status of the recommendations.

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[2] See section 14(1)(c) of the RTI Act and sections 17 and 18(1)(d) of the IP Act.
[3] Accessible at https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/about/our-organisation/key-functions/compliance-and-audit-reports/.

Figure 2A

Implementation status ratings

Rating	Description
Fully implemented	The agency has adopted the recommendation substantially or in its entirety.
Implementation in progress	The agency has taken some action to implement the recommendation and efforts to complete implementation are ongoing. Included in this rating are those recommendations about which the agency did not provide sufficient support evidence to verify the stated actions.
Partially implemented	The agency has implemented part of the recommendation, but the intent of the recommendation has not been fully satisfied.
No action taken	The agency has not implemented any part of the recommendation and there is no valid reason for why action was not taken.

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

This report presents the implementation progress by university (chapter 3) and by the broad performance areas (chapters 4 to 8) that we monitor across all agencies in order to report on agency compliance with the RTI and IP Acts.[4]

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[4] For more information about each performance area, please refer to our publication *RTI and IP – Performance Standards and Measures for Agencies*, accessible at https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/excel_doc/0009/7758/policy-performance-standards-and-measures.xls.

3   Implementation status of recommendations

3.1   Griffith University

Culture of openness	Leadership & accountability	Maximum disclosure	Compliance
Develop and publish a statement of commitment to community engagement about their information needs *(Rec 1 – Implemented)*	Drive proactive release of information through bodies governing information management *(Rec 3 – Implemented)*	Promote administrative access arrangements *(Rec 7 – Implemented)*	Update publication scheme *(Rec 10 – Implemented)*
	Clarify status of right to information policy and procedures *(Rec 4 – Partially implemented)*	For good practice, adopt an administrative access arrangement for reference checking on promotion to maximise disclosure and streamline processes *(Rec 8 – Implemented)*	Where relevant documents have not been published to the disclosure log, ensure reasons for non-publication are recorded *(Rec 11 – Implemented)*
	Expand scope and coverage of general awareness training about right to information and information privacy to all staff *(Rec 5 – Partially implemented)*	Develop and publish an Information Asset Register *(Rec 9 – Implemented)*	For good practice, contact applicants if information is to be provided in an access type other than as requested *(Rec 12 – Implemented)*
	Improve performance measurement *(Rec 6 – Implemented)*		

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

3.2 Queensland University of Technology

Culture of openness	Leadership & accountability	Maximum disclosure	Compliance
Develop and publish a statement of commitment to community engagement about their information needs *(Rec 1 – Implemented)*	Drive proactive release of information through bodies governing information management *(Rec 3 – Implemented)*	Promote administrative access arrangements *(Rec 7 – Implemented)*	Update publication scheme *(Rec 10 – Implemented)*
Develop and publish a statement of commitment to right to information *(Rec 2 – Implemented)*	Include information management activities in plans and work programs *(Rec 3 – Implemented)*	For good practice, adopt an administrative access arrangement for reference checking on promotion to maximise disclosure and streamline processes *(Rec 8 – Implemented)*	Where relevant documents have not been published to the disclosure log, ensure reasons for non-publication are recorded *(Rec 11 – Implemented)*
Promote the use of administrative access arrangements to staff through training and communication *(Rec 2 – Implemented)*	Update training modules on right to information and privacy *(Rec 5 – Implemented)*	Develop and publish an Information Asset Register *(Rec 9 – Implemented)*	For good practice, contact applicants if information is to be provided in an access type other than as requested *(Rec 12 – Implemented)*
	Implement plan to deliver updated privacy module to all staff *(Rec 5 – Implemented)*		
	Improve performance measurement *(Rec 6 – Implemented)*		

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

3.3   University of Queensland

Culture of openness	Leadership & accountability	Maximum disclosure	Compliance
Develop and publish a statement of commitment to community engagement about their information needs *(Rec 1 – Implemented)*	Drive proactive release of information through bodies governing information management *(Rec 3 – Implemented)*	Promote administrative access arrangements *(Rec 7 – Implemented)*	Update publication scheme *(Rec 10 – Implemented)*
	Review general awareness training and incorporate greater right to information content *(Rec 5 – Implemented)*	For good practice, adopt an administrative access arrangement for reference checking on promotion to maximise disclosure and streamline processes *(Rec 8 – Implemented)*	Where relevant documents have not been published to the disclosure log, ensure reasons for non-publication are recorded *(Rec 11 – Implemented)*
	Improve performance measurement *(Rec 6 – Implemented)*	Develop and publish an Information Asset Register *(Rec 9 – Implemented)*	For good practice, contact applicants if information is to be provided in an access type other than as requested *(Rec 12 – Implemented)*

Source: *Office of the Information Commissioner*

3.4   University of Southern Queensland

Culture of openness	Leadership & accountability	Maximum disclosure	Compliance
Develop and publish a statement of commitment to community engagement about their information needs *(Rec 1 – Implemented)*	Drive proactive release of information through bodies governing information management *(Rec 3 – Implemented)*	Promote administrative access arrangements *(Rec 7 – Implemented)*	Update publication scheme *(Rec 10 – Implemented)*
	Include information management activities in plans and work programs *(Rec 3 – Implemented)*	For good practice, adopt an administrative access arrangement for reference checking on promotion to maximise disclosure and streamline processes *(Rec 8 – Implemented)*	Where relevant documents have not been published to the disclosure log, ensure reasons for non-publication are recorded *(Rec 11 – Implemented)*
	Include right to information and privacy in induction *(Rec 5 – Implemented)*	Develop and publish an Information Asset Register *(Rec 9 – Implemented)*	For good practice, contact applicants if information is to be provided in an access type other than as requested *(Rec 12 – Implemented)*
	Update training modules *(Rec 5 – Implemented)*		For good practice, reduce time to process applications *(Rec 13 – Implemented)*
	Improve performance measurement *(Rec 6 – In progress)*		

Source: *Office of the Information Commissioner*

4 Culture of openness

Key findings

- Each university has published a policy statement promoting two-way community engagement about access to university-held information.

- QUT has undertaken multiple activities to raise staff awareness of administrative access arrangements and the RTI and IP application process.

4.1 Introduction

In our original review, we examined whether the culture of the universities embraced openness and transparency. This included looking for evidence that each university explicitly recognised community engagement about releasing information.

When agencies recognise the value of asking the community what information it needs, they can perform their right to information obligations more effectively. For example, such engagement can assist an agency to identify information for proactive release, or opportunities to improve access to information.

The four universities had each addressed community engagement to differing degrees and in different ways; however, none had a community engagement strategy, framework, or policy statement about information release. We sought evidence that the universities had a public statement of commitment to engaging in two-way dialog with the community about access to university-held information.

Our original review also identified varying levels of awareness and support across business units at QUT for administrative access arrangements and the RTI and IP application process. We recommended that QUT take steps to continue to build a pro-disclosure culture.

Figure 4A shows the implementation status of the recommendations about culture of openness.

Figure 4A

Culture of openness

	Recommendation	Status
1	All universities develop a broad strategic policy statement promoting community engagement about access to university-held information, and publish the policy statement within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
2	QUT issue agency wide communications to all business units within the next three months to reinforce QUT's commitment to the right to information, and through training and communication activities by management, ensure QUT staff are aware of and operate in accordance with QUT's procedures for administrative access and respond appropriately to requests for information by Governance and Legal Services, within the next 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (QUT)

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

4.2 *Conclusions*

All four universities are better positioned to understand the information needs of their stakeholders now that they have explicitly recognised the importance of two-way community engagement in a published statement of commitment. This will assist the universities to perform their right to information obligations, including promoting access to the information they hold.

The training and awareness activities QUT undertook will strengthen a pro-disclosure culture across the university and support its RTI and IP decision-makers in handling applications made under the RTI and IP Acts. This in turn will enable quicker processing times and provide the community with faster access to information.

4.3 *Results*

The four universities have published a statement of commitment to community engagement about access to university-held information. For example, figure 4B shows the statement that UQ added to its *Right to Information – Policy.*[5]

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[5] Accessible at https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.60.01-right-information.

Figure 4B

UQ Right to Information - Policy (extract)

The *Right to Information Act 2009* reflects government policy that documents should be made generally available administratively without the need for a formal application. The University's continued success as a knowledge leader relies on the forging of strategic partnerships with key partners and stakeholders. In achieving this, the University will engage those partners and stakeholders about appropriate access to University-held information. For that purpose, the University is committed to understand the information needs of its stakeholders.

Source: University of Queensland

Figure 4C shows the statement that USQ added to its website.[6]

Figure 4C

USQ - Our Community Engagement Statement webpage

Source: University of Southern Queensland

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[6] Accessible at https://www.usq.edu.au/about-usq/engage/community-engagement-statement.

QUT undertook a number of training and communications activities to build a pro-disclosure culture across all business units. For example, a broadcast email from the QUT Registrar to all staff included a statement about QUT's commitment to providing access to information unless there is a public interest reason to refuse.

Governance and Legal Services within QUT implemented a standard search record/documents retrieval request, modelled on the template provided in our guideline: *Searching for documents*,[7] to assist staff in their handling of applications for information made under the RTI and IP Acts.

QUT also revised its information privacy awareness online training module. The updated module explained how QUT gives individuals access to information through formal access applications and administrative access arrangements.

For example, figure 4D shows a page about what action QUT staff should take if asked to search for and provide information in response to an access application under the RTI Act or IP Act.

Figure 4D

QUT – Information Privacy Awareness online training module (extract)
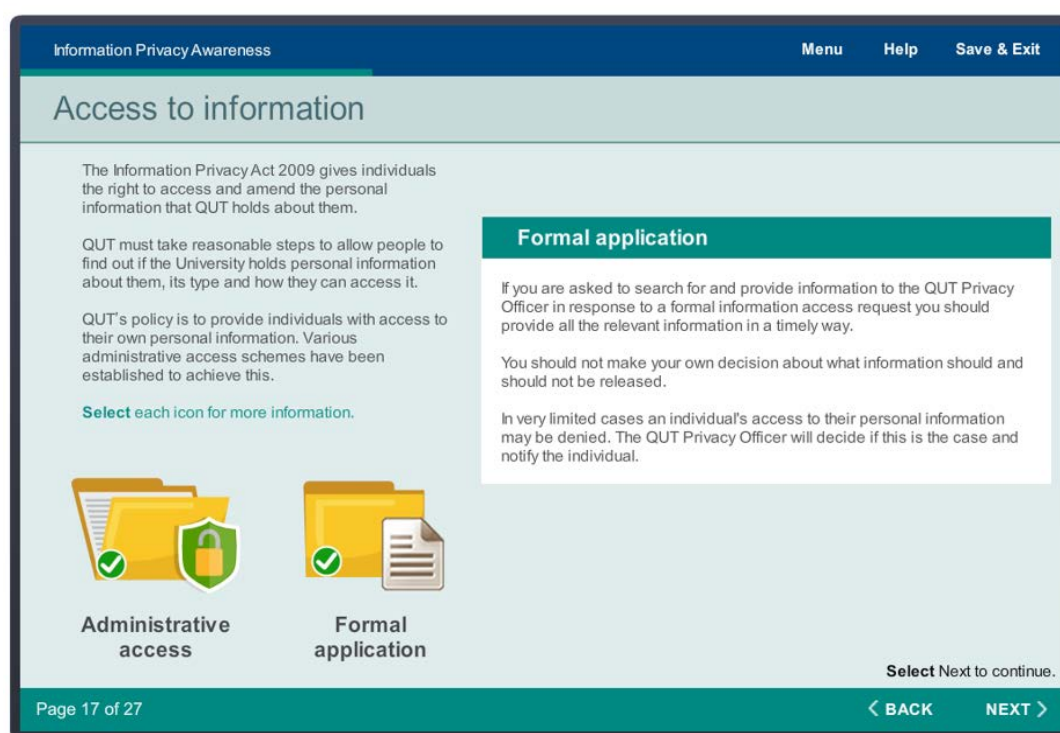
Source: Queensland University of Technology

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[7] Accessible at https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/guidelines/for-government/access-and-amendment/processing-applications/searching-for-documents-process-and-requirements.

5 Leadership

Key findings

- Each university has implemented strategies to actively monitor and oversee the proactive release of information.

- Griffith has clarified the status of policy information provided on its privacy webpage, but has not clarified the status of policy information provided on its RTI webpage.

- QUT, UQ and USQ updated their RTI and IP training materials to address feedback from OIC during the original review.

- Griffith updated its IP training module. There was no evidence of amendments to its RTI training module.

- QUT and USQ added RTI and IP general awareness training into their mandatory induction program.

5.1 Introduction

In our original review, we examined the universities' leadership and governance frameworks, including strategies for good governance, active management of information, organisational structure, resourcing and training.

Each of the four universities had a committee that was broadly responsible for strategic information management or information and communications technology (ICT). We looked at how these committees managed information as a strategic asset. We found that the universities could adopt strategies for active monitoring and oversight of the proactive release of information to inform their committees better about progress in addressing the requirements of the RTI Act.

We also examined whether the universities' plans or work programs identified or contained right to information and information privacy initiatives. Griffith and UQ's strategic plans and work programs contained information management projects and activities, whereas QUT and USQ focused on ICT projects. Consequently, we recommended that QUT and USQ include information management activities in their plans and work programs.

We assessed the universities' RTI and IP training materials and recommended the universities broaden the scope of this material and increase staff participation in general awareness training.

All four universities maintained a publicly available library or manual of their policies and procedures. The libraries/manuals for UQ, QUT and USQ contained right to information and information privacy policies and procedures, whereas Griffith's policy library contained its privacy plan. Because Griffith had no formal right to information policy, we recommended that it clarify the status of any existing policy or procedural information on its RTI webpage, to ensure that people using the website had confidence that the information provided represents the official policy of the university.

Figure 5A shows the implementation status of the recommendations about leadership.

Figure 5A

Leadership

	Recommendation	Status
3	All universities ensure that the responsible bodies governing information management implement ongoing active monitoring and oversight of the proactive release of information in accordance with the RTI and IP Acts, within the next 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
	QUT and USQ include information management activities in future strategic information management plans and operational work programs, within the next 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (QUT and USQ)
4	Griffith clarifies the status of policy information provided on its website about right to information policy and procedures, within 12 months.	Partially implemented (Griffith)
5	Griffith expands the scope and coverage of general awareness training about right to information and information privacy and delivers the updated training to all university staff within 12 months.	Partially implemented (Griffith)
	QUT updates its training modules regarding right to information and information privacy and in particular administrative release within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (QUT)
	QUT implements a plan to deliver its updated training module on information privacy to all existing university staff within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (QUT)
	UQ reviews its general awareness training programs and incorporates greater content relating to right to information within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (UQ)
	USQ updates training modules regarding right to information and information privacy within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (USQ)
	USQ includes information about right to information and information privacy in its induction process for new staff within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (USQ)

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

5.2 Conclusions

The four universities have improved their management of information as a strategic asset. Their plans and work programs included information management activities to help them monitor the proactive release of information. They have also extended general awareness training in right to information and information privacy and improved the quality of this training.

Together, these activities will help to ensure that the four universities exploit the information they hold to its fullest extent, and that staff are supported to manage, share and use information appropriately.

5.3 Results

The universities have undertaken a range of activities to ensure the governing bodies responsible for information management actively monitor and oversee the proactive release of information. QUT developed a corporate information asset policy[8] to clarify the roles and responsibilities for information identified as being of value to QUT's business functions. For example, it allocated responsibility for '*sharing of the information asset to the maximum extent possible in accordance with data standards and data security*' to the data custodian.

UQ expanded the scope of the terms of reference for its information management governance committee by adding the responsibility to '*Where appropriate, consider data sets that may be suitable for proactive release and make recommendations to the Chief Operating Officer on the University's obligations under the Open Data Strategy for Queensland Universities*'.

USQ's ICT Strategy Board endorsed the establishment of a working group that will consider requests to release datasets. The working group will also look at how the university already releases information - for example, under legislative and administrative access schemes - to guide them in their considerations. The ICT Strategy Board has oversight of the working group's considerations through half-yearly reporting.

USQ and QUT addressed information management activities in their strategic plans and work programs.

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[8] Accessible at http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/F/F_01_09.jsp.

For example, USQ's *Enterprise ICT Plan 2016 – 2020* includes activities specifically aimed at increasing the availability and accessibility of information, such as:

- identify and eliminate barriers to information access and promote openness of data internally

- enhance capacity for data collection to inform training and digital fluency needs identification over time.

QUT's *Governance and Legal Services Operational Plan 2016* identified key operational priorities for 2016, including the progressive rollout of committee portals as an efficient means of promulgating committee information and supporting committee business.

We assessed Griffith's implementation of recommendation four as partially implemented. While Griffith updated its privacy webpage to state that it had promulgated its privacy plan as university policy, there was no equivalent statement about existing policy or procedural information on its right to information webpage. Updating the right to information landing page with the status of policy or procedural information provided on that page would implement this recommendation in full. Alternatively, Griffith could fully implement this recommendation by including a right to information policy in its policy library.

QUT, UQ and USQ updated their training material to address the feedback provided in our original review. QUT and USQ also addressed specific recommendations to expand the extent to which they provide training by including RTI and IP training in mandatory induction training.

We assessed that Griffith had partially implemented this recommendation. While it has expanded the scope of its general awareness training on information privacy, it did not provide evidence showing similar improvements to its general awareness training on right to information.

QUT, as part of a broader training review, implemented a framework to deliver improved online training. Improvements included better design and graphics, the ability to define a target audience and frequency, and automated reporting on completion rates.

Figure 5B provides an example of the design and graphics used on the menu screen of QUT's Information Privacy Awareness online training module.

Figure 5B

QUT – Information Privacy Awareness online training module

Source: Queensland University of Technology

QUT staff are required to complete the Information Privacy Awareness online training module if their length of employment is two months or more, and the number of hours worked per week is 10 hours or more.

Refresher training will occur every two years. Ongoing and fixed-term staff receive automated emails with one month's notice of required training they are due to complete. Staff and their supervisor receive a reminder email if the staff member has not completed the training within one month of its scheduled completion date.

6 Accountability

Key findings

- Griffith, QUT and UQ have developed performance measures to monitor their RTI and IP functions at the operational and strategic level.

- USQ is collecting data that it can use to inform the development of operational performance measures.

6.1   Introduction

Our original review examined the universities' systems for monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of its RTI and IP operations. We found evidence of performance measurement at the operational level across all four universities, and project based performance measures at the strategic level at Griffith and UQ.

We recommended that the universities develop a holistic suite of performance measures to ensure ongoing monitoring of right to information and information privacy. This will assist the universities to identify improvements they could make to increase the proactive release of information and protection of personal information.

Figure 6A shows the implementation status of the recommendations about accountability.

Figure 6A

Accountability

Recommendation		Status
6	All universities, within 15 months, develop and incorporate performance measures and targets at the strategic and operational level to measure effectiveness and efficiency in implementing right to information and information privacy processes.	Recommendation fully implemented (Griffith, QUT and UQ)
		Implementation in progress (USQ)

Source: *Office of the Information Commissioner*

6.2 Conclusions

Since our original review, Griffith, QUT and UQ have established a review program, or included performance measures in strategic and operational plans, to monitor and report on the performance of their RTI and IP functions. USQ is collecting data that will provide a solid foundation from which to undertake further work in identifying suitable performance measures and targets.

These activities have placed the universities in a better position to sustain a culture of accountability for performance and continuous improvement in their RTI and IP functions.

The universities' analysis of the performance information means they can identify and implement improvements about proactive and administrative release of information and protection of personal information. This will benefit the community, create value, and influence trust and confidence in the universities' products, services and policies.

6.3 Results

Griffith, QUT and UQ have established a review program or included performance measures at a strategic or operational level to monitor and improve their compliance with the RTI and IP Acts. USQ's implementation of this recommendation is in progress. Integrating suitable performance measures and targets into its annual planning process, together with ongoing status reports on RTI and IP projects to the governance committee, would implement this recommendation in full.

QUT incorporated performance measures and targets into its annual operational plan for Governance and Legal Services, the unit responsible for RTI and IP functions. There was a strong focus on maximum disclosure of information to the community and compliance with the legislative requirements of the RTI and IP Acts. The plan included operational priorities for 2016, as well as medium term three-year goals.

Examples of performance indicators included:

- completion of the online RTI and IP induction training module

- review of RTI and IP policies, procedures, resources and manuals

- review of student collection notice

- review of communications to staff promoting greater awareness of RTI processes.

UQ developed a '*RTI and IP Performance Measures Compliance Program*' based on the performance areas described in our guideline: *How to review and measure your agency's progress in implementing RTI and IP.*[9] Griffith also incorporated our guideline into its annual assessment of how well the university is meeting its legislative obligations.

It is encouraging to note the value that Griffith places on compliance with its legislative obligations in its *Griffith University Compliance Framework*[10]*,* as shown in figure 6B.

Figure 6B

Griffith University Compliance Framework (extract)

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2. COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The University's compliance program is an important element of the University's corporate governance framework.

The compliance program aims to prevent, and where necessary, identify and respond to, noncompliance with the University's obligations under laws, regulations, codes and its own organisational standards. An important priority for the compliance program is to encourage a culture of valuing compliance with obligations, consistent with the profile of a good corporate citizen.

The compliance program's general aims are pursued through the following key elements:

- identification and management of the University's legal obligations in the Register of Compliance Obligations;
- allocation of responsibility to the relevant operational areas for ensuring compliance with obligations;
- the assessment of how well the University meets its obligations, and where and how it could improve, including identification of any non-compliance and remedial action taken;
- promotion and training to staff and management on the importance of compliance with specific obligations, as well as commitment to compliance as an organisational value in line with the University's Code of Conduct.

Source: *Griffith University*

We assessed USQ's implementation of the recommendation as in progress. It broadened the operational reporting to its Audit and Risk Committee to include activities such as administrative access requests, privacy impact assessments, enquiries and outsourcing arrangements. Figure 6C shows the information privacy activities that USQ reports to its Audit and Risk Committee[11].

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[9] Accessible at https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/guidelines/for-government/access-and-amendment/proactive-disclosure/measuring-progress-on-rti-implementation.
[10] Accessible at http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Compliance%20Framework.pdf.
[11] Noting USQ's advice that it is planning to refine this reporting process, which may result in changes.

Figure 6C

USQ Information Privacy Report to the Audit and Risk Committee (extract)

Handled as	Reporting Period (- -15 to - -15)			
	Handled in Period		Status at - -15	
	Carried forward	New	Finalised	In progress
Administrative access application (A)				
Information privacy access application (B)				
Threshold privacy assessment (C)				
Privacy impact assessment (D)				
Privacy enquiry (E)				
Disclosures: QPS enquiry (F)				
Disclosures: other (G)				
Privacy Deed (H)				
Privacy Complaint (I)				
Total:				

Source: University of Southern Queensland

The Audit and Risk Committee also received strategic performance information in these reports, such as status updates on USQ's implementation of the recommendations from our original review.

USQ could use this information, together with the half-yearly reports provided to the ICT Strategy Board about requests to release USQ datasets, to inform the selection of suitable performance measures and targets for inclusion in its annual plans and work programs. Reporting on these measures, and continuing to provide its governance committee with status updates of RTI and IP projects, such as those listed in USQ's *Enterprise ICT Plan 2016 – 2020*, would implement this recommendation in full.

7 Maximum disclosure

Key findings

- Each university's website provided easily accessible information about administrative access arrangements.

- All four universities have considered developing formal administrative access arrangements for making referee reports available to applicants for promotion.

- Each university has published an Information Asset Register on its website, and developed procedures for maintaining the register.

7.1 Introduction

Our original review examined two strategies for routine and proactive disclosure of information to the public: fast tracking the provision of information through administrative access, and leveraging online information delivery.

Documented processes for the administrative release of certain information not only allow the community to understand how administrative access works in the agency, but also increase the confidence of agency staff to release information.

In our original review, we found that the visibility of available administrative access arrangements online was an issue. We also identified that requests to access referee reports arising out of the academic promotion process was a common application type and recommended that the universities adopt procedures to streamline processing requests of this type.

We reported that the universities did not maintain publicly available Information Asset Registers online. This meant that the community might find it difficult to discover what information the university holds.

Figure 7A shows the implementation status of the recommendations about maximum disclosure.

Figure 7A

Maximum disclosure

	Recommendation	Status
7	All universities ensure that administrative access arrangements are made more prominent on the universities' websites within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
8	All universities, as a matter of good practice, consider developing an administrative access arrangement for making referee reports available to applicants for promotion, and adopt procedures that maximise disclosure and streamline handling of any requests by applicants to obtain referee reports, within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
9	All universities develop an Information Asset Register within 12 months, along with procedures to ensure the Information Asset Register is maintained. All universities publish their Information Asset Register on the website to create greater transparency as to the information resources available, within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

7.2   Conclusions

The four universities have made their administrative access arrangements more visible online. This will help raise internal and external awareness of the options available for obtaining information held by the universities.

The publication of an online information asset register by each university will encourage access to, and reuse of, information. It will also assist the universities to avoid any unnecessary duplication of information.

Together, these improvements will support the universities to make the maximum amount of information available to the community efficiently and economically.

7.3   Results

The four universities have increased the visibility of their administrative access arrangements on their websites. QUT, UQ and USQ websites provided information about the types of information available for release under formal administrative access arrangements, such as academic transcripts. This information was accessible from the RTI webpage and from the relevant policies and procedures. It is encouraging to note that we were able to locate this information more easily than in our original review.

Griffith's website clearly promoted administrative release as the simplest means by which an individual might access information. Its website stated the timeframe in which Griffith would generally decide whether to release the requested documents administratively.

USQ's administrative access arrangements were particularly prominent. As shown in figure 7B, the availability of administrative access was visible in the webpage title, navigation pane and in the images used as links in the body of the webpage.

Figure 7B

USQ – Right to Information and Administrative Access Scheme webpage[12]
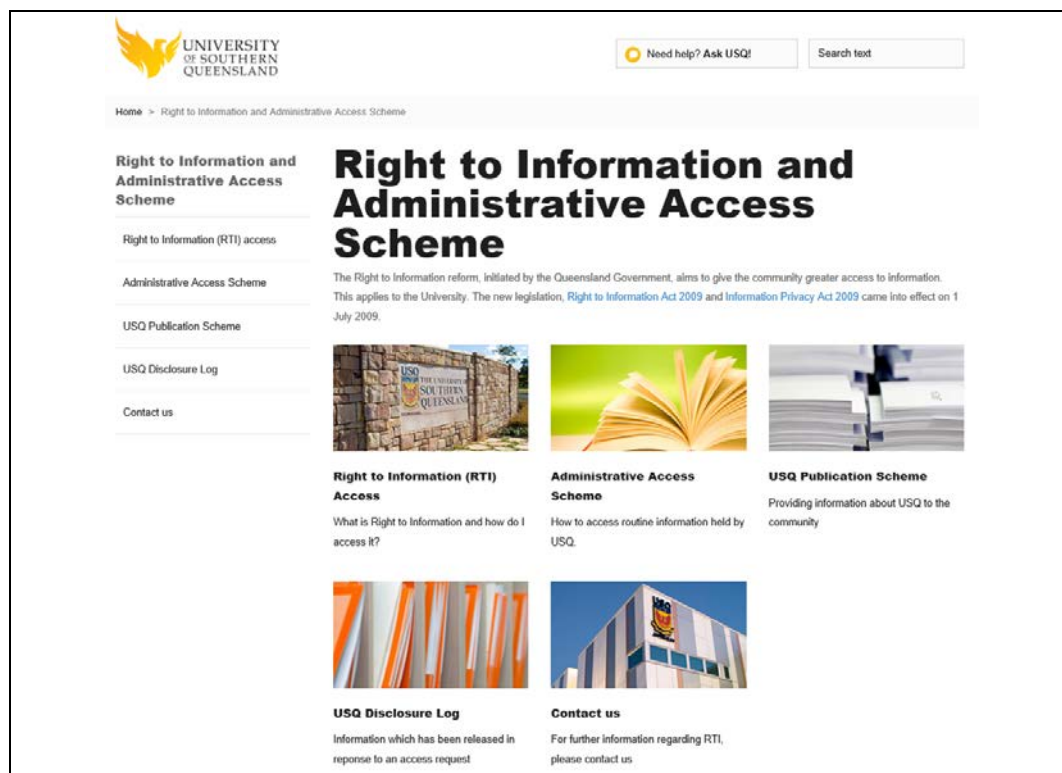
Source: University of Southern Queensland

All four universities considered developing a formal access arrangement for referee reports arising out of the academic promotion process. Key factors they considered included the volume of RTI applications received for this type of referee report, and the efficiency of existing practices in handling requests of this nature.

UQ and USQ developed a formal access arrangement to provide applicants for academic promotion with access to referee reports. Their websites contained details of the arrangements.

Figure 7C shows UQ's administrative access arrangement, as set out in its *Right to Information – Procedures*[13].

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[12] Accessible at http://www.usq.edu.au/right-to-information.

Figure 7C

UQ – Right to Information – Procedures (extract)

> **5.2 Access to referee reports for continuing appointment and promotion of academic staff levels A-D**
>
> Academic staff who have applied for confirmation of continuing appointment or promotion (excluding professorial confirmation and promotion) are permitted access to referee reports, only where the referee has agreed to the release of the report to the staff member. To access the referee reports, the staff member must:
>
> - lodge a written request to the Right to Information and Privacy Office via email to rtip@uq.edu.au
>
> - specify the reports requested
>
> - include a copy of the applicant's staff card.
>
> The application will normally be processed within 15 business days and access to the reports will be provided electronically to the nominated email address or by collection on CD from the Right to Information and Privacy Office.
>
> Applications seeking access to a) referee reports where the referee has not consented to the disclosure of the report to the staff member or b) other documents relating to an application for confirmation of continuing appointment or promotion must be made under the *Information Privacy Act 2009.*

Source: University of Queensland

In its response to the original review, QUT did not agree to developing a formal access arrangement for referee reports because it had received no requests for records of this nature in 10 years. However, we assessed that QUT has fully implemented this recommendation. It has embedded the proactive release of the report containing an evaluation of the applicant's suitability for promotion to the respective applicant in its policy *B/5.3 Promotion for academic staff*.

All four universities have published an Information Asset Register (IAR) on their websites, and documented formal processes for its maintenance. The registers contained on average 46 datasets, and were easy to locate using the website search function.

Each university has taken steps to increase the visibility of its IAR. All four universities added a link to the 'Our Lists' class in the publication scheme; and one university added a link to its RTI webpage.

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[13] Accessible at http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.60.01-right-information.

The level of detail about the datasets varied between universities[14]. At a minimum, each university described its datasets, most typically grouped into key functions.

Griffith detailed the dataset's owner, custodian, security classification, access rights, keywords and creation date. Similarly, USQ published additional details about the system owner, business process supported by the dataset and the dataset's source system.

The usability of the IARs varied. The universities presented the information differently: by means of an online tool, expand/collapse headings, a table, or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)[15]. Figure 7D shows Griffith's register.[16] It had multiple search options, such as the ability to select from an alphabetical list, apply filters or conduct a full text search.

Figure 7D

Griffith - Information Asset Register

Source: Griffith University

Each university provided contact details for enquiries about its IAR. A good practice noted in two registers was an explicit statement of how the community could request access to the listed datasets.

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[14] Please see the Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture *Information asset register guideline*, accessible at https://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/images/documents/QGEA_documents/Information-asset-register-v200-publish.docx, for advice on content typically captured in an information asset register.
[15] PDF is a file format developed by Adobe for sharing electronic documents. PDF files preserve and protect the content and layout of a document, regardless of the software, hardware or operating system used to view or print the document. However, it can be challenging to reuse information within a PDF document, as the content cannot be easily manipulated.
[16] Accessible at https://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/right-to-information/information-asset-register.

Griffith, QUT[17] and USQ[18] developed a policy, procedure or guideline setting out roles and responsibilities for managing their IARs, including an annual review for currency and accuracy. UQ incorporated maintenance of its register into its '*RTI and IP Performance Measures and Compliance Program*'. This program included a review of the IAR every two years as a measure of its proactive release of information.

A good practice noted at Griffith was to embed processes into its standard project initiation templates and solution architecture reviews[19] for updating the register when a business process or system creates or uses a new dataset.

The universities have devoted considerable time and resources to developing their IARs. It is encouraging to see their commitment to regular reviews and growth of their registers. Examples of activities include:

- engaging a consultant to assist in the development of an Information Asset Management Framework
- appointing a project manager to implement the IAR and system to appropriately manage the use of corporate information within the university
- initiating a project to identify corporate information asset held at faculty level, assign roles for these information assets and further populate the IAR
- procuring specialist taxonomy software[20] to assist in the ongoing management of the IAR
- delivering face-to-face training and workshops for data custodians and system administrators
- developing a project plan for the continued population of the IAR.

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[17] QUT F/6.3 Access to information policy, accessible at http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/F/F_06_03.jsp.
[18] USQ Information Asset and Security Classification Procedures, accessible at http://policy.usq.edu.au/documents/13931PL.
[19] A solution architecture review ensures that solutions in development or being delivered to solve a business problem comply with the current and future structure and behaviour for an organisation's processes, information, applications, technology and human resources.
[20] Taxonomy software is a tool that is used to create and maintain a classification scheme structure, and then assign each piece of content a place in that structure.

8 Compliance

Key findings

- The four universities have addressed all feedback that we provided on their publication schemes during our original review.

- Each university has amended its processes so that it records decisions not to publish information released under the RTI Act to the disclosure log.

- Each university has amended its processes to include contacting applicants where it is not possible to provide access in the format requested and negotiate an alternate access type.

- USQ reduced the average time to process an access application from 46.4 business days to 17 business days.

8.1 Introduction

Our original review looked at whether the universities were complying with legislative requirements for publication schemes and disclosure logs. We also looked at the universities' application processing and personal information handling practices.

We found that the universities could include more information in their publication schemes and the terms on which this information is available. In addition, the universities were not routinely recording their decisions about not publishing information to the disclosure log.

The original review noted instances at three universities where they did not provide access in the type requested by the applicant, and there was no evidence on file of a discussion with the applicant as to whether or not the alternative access type was suitable. We also recommended that USQ take action to reduce the length of time it takes to process applications.

Figure 8A shows the implementation status of the recommendations about compliance.

	Recommendation	Status
10	All universities review and update their publication schemes to meet compliance requirements within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
11	All universities document any decision not to publish information released under the RTI Act to the agency's disclosure log, and retain the reasons for the decisions in internal records in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines, commencing immediately.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
12	All universities, as a matter of good practice, ensure that if it is necessary to provide information in an alternative access type (for example, provide information by compact disc rather than a hard copy) the applicant is first contacted to negotiate how access will be provided, commencing immediately.	Recommendation fully implemented (all universities)
13	USQ, as a matter of good practice, takes action to reduce the time taken to process applications within 12 months.	Recommendation fully implemented (USQ)

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner

8.2   Conclusions

The four universities are making better use of push model strategies, such as publication schemes, to make information available to the community. These actions support the community's access to information and show the universities' commitment to transparency and accountability.

The universities' improvements to application handling practices means applicants will have faster and easier access to information.

8.3   Results

In our original review, we issued a detailed list of findings to each university about improving the administration of their publication schemes. Common opportunities for improvement included populating the publication scheme with as much significant, appropriate and accurate information as possible, and giving further advice about the terms on which the university will make information available.

The four universities have addressed all findings. Examples of how the universities have improved their publication schemes include:

- Griffith updated the 'Our lists' class of information to include links to its disclosure log, asset register, online verification of qualifications and policy library

- QUT updated the 'Our finances' class of information with a link to the Queensland Government QTenders website, from where information about tenders and awarded contracts is accessible

- QUT added advice to its publication scheme webpage that most information listed in the publication scheme can be downloaded free of charge and provided contact details for requesting access information in an alternative format

- UQ updated the 'Our priorities' class of information to include a link to its strategic planning webpage, from which its progress and achievement reports are accessible

- UQ updated the 'Our lists' class of information with contact details for accessing those registers which are not available online

- USQ added its gifts and benefits register to the 'Our Lists' class of information.

The four universities have amended their processes to document decisions about not publishing information about documents released under the RTI Act on the disclosure logs.

QUT updated its notice of decision template to remind the decision-maker to keep a file note in the corporate electronic recordkeeping system of all decisions not to publish information to the disclosure log. UQ implemented a '*Disclosure Log Assessment*' form to record its reasons for deciding not to publish information on its disclosure log. A good practice noted at two universities was that they also documented details of their decisions that it was appropriate to publish information to their disclosure logs.

Three of the four universities held records about decisions not to publish information on the disclosure log. The records documented the reasons why publication to the disclosure log was not appropriate. The remaining university could not produce such records because it had not finalised any RTI applications since updating its notice of decision template.

The four universities have amended their processes about providing information in an alternate access type and contacting the applicant to negotiate the proposed access type.

UQ provided copies of correspondence with applicants where it was unable to provide access to documents in the type requested by the applicants and it had negotiated access in an alternative format. A good practice noted in two instances was to explain why the requested access type was not feasible.

The other three universities could not provide evidence of negotiating an alternative access type. This is because they have not finalised any applications where they were unable to provide access in the requested format since the original review.

Figure 8B shows the volume of access applications finalised by the four universities in 2014-15, based on the most recent data available.

Figure 8B

Number of access applications finalised by the universities in 2014-15

University	Number of access applications		
	RTI	IP	Total
Griffith University	4	2	6
Queensland University of Technology	1	4	5
University of Queensland	9	14	23
University of Southern Queensland	2	1	3
All universities	**16**	**21**	**37**

Source: *Right to Information Act 2009 and Information Privacy Act 2009 – Annual Report 2014-15[21]*

In light of the small volume of applications, we assessed that Griffith, QUT and USQ had fully implemented the recommendation because they incorporated procedures in their application handling process about contacting applicants to ensure that the proposed access type was appropriate.

For example, QUT updated its notice of decision template to remind decision-makers to consult with the applicant where it is more practical to provide documents in a different format to that requested by the applicant. Griffith took similar steps by updating its RTI and IP manual with an instruction that a decision-maker contacts the applicant to discuss the form in which the applicant wishes to receive the document.

USQ updated its template notice of a considered decision to state that it will release documents in the type negotiated with the applicant. A good practice also adopted by USQ was the inclusion of a checkbox on the running sheet for processing applications for capturing the negotiated access type.

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[21] Accessible at
http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/TabledPapers/2016/5516T1025.pdf.

Our original review reported that while USQ was processing all applications within statutory processing periods, it had a much longer average processing time compared to the other universities, with an average time of 46.4 business days.

Reports to USQ's Audit and Risk Committee on application handling show that the average time taken to process an application during the period March 2015 to March 2016 was 17 business days. This is a 63.4% improvement in the time taken to process applications. As USQ handles a small number of applications every year, we acknowledge that one or two applications that are complex, or involve assessing a large volume of information, are sufficient to unduly influence the average time taken to process an application.

Appendix – Comments received

In accordance with our policies and procedures for the conduct of reviews, we provided this report to Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland with a request for comment.

Griffith University

Griffith University responded via email on 24 November 2016 that it had no further comments in response to the proposed report.

Queensland University of Technology

QUT

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Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, Vice-Chancellor

11 November 2016

Ms J S Mead
A/Information Commissioner
Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland
PO Box 10143
Adelaide Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Ms Mead

Follow-up review of universities' implementation of recommendations
Compliance with Right to Information and Information Privacy

Thank you for your letter of 1 November with the report you propose to provide to the Queensland Parliamentary Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on 30 November 2016.

We acknowledge the report and your finding that the eleven recommendations for QUT have been fully implemented.

We are committed to open and transparent engagement with our students and community partners. We therefore very much appreciate the collegial way in which the review was conducted and the constructive advice that was provided to us during the process.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter Coaldrake
Vice-Chancellor

CRICOS No. 00213J ABN 83 701 724 622

University of Queensland

THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Vice-Chancellor and President
Professor Peter Høj
MSc PhD DUniv FTSE

16 November 2016

Ms Jenny Mead
A/Information Commissioner
Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland
PO Box 10143
Adelaide Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Email: administration@oic.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Mead, *Jenny*

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW OF UNIVERSITIES' IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS
COMPLIANCE WITH RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND INFORMATION PRIVACY**

I refer to your letter of 1 November 2015 advising of the outcome of the Office of the Information Commissioner's follow-up review into The University of Queensland's implementation of the recommendations contained in the *Compliance Review – Queensland Universities: Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland: Review of compliance with the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld).*

It was pleasing to note that the University has fully implemented all recommendations made in your original review.

I would like to thank Ms Suzette Jefferies and staff in the Performance Monitoring and Reporting Unit for their assistance over the past year during the implementation of the recommendations of the original review.

Please refer any inquiries you have in relation to this review to Mr Anthony Zgrajewski on 3365 2571.

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter Høj
Vice-Chancellor and President

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16 November 2016

JS Mead
A/Information Commissioner
P o Box 10143
Adelaide Street
Brisbane   4000

Attention: Sandra Heidrich
E: Sandra.heidrich@oic.qld.gov.au

Dear Sandra

Thank you for your letter dated 1 November 2016 regarding the Follow-up review of universities' implementation of recommendations – Compliance with Right to Information and Information Privacy.

I advise that the report dealing with the University of Southern Queensland's implementation of the recommendations appears to provide a reasonable assessment of USQ's compliance and I have no further comments to add.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Jan Thomas
Vice-Chancellor & President