

## Public Access Agency Reference Group Meeting

### Special meeting to discuss resourcing and recruitment of FOI officers

**Date:** Monday 4 October 2021

**Time:** 2:00 – 3:00pm (Microsoft Teams)

#### Participants

Joanne Kummrow, Public Access Deputy Commissioner, OVIC (Chair)

Ianina Belski, Assistant Commissioner Public Access Reviews and Regulation, OVIC

Shantelle Ryan, Assistant Commissioner Public Access Operations and Compliance, OVIC

Annan Boag, Assistant Commissioner Privacy and Assurance

Andrew Weston, Department of Transport

Cameron Montgomery, City of Ballarat

Cleo Kerama, Department of Transport

Felicity Wright, Transport Accident Commission

Jane Taylor, Department of Education and Training

Katharine Allen, Monash University

Lisa Scholes, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Melinda Robinson, Department of Justice and Community Safety

Monica Barnes, Country Fire Authority

Raffaella Di Miao, University of Melbourne

Robin Davey, Victoria Police

Kate Kulman, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Matthew Thompson, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Michael Ghobrial, Department of Health

Sonia Rivalland, Department of Health

Stuart Atkins, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Bela Belojevic, Victorian Public Sector Commission

Anita Mugo, Secretariat, OVIC

#### Agenda Items

1.	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting start: 2:02pm</li> <li>The Public Access Deputy Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jude Hunter, Victorian WorkCover Authority</li> <li>Richard Long, Monash University</li> </ul> <p><b>Previous meeting minutes and action items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees confirmed meeting minutes of 23 August 2021.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Presentation on the Jobs and Skills Exchange</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Victorian Public Service Commission gave a presentation on the Jobs and Skills Exchange (JSE) and its recruitment policy.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commission noted some of the reasons the JSE was established including to reduce expenditure on labour hire and consultancies, enhance skills and capabilities of VPS employees and support mobility in the VPS.</li> <li>• The Commission gave an overview of membership and engagement with the JSE noting there are approximately 40,000 members on JSE. 32,000 of those are active members and the remaining have created member profiles.</li> <li>• The Commission gave an overview of the number of recruitments and placements undertaken through the JSE. The Commission noted approximately 103,000 applications have been processed through the JSE. Most jobs advertised on the JSE are for projects and policy positions.</li> <li>• The Commission noted some of the initiatives undertaken to enable the JSE to enhance skills across the VPS and increase mobility including piloting a VPS administrative specialists pool which has been running for approximately 8 months. Specialists from the pool are deployed across the VPS on assignments varying in length from 2 weeks – 2 months. The length of the assignment is dependent on the short term needs of the Department requiring the specialist. The Commission noted it is looking into setting up pools for specialist skills such as customer service officers and project officers.</li> <li>• The Commission noted it has launched a suite of short courses and skill set training delivered by Box Hill Institute and Melbourne Polytechnic.</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b>Resourcing and recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Public Access Deputy Commissioner invited members to share the challenges they experience with resourcing and recruitment of FOI officers and possible solutions.</li> <li>• Members discussed several challenges including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finding suitable candidates for short term contracts or when staff go on leave. Some members noted they often chose not to fill the role given the difficulty in finding an appropriate candidate although this tends to create a backlog of FOI matters. One member noted the structure of their organisation as a University makes it particularly challenging to fill short term roles.</li> <li>○ Lack of encouragement for staff to take secondments.</li> <li>○ Managing sudden surges and increases in workloads.</li> <li>○ Finding candidates with the ideal set of transferable skills to fill FOI officer positions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some members noted they have been successful recruiting candidates from other jurisdictions like New Zealand and the Commonwealth Government.</li> <li>• One member suggested OVIC and other agencies could consider making staff available to each other particularly to manage surge capacity. Another member noted that there may be an opportunity to formalise a training program for FOI officers.</li> <li>• Members agreed it would be valuable to have a pool of FOI officers like the JSE’s administrative specialist pool.</li> <li>• The Public Access Deputy Commissioner asked whether attendees would be interested in having further discussions with the VPSC on the issue of resourcing and recruitment of FOI officers.</li> <li>• The VPSC noted they would be interested in having further discussions on the matter.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Public Access Deputy Commissioner invited members to contact the Secretariat if interested in participating in further discussions on the matter.</li></ul>
4.	<b>Other business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>
5.	<b>Meeting close:</b> 3:08pm