

Our ref: RTI/2014-15-02

21 November 2014

Mr T. Lonsdale
PO Box 6096
Windsor Delivery Centre
NSW 2756

Dear Mr Lonsdale,

Re: Right to Information Act 2009 – Request for Information

I refer to your application, received by this office on 7 October 2014, requesting information under the terms of the *Right to Information Act 2009 Qld* (RTI).

In relation to your application you requested:

“details of research funds, sponsorship, agreements and contracts between pet-food companies and the James Cook University, its staff and students”.

As previously advised the date by which a decision must be made by the University is 10 November 2014 unless third party consultation was undertaken, in which case the deadline is 24 November 2014.

Searches

Searches were conducted by the College of Public Health, Medical and Veterinary Sciences and Research Services.

Documents located in response to your RTI application

No documents were located as such but the relevant staff provided answers to your questions.

Decision

I have decided to grant full access to the information provided that falls within the scope of your request.

You asked that the answers be grouped into categories as follows:

a) Capital contributions for buildings, laboratories, library endowments etc.

Answer: nil. The most recent development of buildings for Veterinary Science was funded by the Commonwealth Government (2004 onwards).

b) Current account funding for research projects, lecturer salaries, textbooks etc.

Answer: the University is not in receipt of any funding for research projects or lecturer salaries. A pet food company (Hills) routinely donate a textbook - *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition-Quick Consult* to every third year student and to some staff.

c) Contributions in kind including student excursions, guest lecturers, product supply, teaching materials, teaching aids etc.

A pet food company (Hills) used to provide three hours of “unbranded” clinical nutrition lectures and a practical class as part of the JCU vet curriculum to third year students in the past. JCU now delivers these clinical nutrition lectures to third year students with our own academic staff (nutritionists) where students are encouraged to critically assess different feeding strategies for dogs and cats, including the raw meat and bones philosophy. As part of that same subject donated food (Hills & Royal Canin) is used in practical classes where students are required to interpret the nutritional panel and other labelling information on pet food packets and assess its suitability, or not, for particular life stages/breeds. The food concerned was on-donated to a pet rehoming centre and the packaging

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retained by the University. The University ensures a balanced approach of exposing students to several competing ideas about the optimal way to feed companion animals whilst encouraging students to analyse the topic critically and assist them to develop the ability to do so.

A pet food company (Hills) currently deliver eight hours of “unbranded” clinical nutrition lectures as part of the JCU vet curriculum to fourth year students. As stated these lectures are unbranded and have been carefully evaluated by a senior academic to ensure that they are independent, objective and unbiased. There is no formal, written agreement or any other documentation about this longstanding arrangement. The lecture materials are not copied or provided to any third party without the express permission of the copyright owner.

The University has no involvement in any arrangements students may have made with any pet food companies.

Review rights

If you are not satisfied with this decision you can apply for an internal review. Internal review is an important part of the review process. An internal review:

- gives us the opportunity to consider new or additional evidence or information from you
- allows further searches to be conducted if necessary
- is conducted by a different officer within the University (of the same or higher seniority)
- gives us the opportunity to improve our decision making processes
- is less formal than external review
- will result in a new decision about the internal review application being made
- in addition to an external review (if needed) provides the advantage of two review processes.

An internal review application must be made to the University within **20 business days** after the date of the written decision notice. Your application can be lodged with the University in person, by mail or email.

If you wish to request an internal review of this decision you should do so in writing to:

Mr Michael Kern
University Secretary (Internal Review Officer)
Secretariat & Records
JCU
Townsville 4811
michael.kern@jcu.edu.au

If you are dissatisfied with the internal review decision, you can then apply for external review. You may however apply directly for external review without first seeking internal review.

If applying for external review, either directly or after internal review, the application must be made to the Information Commissioner within **20 business days** from the date of the written notice of the decision to be reviewed. An application can be lodged with the Office of the Information Commissioner in one of the following ways:

In person: Level 4, 300 Adelaide St Brisbane
Post: PO Box 10143, Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld 4000
Fax: 07 3005 7150 Email: administration@oic.qld.gov.au
Online: <http://www.oic.qld.gov.au/external-review/application-external-review>

Yours sincerely,

I. D. Troupe

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