



Request for curricula vitae of applicants selected for interview

Legislation	Official Information Act 1982
Agency	Department of Social Welfare
Ombudsman	Sir Brian Elwood
Case number(s)	W30757
Date	May 1994

Request for curricula vitae of applicants selected for interview—information withheld under s 9(2)(a)—summaries made available under s 16

As part of a broad request for information relating to the process by which candidates for a position in the Department of Social Welfare had been selected and for reasons for the decision not to select him for interview, the requester asked for copies of the curricula vitae of those selected for interview.

In the course of the investigation, the individuals concerned were consulted. One consented to the release of his curriculum vitae, the others did not. In considering whether or not the requirements of section 9(2)(a) of the OIA were made out in respect of the curricula vitae of those who did not consent to their release, regard was had to IPP11 of the Privacy Act. The persons concerned had given the information to the Department for the sole purpose of applying for the position. They would not have contemplated that the information would be released to third parties without their consent and they had not consented when asked. While it was acknowledged that some of the information may have been published, for example, examination results in the newspaper, the information was not publicly available in the detailed and collated form contained in the curricula vitae. It was therefore concluded that it was necessary in terms of s 9(2)(a) to withhold the details of the curricula vitae of those persons who did not consent to release in order to protect their privacy.

However, section 16(1)(e) and section 16(2)(c) of the OIA enable documents to be released in summary form, particularly where release of the actual document requested would prejudice

one of the interests which section 9 of the Act seeks to protect. In terms of section 9(1), there is public interest in an unsuccessful applicant for a position in a public sector organisation having meaningful information about the selection process. Accordingly, the Department was asked to release summaries of the information in the curricula vitae accurately representing the general contents of them, whilst protecting the identities of the candidates. This information would provide the requester with sufficient detail to be able to compare his background qualifications and experience with those of the interviewees.

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