



Joint Media Statement

2 December 2016

250th Anniversary of Global Freedom of Information - 2 December 2016

Today marks the 250th anniversary of the passage of the first Freedom of Information legislation in Sweden. To mark the occasion Australia's State, Territory and Commonwealth Information Commissioners and New Zealand's Ombudsman have joined forces to promote their commitment to the importance of Open Government and the right to access government-held information.

This 250th anniversary of the first freedom of information legislation also coincides with the closing of public submissions on Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan on 2 December 2016.

The following statements can be attributed to the listed State, Territory and Commonwealth independent statutory officers and the New Zealand Ombudsman:

The right to access government held information and our ongoing commitment to Open Government is a cornerstone of modern democratic society.

We mark the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the first freedom of information legislation on 2 December 2016. We do this to acknowledge the important contribution that freedom of information has made to the effectiveness of democratic government across the world since 1766. Freedom of information enables citizens to access information held by governments and their agencies. Having access to Government held information is critical to citizens being able to meaningfully participate in Government decision making.

Access to information and participation in government processes contributes to the transparency of government – promoting better decision making, accountability and greater public trust. This is the key contribution freedom of information has to make to our modern democratic governments.

Co-signed by:

Sven Bluemmel, Western Australian Information Commissioner

Richard Connock, Tasmania's Ombudsman

Michael Ison, Acting Victorian Freedom of Information Commissioner

Wayne Lines, South Australia's Ombudsman

Brenda Monaghan, Northern Territory Information Commissioner

Timothy Pilgrim, PSM, Australian Information Commissioner

Jenny Mead, Acting Queensland Information Commissioner

Elizabeth Tydd, NSW Information Commissioner and Open Data Advocate

Judge Peter Boshier, New Zealand Chief Ombudsman

Leo Donnelly, New Zealand Ombudsman

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