



Office of the
Information Commissioner

Freedom of information for Western Australia



International Access to Information Day

MEDIA RELEASE

28 September 2020

Joint statement on International Access to Information Day 2020

Information Access Commissioners and Ombudsmen from across Australia and New Zealand have released a joint statement to mark International Access to Information Day on 28 September:

International Access to Information Day on 28 September is an opportunity to recognise the vital role that access to information plays in building community trust through transparency, in times of crisis and beyond.

On this day, we join with members of the United Nations, international regulators and others to acknowledge the importance of access to information laws and the community's right to know.

The importance of public access to information as governments respond to the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be overstated. The pro-active release of government-held information underpins our response to COVID-19, bush fires and other emergencies.

It also instils confidence in decisions that promote our economic recovery from the current pandemic by preserving transparency and accountability in government expenditure and ensuring that the public understands decisions that affect them.

The right to information is enshrined in access to information laws across Australia and New Zealand. We are among more than 120 nations around the world to guarantee citizens these rights — a significant expansion since 2009 when UNESCO recorded only 40 countries with these laws.

As countries around the world manage the impacts of COVID-19 and other crises facing communities, access to information becomes even more essential. Open, transparent and accountable governments that proactively release information to the community remain fundamental to a democratic society.

Co-signed by:

Angelene Falk

Australian Information
Commissioner

Peter Boshier

Chief Ombudsman, New
Zealand

Catherine Fletcher

Information Commissioner,
Western Australia

Sven Bluemmel

Information Commissioner,
Victoria

Rachael Rangihaeata

Information Commissioner,
Queensland

Elizabeth Tydd

Information Commissioner,
New South Wales

Wayne Lines

Ombudsman, South Australia

Richard Connock

Ombudsman, Tasmania

Michael Manthorpe

Ombudsman, ACT

Peter Shoyer

Information Commissioner,
Northern Territory

ENDS



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For further information, please contact:

The Office of the Information Commissioner (WA) by email to info@oic.wa.gov.au or phone to 6551 7888.

For more information about International Access to Information Day:

- [Office of the Information Commissioner Western Australia \(OIC WA\)](#)
- [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#)
- [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner \(OAIC\)](#)
- [Office of the Information Commissioner \(Queensland\) \(Qld OIC\)](#)
- [Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner \(OVIC\)](#)

About the Western Australian Information Commissioner

The Information Commissioner is an independent officer who reports directly to Parliament. The position is established by the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (**the FOI Act**) and is supported by staff of the Office of the Information Commissioner (**the OIC**).

The main function of the Information Commissioner is to, in response to complaints by applicants, provide independent external review of decisions made by agencies on access applications and requests to amend personal information under the FOI Act.

The Information Commissioner's other responsibilities include:

- ensuring that agencies are aware of their responsibilities under the FOI Act;
- ensuring that members of the public are aware of the FOI Act and their rights;
- providing assistance to members of the public and agencies on matters relevant to the FOI Act; and
- recommending to Parliament legislative or administrative changes that could be made to help the objects of the FOI Act to be achieved.



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