



**Office of the
Information Commissioner**

Freedom of information for Western Australia



**International Access
to Information Day**



MEDIA RELEASE

24 September 2021

Information Access Commissioners and Ombudsmen make recommendations to support Open by Design Principles

Australian Information Access Commissioners and Ombudsmen today published an authoritative statement to promote the proactive release of information.

The *Open by Design Principles* have been released ahead of International Access to Information Day on 28 September, and should be used by government agencies to encourage and authorise the proactive release of information and promote open government.

Citizens throughout Australia experience inconsistent levels of access to valuable and important information from government. This is particularly evident in the differences in proactive release of information between jurisdictions.

The proactive disclosure of government-held information promotes open government and advances our system of representative democracy. The principles are intended to advance integrity in government and provide ready access to information that is important to citizens and the digital economy.

The *Open by Design Principles* have been informed by citizen surveys that identified information that is important to citizens. The principles recognise that:

- information held by government and public institutions is a public resource
- a culture of transparency within government is everyone's responsibility
- appropriate, prompt and proactive disclosure of government-held information:
 - informs community
 - increases participation and enhances decision-making
 - builds trust and confidence

- improves service delivery
- is required or permitted by law
- improves efficiency.

All Australian governments – Commonwealth, state and territory, and local – and public institutions are strongly encouraged to commit to being Open by Design by building a culture of transparency and by prioritising, promoting and resourcing proactive disclosure. In their joint statement, Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen recommend ways that public sector agencies can:

1. Embed a proactive disclosure culture in all public sector agencies and public institutions
2. Implement a best practice Open by Design approach to proactive disclosure
3. Engage with the Australian community in relation to the information that is of most value and interest to them
4. Adopt a customer service approach to the proactive disclosure of information.

View the full recommendations in the [joint statement](#).

In the lead up to International Access to Information Day, Australian Commissioners and Ombudsmen have also released a [new consumer video](#) resource to raise awareness of information access rights.

This global event highlights the importance of timely access to information in promoting public scrutiny and participation and allowing individuals and governments to make informed decisions.

Find out more at <https://www.oic.wa.gov.au/en-au/Home/International-Access-to-Information-Day>.

Co-signed by:

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END

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For more information about International Access to Information Day:

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

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 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 be achieved.

