Access to Information

Implementation guide for the Access to Information icon

Introduction

In October 2025, the Association of Information Access Commissioners (AIAC) agreed to introduce a single, consistent icon for accessing government information. The icon is now being implemented across agencies and jurisdictions. It provides a clear, recognisable entry point, helping people find information more easily, regardless of the website or legislative framework.

What is the icon?

A single, uniform 'access to information' icon for use across government agencies and jurisdictions.

The selected design features a hand holding the universal 'i' symbol, representing:

- information (recognisable 'i')
- access and disclosure (information being offered)
- support and enablement (the guiding hand)
- user agency (information in the user's hands).

It acts as a clear, public-facing visual cue to help people quickly locate government-held information.

Who can use this icon?

The icon is for Australian Government (Commonwealth), state and territory entities that provide access to information under freedom of information (FOI) legislation or equivalent information access schemes.

This includes:

- Commonwealth, state and territory agencies and departments subject to FOI or equivalent legislation
- Agencies with publication, disclosure, or information access obligations
- Ministers and ministerial offices where information access obligations apply
- Statutory authorities and regulators with information access responsibilities
- Agencies that make access decisions or provide administrative access to government-held information.

Why it matters?

1. Makes access easier for users

- Addresses inconsistent terminology (FOI, RTI, GIPA, etc.)
- Reduces reliance on prior knowledge of legislation
- Provides a consistent, recognisable entry point across websites

2. Supports open government

- Reinforces an open-by-design approach
- Improves visibility of proactively published information

- Helps ensure information is not just available, but easy to find

3. Builds consistency across jurisdictions

- Establishes a shared visual language across agencies
- Strengthens recognition through repeated use
- Reduces confusion across different government systems

How to implement the icon

1. Placement and function

Place the icon on the homepage (recommended: footer or header utility area)

- Use consistently across agency websites
- Link to a central 'Access to information' landing page including:
    - proactively published information
    - disclosure logs / publication schemes
    - FOI or information request pathways
    - guidance on accessing unpublished information.

2. Visual and accessibility requirements

- Use only approved icon files (no modification)
- Ensure minimum colour contrast ratio of 3:1
- Provide alternative text (e.g. 'access to information')
- Maintain clear space around the icon
- Avoid busy or high-contrast backgrounds
- Minimum size:
    - Horizontal: 9 mm height
    - Portrait: 13 mm height

3. Consistency rules (critical for recognition)

- Do not alter colours, proportions, or orientation
- Do not add effects or additional elements
- Maintain consistent placement across pages
- Apply across digital channels where relevant

4. Design intent

The hand + 'i' symbol reflects:

- Access and disclosure – information being made available
- Support and service – enabling the community to access information
- User empowerment – putting information directly in people's hands.

Implementation checklist

- ✓ Icon on homepage
- ✓ Links to a central access page
- ✓ Meets accessibility requirements
- ✓ Used without alteration
- ✓ Positioned consistently
- ✓ Supported by complete, user-friendly content

Measuring success

- Uptake across agencies and jurisdictions
- Increased use of access-to-information pages
- Improved user ability to find information quickly

In practice

The 'Access to information' icon simplifies a complex and fragmented experience into a clear, consistent and user-friendly pathway, helping people find government information quickly and confidently.