



OmbudsmanSA

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Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen hail importance of enabling digital access

28 September 2022

Australian and New Zealand Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen today highlight the importance of government agencies developing robust digital systems that strengthen the community's access to information.

To mark International Access to Information Day (IAID, also known as IAI Day), celebrated annually on 28 September, we join in our commitment to promote and uphold the fundamental right of the community to access government information.

IAID recognises the community's right to access government-held information and its role in helping everyone participate in our democracy. The 2022 UNESCO theme for the day is **artificial Intelligence, e-Governance and access to information**.

The increasing shift to conducting the business of government digitally including online service delivery has raised the importance of correctly designing the right information management systems and processes to enable access to information in the digital context. In this way we can ensure that government moves beyond a transactional approach to e-Government to the broader goal of strengthening Open Government and realising e-Governance.

This year's focus on enabling digital access builds upon our release last year of the [*Open by Design Principles*](#), which outline important considerations for government agencies to build a culture of transparency and trust by prioritising, promoting and resourcing proactive disclosure.

Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen recognise that the government information landscape is changing rapidly and that making government-held information available to all Australians is essential to building trust in the community.

In accordance with the *Open by Design Principles*, Australia's and New Zealand's Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen urge agencies to tailor their digital strategy to implement a best practice approach to proactive disclosure.

This means:

- embedding proactive disclosure of information into agency practices through implementing governance mechanisms
- adopting a transparency by design approach to services delivery, decision-making and disclosure of information
- establishing proactive disclosure mechanisms whenever creating new institutions, and
- identifying, on a continual basis, categories of information - including data and data sets - suitable for proactive disclosure.

The global recognition of IAID highlights the importance of timely access to information in promoting public scrutiny of government policy, participation in democratic processes, and allowing individuals and governments to make informed decisions.

Find out more at oaic.gov.au/iaid.

Co-signed by:

Angelene Falk
Australian Information Commissioner

Leo Hardiman PSM KC
Freedom of Information Commissioner

Iain Anderson
Ombudsman, ACT

Peter Boshier
Chief Ombudsman, New Zealand

Sven Bluemmel
Information Commissioner, Victoria

Richard Connock
Ombudsman, Tasmania

Catherine Fletcher
Information Commissioner, Western Australia

Wayne Lines
Ombudsman, South Australia

Rachael Rangihaeata
Information Commissioner, Queensland

Peter Shoyer
Information Commissioner, Northern Territory

Elizabeth Tydd
Information Commissioner, New South Wales
