

Metrics on Public Use of Freedom of Information Access Rights

Commitment 3.2 of Australia's Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016

The following six metrics have been developed. It should be noted that because of variations jurisdiction legislative regimes and data collection and reporting practices, there will be differences in presentation between jurisdictions. These differences will be identified in the data report to be published using 2015/16 data by the end of 2017.

Metric 1: Type of applicant

Alignment with the World Justice Project Open Government Index

This metric is not strictly aligned to a WJP Open Government Index variable. However, it does align with metrics outlined in page 35 of the [WJP Open Government Index 2015 Report](#) which separates requests for information by the gender, socio-economic status and level of education of the requestor.

Purpose

To inform the community about the types of applicants making use of information access regimes.

Definition / How measured

Count of the number of valid/formal applications for information received by all agencies categorised as:

- member of the public (i.e. individuals and their legal representatives)
- other (i.e. members of parliament, media, private businesses, not for profit organisations)
- unknown (not categorised)

Calculation

N/A

Metric 2: Applications per capita

Alignment with the World Justice Project Open Government Index

This metric is not aligned to a WJP Open Government Index variable; however, it is reported in some literature¹. However its utility is recognised in other measures and as a base line measure it has significance given its prevalence within jurisdiction specific legislation.

Purpose

To indicate the relative use of information access regimes across jurisdictions.

¹ For example: Freedom of Information: Local Government and Accountability, Robert G Vaughan, Routledge, 2016

Definition / How measured

- Count of the number of valid, formal applications received in a financial year by agencies per 100,000 population. The count includes:
 - applications that are subsequently withdrawn
 - applications subsequently transferred to another agency
 - excludes applications subsequently found to be invalid.
- Population numbers taken from The Australian Bureau of Statistics, ([Report 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics](#)) as of the end of financial year (i.e. end of June quarter of each year).

Calculation

$$\frac{\textit{The number of valid, formal applications received by agencies in a financial year}}{\textit{Jurisdiction population per 100,000}}$$

Metric 3: Release rates

Alignment with the World Justice Project Open Government Index

GPP12: Right to Information – Information Requests - Responsiveness

Purpose

To identify the extent to which governments release information that has been formally requested under information access laws.

Definition / How measured

- The percentage of all decisions made on valid/formal applications where access was granted in full or in part, combined.
- Expressed as the number of decisions made which granted access in full or in part as a percentage of the total number of decisions made on valid applications.

Calculation

$$\frac{\textit{The number of decisions made to grant access in full or in part, combined}}{\textit{The total number of decisions made on valid/formal applications}} \times 100$$

Metric 4: Refusal rates

Alignment with the World Justice Project Open Government Index

GPP12: Right to Information – Information Requests - Responsiveness

GPP13: Right to Information – Information Requests - Responsiveness

Purpose:

To indicate the responsiveness of agencies to requests for information.

Definition / How measured

- The percentage of all decisions on valid/formal applications where access was refused, where the information was held by the agency but not released.
- Expressed as the number of decisions made where access was refused as a percentage of the total number of decisions made on valid/formal applications.

Calculation

$$\frac{\textit{The number of decisions made to refuse access in full}}{\textit{The total number of decisions made on valid/formal applications}} \times 100$$

Metric 5: Timeliness

Alignment with the World Justice Project Open Government Index

GPP18 – Information requests - timeliness

QRQ12 – Information requests - timeliness

Purpose

To indicate the responsiveness of the information access regime, particularly the extent to which decisions are made within legislated timeframes.

Definition / How measured

- The number of decisions made within the relevant jurisdiction's statutory timeframe as a percentage of all decisions made.

Calculation

$$\frac{\textit{The number of decisions made within the statutory timeframe}}{\textit{The total number of decisions made}} \times 100$$

Metric 6: Review rates

Alignment with the World Justice Project Open Government Index

QRQ42 – Ability to seek review of a decision before another agency or judge (i.e. external review).

Purpose

To indicate the extent to which the community is dissatisfied with an information access decision and seeks recourse from an independent agency.

Definition / How measured

The total number of external reviews received by the Information Commissioner/Ombudsman, expressed as a percentage of all applications received within each jurisdiction.

Calculation

$$\frac{\textit{The number of external reviews received by the Information Commissioner/Ombudsman}}{\textit{The total number of applications received by agencies}} \times 100$$