



# Office of the Information Commissioner

*Freedom of information for Western Australia*

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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

28 September 2023

### **Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen recognise importance of the online space in accessing 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 2023 UNESCO theme for the day is: The importance of the online space for access to information.

Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen across Australia recognise that the online space plays a pivotal role in empowering citizens by providing easy and convenient access to a vast array of government information. Citizens have a right to expect transparency and accountability from the governments they elected. This fosters an informed and engaged society and enables individuals to participate actively in public discourse. The right to access information recognises that the public interest in open and accessible government information and decision-making is a crucial element of a participative democracy.

Online access to government information must be inclusive, so that all citizens can quickly and easily engage with government agencies, access services, and seek assistance. This enhances overall public service delivery and streamlines e-government services, further developing efficient and effective government.

This IAID, information commissioners and ombudsmen urge all agencies to consider their approach to the online space and implement strategies and practices to further improve digital access and support citizens' right to access information.

The global recognition of IAID plays a crucial role in highlighting the importance of access to information, which in turn greatly aids our democratic system of government.

Find out more on the [OIC WA website](#) and at [UNESCO](#).

#### **Co-signed by:**

Signature of Commissioners/Ombudsmen

#### **Angelene Falk**

Australian Information Commissioner

#### **Toni Pirani**

Acting Australian Freedom of Information Commissioner

#### **Iain Anderson**

Ombudsman, ACT

#### **Rachel Dixon**

Acting Information Commissioner, Victoria

**Richard Connock**

Ombudsman, Tasmania

**Catherine Fletcher**

Information Commissioner, Western Australia

**Wayne Lines**

Ombudsman, South Australia

**Stephanie Winson**

Acting Information Commissioner, Queensland

**Peter Shoyer**

Information Commissioner, Northern Territory

**Elizabeth Tydd**

Information Commissioner, New South Wales

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact:**

The Office of the Information Commissioner (WA) by email to [info@oic.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@oic.wa.gov.au) or phone to 6551 7830.

**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.