

The Right to Information - 2016 Community Attitudes

In July 2016, the IPC surveyed the NSW community about the importance of right to information, including their awareness of and experience in exercising this fundamental right. The survey sought to examine any change in awareness, attitudes and experience since the IPC first conducted this survey in 2014.

The survey found that the NSW community increasingly believe the right to access government information is important, with 89% believing such a right is important, up from 84% in 2014 (Figure 4).

Additionally, **the community is strongly aware of the right to access government information, with 79% reporting awareness of the right to access information** from at least one of the agency sectors that are required to observe that right. This growth in awareness ranges from 3 to 5% over the two years since the last survey.

Figure 4: Importance of having the right to access government information

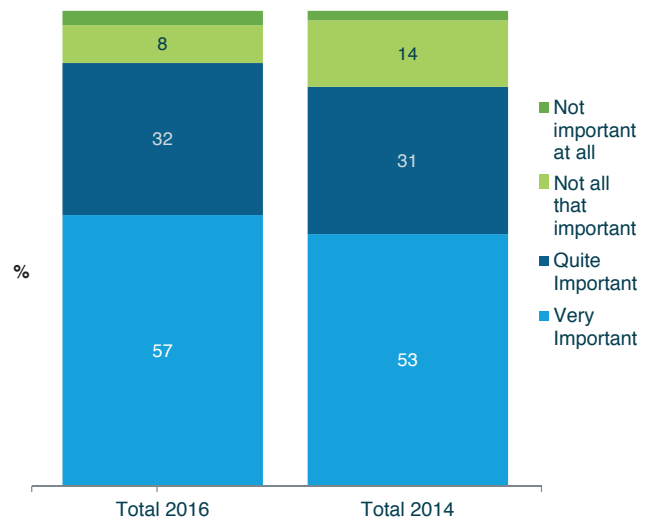
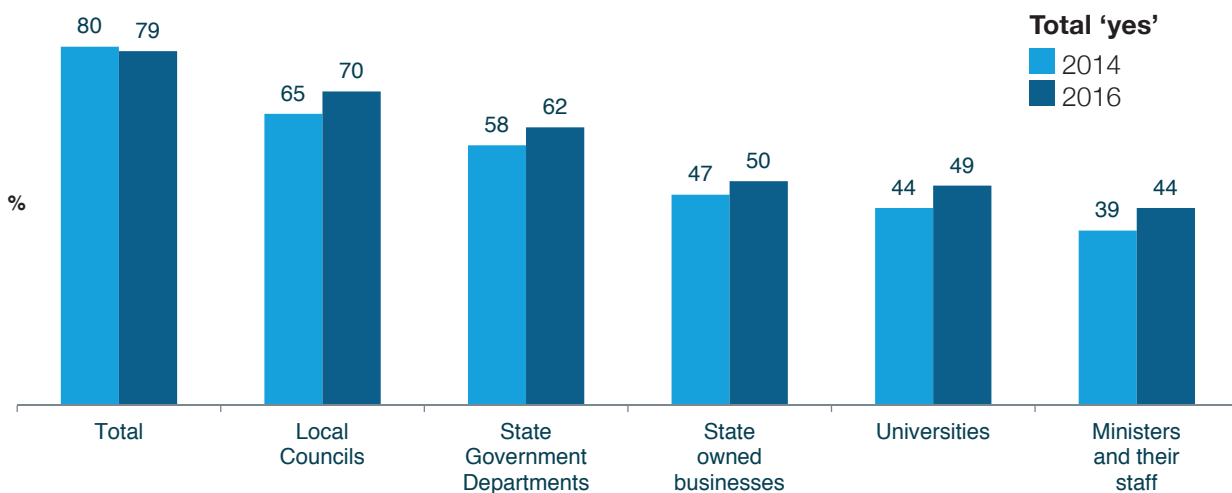


Figure 5: Responses to the question, 'Did you know, under NSW access to information law, that you have a right to access information held by the following agencies?'



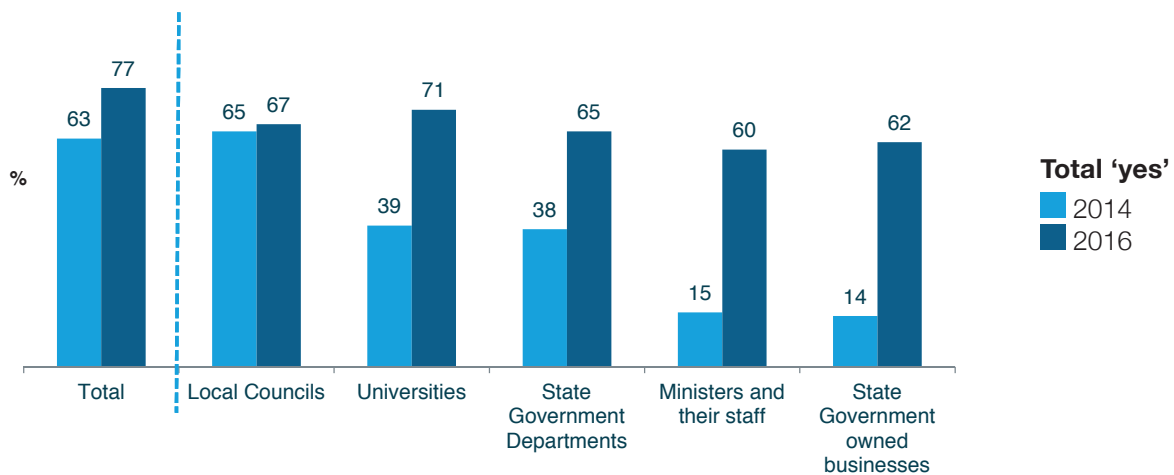
Particularly encouraging is that the community is more active in exercising their rights, with 77% reporting they had attempted to access information in the last three years. This is a statistically significant increase from 63% in 2014.

Importantly, the significant increase in the exercise of information access rights has been in four of the five sectors required to observe the right to access information. Across those four sectors, the increase has ranged from 32% to 48%.

Note on survey methodology:

A 'mixed-mode' sampling method was used to survey 340 adults aged 18 years and over from both capital and non-capital cities in NSW, with quotas set on Sydney and regional NSW, age and gender. Interviews were conducted using both online and in-house computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), following which the data was weighted by age, gender and areas to reflect the Australia Bureau of Statistic population estimates.

Figure 6: Responses to the question 'In the last three years have you tried to access information held by...'



In 2016 more respondents attempted to access information from other agencies other than local councils than in 2014. In 2014 63% of respondents said that they tried to access information from at least one of the listed agencies, in 2016 this was 77%.

However, the community has varying success in achieving access, with 97% gaining the information they sought from government departments (an increase from the 87% reported in 2014). However, only 80% were successful in gaining the information they sought from councils (a decline from 87% in 2014) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Accessed information successfully

