



Media release

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Publication of Report into NSW universities' compliance with contract reporting

NSW Information Commissioner and CEO of the Information and Privacy Commission (IPC), Elizabeth Tydd, has released her first proactive Compliance Report which examines universities' compliance with contract reporting obligations.

[View the *Universities' Compliance with the GIPA Act: Audit Report 2015*.](#)

"Open access to government dealings with the private sector promotes the principles of transparency and accountability essential to our democratic system. The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) recognises the requirements for transparency and integrity by shifting the focus toward proactive disclosure and mandating that certain open access information must be published. This includes an agency's register of significant private sector contracts," said Ms Tydd.

"The Report acknowledges the role of NSW universities as significant public institutions and their contribution to positive social and economic outcomes."

However the Report found that Universities:

- have a low level of compliance with the mandatory requirements for contract reporting under the GIPA Act;
- lack operational maturity in managing compliance with contract register obligations; and
- adopt different approaches towards compliance.

"Making universities' contracts information publicly available helps to ensure that:

- contracts are awarded fairly;
- malfeasance, fraud and corruption is minimised;
- public expenditure is appropriate;
- the government is getting value for money; and
- universities' resources are used efficiently and effectively.

"The IPC is committed to working with NSW universities to elevate compliance and ensure transparency through a collaborative regulatory approach," said Ms Tydd.

The Report also commits to the IPC developing guidance materials; reviewing future compliance and examining compliance by other regulated sectors.

"Online publication of government contracts on government websites is evidenced nationally and internationally and has been described as a standard transparency mechanism. The GIPA Act contract reporting requirements support achieving this outcome," said Ms Tydd.

The Report's recommendations include:

- universities to conduct an annual register review;
- universities' Vice Chancellors to consider an annual compliance attestation;
- universities to clearly define and communicate contracts register roles and responsibilities to all staff;
- universities to ensure that register obligations are embedded into its policies and procedures; and
- universities to conduct periodic quality assurance reviews of the contracts register.

"This proactive regulatory initiative is the first in what I propose to be a regular and important role for the IPC in monitoring and promoting improved compliance," said Ms Tydd.

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information
and privacy
commission

new south wales

ABOUT THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER:

The Information Commissioner is appointed by the NSW Parliament and has an important statutory role including promoting public awareness and understanding of the GIPA Act; providing information, advice, assistance and training to agencies and the public; dealing with complaints about agencies; investigating agencies' systems, policies and practices and reporting on compliance with the GIPA Act. Ms Tydd is also the Chief Executive Officer of the IPC.

Ms Tydd is available for interviews to discuss the outcomes of the report. Please contact Kate Jobling on 0435 961 691 or email ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au to make your request.

For more information on the IPC and to view the report, please visit www.ipc.nsw.gov.au

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