



## Media release

27 September 2023

### Information Commissioner releases NSW Community Attitudes Survey results for Right to Know Week NSW 2023

The NSW Information Commissioner and Open Data Advocate, Elizabeth Tydd, has released the results of research on NSW Community Attitudes to accessing government information for Right to Know Week NSW 2023.

Citizens were surveyed to gauge the value that they place on the right to access information and assess their experience in exercising that fundamental right.

The results from the survey showed overall improvements across several areas. The key findings include:

- 89% of respondents felt that their right to access government information was important, consistent with 89% in 2022 and 90% in 2021.
- 67% of respondents were aware that they had the right to access information from at least one of the agencies under NSW information access laws, an increase from 55% in 2022.
- Respondents aged 55+ were significantly more likely to indicate that “ensuring the government remains accountable” was important than their 35-55 counterparts (99% and 82% respectively.)
- Almost three quarters (78%) of respondents were successful in accessing information from at least one agency, an increase from 71% in 2022 and 74% in 2021:
  - 90% gained full access from universities
  - 73% gained full access from state-owned corporations
  - 78% gained full access from local councils
  - 82% gained full access from state government
- Significantly, the proportion of those who indicated that the agencies were very helpful doubled from 2021 to 2023 (40% in 2023; up from 19% in 2021).
- Most respondents continue to feel that ensuring that government remains accountable to the people is the most important public interest factor in releasing information.

Respondents answered two questions in the survey regarding the importance of awareness of Government technology use and their confidence in Right to Know laws.

It was found that:

- Approximately nine in ten (88%) respondents indicated that knowing when the government uses technology that affects members of the public was important.



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- Slightly under half of respondents (46%) were confident that the Right to Know laws ensured the ability to access government agencies about how decisions are made by the government.

On the community attitudes results, the Information Commissioner observed, “The results of the survey confirm the need for and expectation of accountability by government to the citizens it serves. In digital government citizens are overwhelmingly concerned to obtain information about government’s use of technology. These results are positive step forward in the context of the online space, which facilitates transparency by making government information readily accessible to the public, promoting trust and enhancing the democratic process.

“Guaranteeing access online can guarantee greater access to information. Additionally, the mandatory public release of open access information under the GIPA Act promotes consistent and transparent information sharing practices across NSW agencies and provides members of the public with an immediate right of access to important government information. It is commendable that NSW agencies have improved in the measure of helpfulness. It is this cultural shift that will open up more information to citizens.”

The NSW results have been released alongside the third cross-jurisdictional study sponsored by the New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia Information Commissioners, the ACT and Tasmanian Ombudsmen, and the Federal Information Commissioner. The comparative data was also released this week.

The NSW Information Commissioner also conducted the survey separately in 2022.

[Access the NSW Community Attitudes to Information Access 2023 results.](#)

## ENDS

### **Other information:**

[The NSW results for 2022 and previous years can be downloaded here.](#)

### **For further information, please contact:**

The Manager, Communications and Corporate Affairs on 0435 961 691 or email [communications@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@ipc.nsw.gov.au)

### **About the Information and Privacy Commission:**

The Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC) is an independent statutory authority that administers New South Wales’ legislation dealing with privacy and access to government information. The IPC supports the Information Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner in fulfilling their legislative responsibilities and functions and to ensure individuals and agencies can access consistent information, guidance and coordinated training about information access and privacy matters.

### **About the NSW Information Commissioner**

The NSW Information Commissioner’s statutory role includes promoting public awareness and understanding of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (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.



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The *Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009* (GIIC Act) establishes the procedures for appointing the Information Commissioner and sets out the Commissioner's powers and functions. It outlines the method for people to complain about the conduct of agencies when undertaking their duties under the GIPA Act, and the way in which the Information Commissioner may deal with the complaint. The GIIC Act also enables the Information Commissioner to investigate and report on how agencies carry out their functions under the GIPA Act.

For further information about the IPC visit our website at [www.ipc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au)

