



Agency Information Guides and the public

Fact sheet

December 2016

The object of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) is to open government information to the public.

Agency Information Guides (AIGs) help ensure that government information is publicly available and up-to-date, as well as helping the public to participate in the making of policy and the delivery of services by NSW Government agencies.

AIGs provide a clear and consistent device through which citizens are able to identify information held by agencies with certainty and confidence. In coupling this legislative certainty with opportunities to participate in agency policy formulation and service delivery, the GIPA Act provides the mechanism to promote responsiveness by government.

AIG requirements

- All NSW Government agencies (other than a Minister) must have an AIG.
- AIGs must be made available free of charge on the agency's website.

What information are agencies required to publish in AIGs?

The GIPA Act specifies seven categories of information that agencies must include in AIGs:

1. the structure and functions of the agency
2. the ways in which the functions (including, in particular, the decision-making functions) of the agency affect members of the public
3. any arrangements that exist to enable members of the public to participate in the formulation of the agency's policy and the exercise of the agency's functions
4. the various kinds of government information held by the agency
5. the kinds of government information held by the agency that the agency makes (or will make) publicly available
6. the manner in which the agency makes (or will make) government information publicly available
7. the kinds of information that are (or will be) made publicly available free of charge and those kinds for which a charge is (or will be) imposed.

What other information can agencies publish in AIGs?

Agencies are not limited to the seven categories listed above and may publish other information in AIGs. For example, agencies are able to include useful information in AIGs about Open Government, Open Data and public participation.

Open Government is a commitment by government to increase access to information, engage with the public and be accountable. AIGs serve this commitment by providing a public resource that informs the public about the information that the agency holds, the agency's engagement channels, and its decision-making processes.

By releasing Open Data, agencies can empower the public and gain new insights that improve the way we live, work and solve problems together. AIGs play an important part in identifying the data held by agencies and detailing the way that agencies will make the data open to the public.

AIGs are able to provide a consistent portal through which the public can find out how to participate in the formulation of policy and service delivery by agencies.

Where will I find an agency's AIG?

The AIG should be made available on the agency's website in an easy to find location.

How will I know if the information in AIGs is up to date?

Agencies must review their AIG and adopt a new AIG every year.

Are there any charges for accessing the information described in AIGs?

Agencies must make "open access information" publicly available and free of charge. This information includes policy documents, contract registers and disclosure logs.

An agency can release government information in response to an informal request subject to any reasonable conditions that the agency thinks fit to impose. In response to a formal access application, an agency can impose a processing charge for dealing with the access application at a rate of \$30 per hour for each hour of processing time for the application.

More information about charges is available in the [Fact Sheet – GIPA Act Fees and Charges](#).

What is the Information Commissioner's role?

Agencies must notify the Information Commissioner before adopting or amending an AIG, and if requested to do so by the Information Commissioner, consult with the Information Commissioner on the proposed AIG or amendment.

I don't think an agency is complying with the AIG requirements – can I make a complaint?

Yes. Anyone can complain to the Information Commissioner about the conduct (including action or inaction) of an agency in the exercise of functions under an Information Act, including conduct that is alleged by the person to constitute a contravention of an Information Act.

You may lodge a complaint in writing in one of the following ways:

- **post:** GPO Box 7011, Sydney NSW 2001
- **fax:** +61 2 8114 3756
- **email:** ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
- **in person:** Level 17, 201 Elizabeth Street Sydney NSW 2000

The complaint must identify the agency against whom the complaint is made. The Information and Privacy Commission can help you with lodging your complaint.

Does the Information Commissioner have to investigate my complaint?

The Information Commissioner is able to apply a number of mechanisms to resolve complaints including investigation, education, and by providing information.

More information on how to make a complaint is in [Complaints about an agency's conduct](#)

The information provided in this fact sheet is of a general nature. It is not a substitute for legal advice.

The Information and Privacy Commission NSW acknowledges the materials published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner in the production of this fact sheet.

For further information

Freecall: 1800 472 679
Email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.ipc.nsw.gov.au