



CASE STUDY

Towards a Charter for Public Participation – Engage, contribute, deliver

Agency: [Information and Privacy Commission NSW](#)

In September 2015 during Right to Know Week, the NSW Information Commissioner Elizabeth Tydd announced her commitment to ensuring that NSW citizens achieve the opportunity to participate in agency policy and service delivery decisions as envisioned in the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act).

Public participation is integral to Open Government and key to driving improved customer service in NSW. Public participation happens when citizens affected by government decisions are able to provide their views and have input into the development of policy and delivery of services by government agencies. The GIPA Act contains a number of mechanisms to ensure that citizens have a knowledge of and access to government information that is both current and significant in relation to the formulation of policy and service delivery by agencies, together with access to arrangements to participate in the formulation of policy and service delivery by agencies. These mechanisms are promoted through the Agency Information Guide (AIG) scheme established under Part 3 – Open Access Information.

Since the Commissioner's announcement, the Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC) has advanced a work program to support the co-creation of a NSW Charter for Public Participation through a public consultation and a desktop monitoring project examining current practices and arrangements in place for public participation in 10 NSW principal departments.

The project involved a nine-week online public consultation conducted in May -July 2016 using an innovative online engagement hub *Your Say IPC* – available to the public around the clock. The consultation provided the IPC with the opportunity to capture the thoughts and opinions of a broad cross-section of the NSW community. Directly engaging with the public to harness their ideas, views and experiences, has positioned the IPC to build guidance materials based on real insights.

The project also involved work to monitor the articulation of existing arrangements for public participation as documented and published at May 2016 in the AIGs of the ten NSW Government principal departments and of the IPC. The monitoring identified the opportunity to maximise the purpose and value of the AIGs through applying this established and certain legislative mechanism to provide a comprehensive statement of arrangements to support public participation.



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Towards a Charter for Public Participation (the Report), released in June 2016, reports on this work and sets out the next steps that the IPC will take, in collaboration with agencies and the public, to advance public participation and Open Government through raising awareness and providing assistance to ensure that agencies and citizens realise the benefits of meaningful engagement supported by the GIPA Act.

Ultimately, the introduction of a NSW Charter for Public Participation aims to effect a cultural shift which fosters long-term and ongoing collaboration between NSW government agencies (including local councils, government agencies, universities and state-owned corporations), and the NSW community to improve government sector problem solving and service design.

[Read the IPC's *Towards a NSW Charter for Public Participation* report here](#)