



Media release

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Information Commissioner recognises improvements and identifies key challenges in achieving Open Government

NSW Information Commissioner and CEO of the Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) Elizabeth Tydd today released the 2014/15 Report on the operation of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act).

View the [Report on the operation of the Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009: 2014 – 2015](#) here.

“This Report provides an analysis of five years of operation of the GIPA Act across our five regulated sectors. I am pleased to confirm that this Report recognises that most agencies are improving their processes for dealing with applications to access information. However, after five years of operation there is still a need to improve how much information is being released to the community and how agencies engage with the communities they serve,” said Ms Tydd.

“Transactional practices across the sectors* are generally improving, indicating that requests for access to government information are being met in a more timely and responsive manner.”

Positive trends indicate that:

- 91% of applications are being decided on time, with refusals because of delays falling to an all-time low of 6%;
- fewer applications are being refused by agencies – 8% declared invalid in 2014/15 compared to 13% in 2010/11; and
- over the last five years where agencies have adopted the Information Commissioner’s recommendation to re-consider their original decisions, they have varied that decision in the majority of cases – approximately 65%.

However:

- partial and full release rates for formal access applications have consistently declined from 80% in 2012/13 to 69% in 2014/15;
- mandatory proactive disclosure of information remains consistently below 85%
- there has been a consistent decline in agencies performing annual mandatory reviews of their proactive release programs; and
- external reviews conducted by the Information Commissioner have more than doubled in five years.

“There are challenges ahead to ensure the right to access government information remains affordable and the legislative intent of accessibility and timeliness is supported,” said Ms Tydd.

“I am committed to improving public participation in how the government provides access to information, and I will continue to work with the sectors to maximise information release – for the benefit of the community and for public purpose service providers to support improved service delivery.”

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In responding to these challenges, the IPC is instituting a strategic and collaborative approach which identifies responsibilities and actions for both the IPC and the regulated sectors.

“The forward focus includes working with agencies to achieve the objectives of the GIPA Act; promoting a rigorous, comprehensive and citizen-centric approach to information management through sound leadership; and, along with our state and territory counterparts, contributing to the national agenda to switch on Open Government across Australia,” said Ms Tydd.

Ms Tydd is currently available for interviews to discuss the outcomes of the Report, the right to information and how NSW is contributing to switching on Open Government. 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

** Sectors that are regulated by the GIPA Act include government (government departments and state-owned corporations), councils, universities and Ministers' offices.*

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