

**Media release**

**5 May 2020**

## **The NSW Privacy Commissioner launches Privacy Awareness Week NSW 2020**

Today, the NSW Privacy Commissioner Samantha Gavel launched Privacy Awareness Week NSW 2020 at an online Public Sector Forum in Sydney. The Forum was opened by the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Mark Speakman with a remote audience of senior leaders and practitioners from government agencies across NSW.

The Privacy Awareness Week NSW 2020 theme is Prevent, Detect, Protect and Privacy Awareness Week runs from 4 – 10 May. The campaign engages both public sector agencies and citizens and assists in improving understanding and awareness of NSW privacy legislation and raises awareness of NSW privacy rights and agency obligations.

In speaking about the theme, Privacy Commissioner, Samantha Gavel said, *Prevent, Detect and Protect* this year highlights the importance of understanding and awareness of NSW privacy legislation and reiterates citizen privacy rights and agency obligations:

- **Prevent** – government agencies are responsible for making sure the right processes are followed and correct procedures are in place for managing people’s personal information.
- **Detect** – government agencies are responsible for ensuring that security protections such as detecting intrusions are up-to-date and effective, and notifying the Privacy Commissioner of any breaches to citizens’ privacy.
- **Protect** – government agencies have an obligation to protect citizens’ privacy and help them be aware of and able to exercise their rights under NSW privacy legislation.

“As governments around the world work to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, the privacy issues associated with the benefits of sharing personal and health information have been highlighted in much of the public reporting about the pandemic, both in Australia and overseas. Privacy Commissioners around Australia appreciate that individuals, organisations and governments are facing significant challenges to stop the spread of COVID-19. The use of personal information is part of addressing this public health crisis but must be managed according to privacy laws,” Ms Gavel said.

“Privacy laws, including those in NSW, contain mechanisms to permit the exchange of critical information in these circumstances. Those laws also require that personal information is handled in a way that is reasonably necessary to prevent and manage COVID-19 and is protected.”



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“Government agencies are increasingly seeking to share and analyse data to assist them with gaining better insights into policy options and providing better outcomes for citizens. NSW government agencies need to be open and upfront with how we collect and how we use people’s information. This is critical to building public trust. Having good privacy practices and taking a privacy-by-design approach to projects will also aid in creating this trust in digital service delivery. Good privacy practice enables the public to have confidence that their personal information is appropriately protected.”

Mr Speakman said technology and processes can change at lightning pace and digital service delivery is increasing exponentially.

“This Privacy Awareness Week campaign reminds us how important it is to ensure the principles of securing and maintaining privacy of personal information are at the core of all of our practices,” Mr Speakman said.

“Each and every day, the people of NSW trust their personal information to government agencies and service providers. This information enables the government to provide quality, connected services, and to continually improve the services available to meet the community’s needs. In return for this trust, the Government has a responsibility to protect and respect that personal information.”

The Privacy Commissioner is releasing two new resources for public sector agencies: guidance to promote secure data sharing across agencies that complies with privacy requirements and a Fact Sheet on Privacy by Design, which explains the key principles of this approach and provides examples of how agencies can implement privacy by design.

For Privacy Awareness Week, the Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) has created a collection of resources on its website for citizen to help protect and manage their personal information.

“Your personal information is extremely valuable. With social distancing, people are spending more time online connecting with family and friends; working; schooling and shopping therefore it’s more important than ever to protect your information,” Ms Gavel said.

More information on Privacy Awareness Week NSW, including resources for the public and for agencies can be found at: <https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/PAW2020>

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact:**

IPC media team on 0435 961 691 or email [ccadigital@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ccadigital@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



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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 Privacy Commissioner**

Samantha Gavel was appointed as NSW Privacy Commissioner on 4 September 2017. Her role is to promote public awareness and understanding of privacy rights in NSW, as well as provide information, support, advice and assistance to agencies and the general public.

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