



Media release

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New privacy survey highlights the need to improve awareness of privacy rights in NSW

The NSW Privacy Commissioner, Samantha Gavel published today the results of the latest two-yearly survey of NSW community attitudes towards privacy. The results provide a broad and indicative sense of the public's view of how privacy is regarded in areas such as data breaches by NSW government agencies, citizens' awareness of their right to access their personal information, where to go to report the misuse of personal information or how to make a privacy complaint.

The results indicate that 95% of respondents felt that NSW government agencies protecting their information was important.

NSW Privacy Commissioner Samantha Gavel said, "It is encouraging to note that similar to previous years, over one in three respondents are aware of their right to access personal information from at least one of the NSW agencies listed, with many saying that they would contact the agency directly for help.

"However, awareness varies by age and many are not sure where to go to gain access to their personal information held by NSW agencies.

"The vast majority of respondents felt that NSW government agencies protecting their information was important and most were concerned about breaches or misuse of data currently held by NSW government agencies."

Key findings of the study include:

- 95% of respondents agreed that it is important that NSW government agencies protect their personal/health information
- 63% of respondents are aware of their right to lodge a complaint or seek a review with an agency if they feel their privacy has been breached
- Knowledge of privacy rights among younger people was lower, with only 37% of under 25 years olds aware of their right to lodge a complaint or seek a review with state government departments
- Regarding breaches or misuse, respondents were most concerned about deliberate hacking of NSW government systems, and least concerned about accidental release of personal information
- Nearly a quarter of respondents were unsure how to access their personal information under privacy laws, or how to report misuse
- 86% of respondents who had lodged a privacy complaint in the past year were happy with the outcome,
- Awareness of the role of the Privacy Commissioner varied across age groups, with those over 55 having the greatest awareness and those under 25 the least.

Considering the current situation with COVID-19 and in order to prevent or manage the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace, NSW Privacy Commissioner, Samantha Gavel stated:



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“Agencies need to consider how they collect, use and disclose personal and health information. This includes the handling of personal information of employees and employees’ family members, visitors to agency premises, as well as individuals to whom the agency provides services and members of the general public.

“As NSW Privacy Commissioner I will be working with agencies to assist them explain to the community their right to access their personal information and what actions they can take if they feel their rights have been breached.”

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For further information, please contact:

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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 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