Invalid applications

Invalid applications

The number of invalid applications may be an indicator of the extent to which the GIPA Act is understood by applicants and agencies. It also provides insight into the level of flexibility offered by agencies to applicants to amend their applications so that they can be considered. Section 52(3) of the GIPA Act requires agencies to provide reasonable advice and assistance to enable applicants to make a valid application.

Figure 8 shows the flow of applications from receipt to initial assessment and subsequent processing, together with the number of valid applications received in 2022/23.
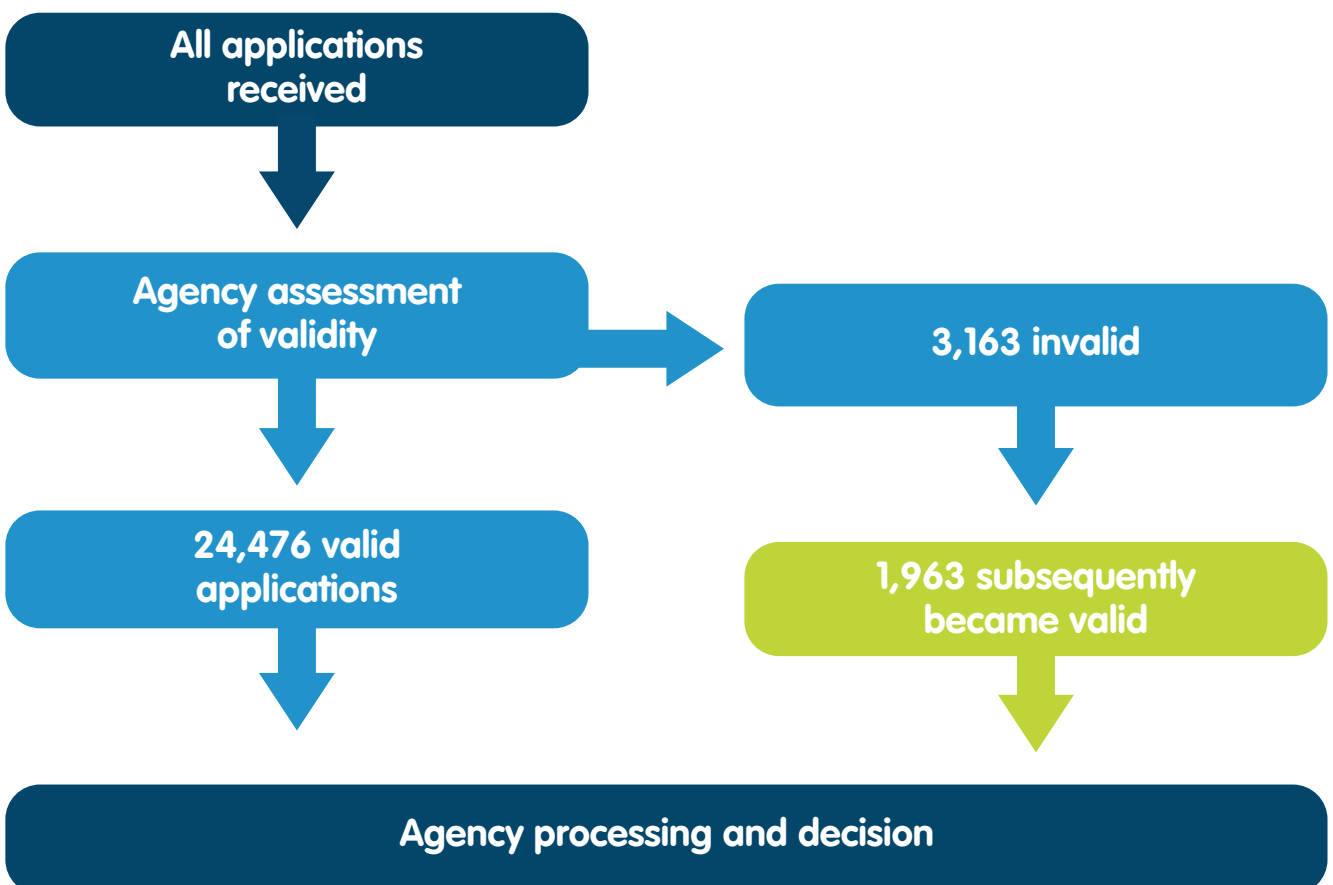
The rate of invalid applications received remains high

In 2022/23, agencies received 3,163 invalid formal applications, equivalent to 13% of all formal applications received (Figure 9).

This is consistent with the proportion of invalid applications reported in 2021/22 (3,022 or 13%).

Consistent with previous years, in 2022/23 the most common reason for invalidity (applying in 96% of invalid applications) was that the application did not comply with formal requirements.

Figure 8: Flow of valid and invalid formal applications, 2022/23

All applications received

Agency assessment of validity → 3,163 invalid

24,476 valid applications

1,963 subsequently became valid

Agency processing and decision

'Invalid applications' are reported and measured by the requirement for agencies to report on the number of invalid applications specified in Table C of Schedule 2 to the GIPA Regulation.

**Figure 9: Invalid applications as a percentage of all formal applications received, 2018/19 to 2022/23**
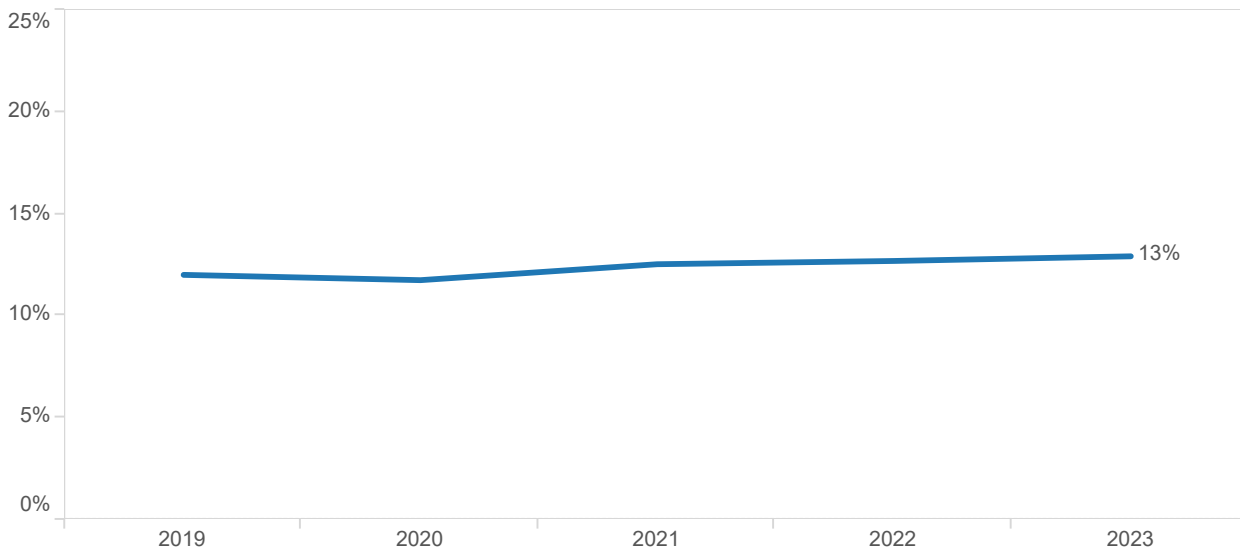
As noted in previous reports, clear agency communication can help minimise the number of invalid applications and reduce the time and effort that may be spent on preparing or assessing applications. The GIPA Act requires an agency to provide advice and assistance to help an applicant make a valid application. Accordingly, opportunities to assist applicants through guided application processes, including electronic lodgement, should be promoted.

The State-Owned Corporations sector had the highest percentage of invalid applications at 35% (Figure 10), compared to 1% in 2021/22. However, overall the number of total applications received by SOCs is still relatively low at 196 applications.

The 34% increase in invalid applications equates an increase of 69 applications compared to 2021/22. This is consistent with the observation that smaller sample sizes are subject to more drastic percentage changes due to the number of applications having a greater distortionary effect.

Data for the Minister sector has only been provided for the period following the 2023 State general election. As a result, this Report cannot provide analysis on the performance of the Minister sector as compared to previous years.

Figure 10: Invalid applications as a percentage of all formal applications received, by sector, 2022/23
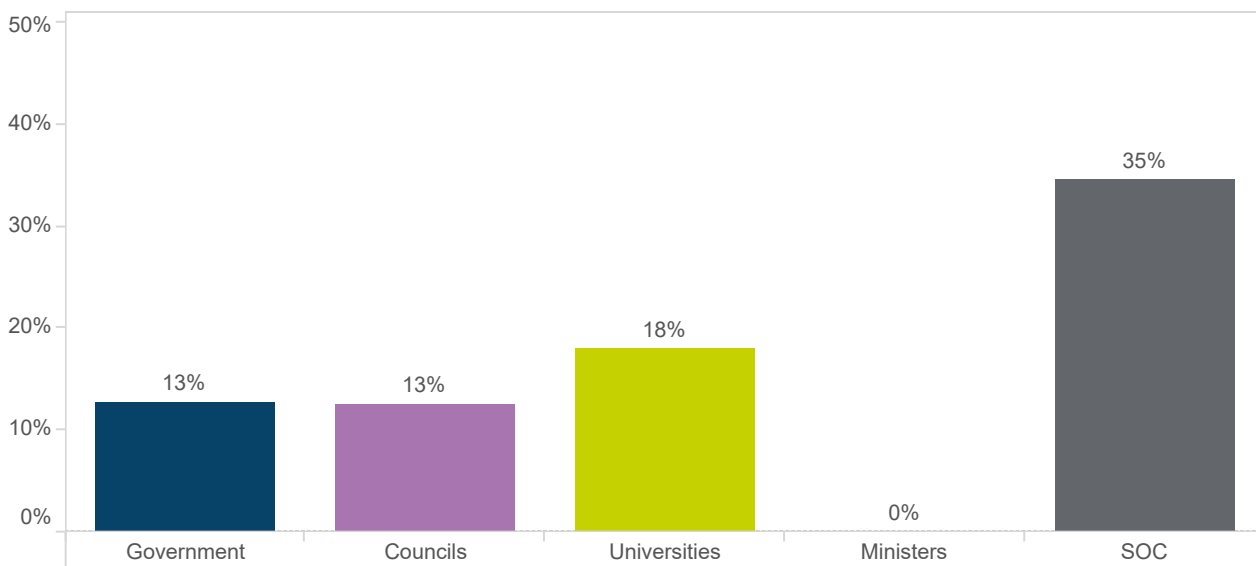
The number of invalid applications received by the Government sector remained broadly stable

The number of invalid applications remained stable for the Government sector, however some agencies within the Government sector experienced moderate changes in the percentage of applications that were invalid compared with 2021/22. This included:

- the Department of Premier and Cabinet, declined from 13% in 2021/22 to 3% in 2022/23
- the Department of Education, increased from 13% in 2021/22 to 20% in 2022/23.

It should be noted that many invalid applications subsequently became valid.

Invalid applications that have subsequently become valid remained stable

Agencies are required to assist applicants to make a valid access application. In 2022/23, 62% of invalid applications subsequently became valid. This is consistent with 58% in 2021/22 (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Invalid applications that became valid as a percentage of all invalid applications, 2018/19 to 2022/23
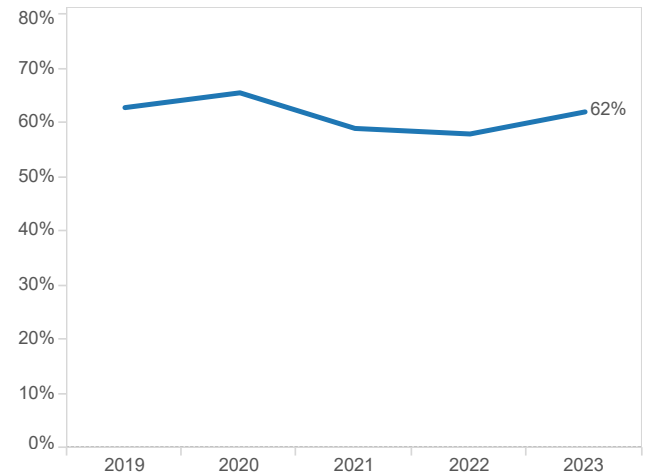
As Figure 12 shows, the percentage of invalid applications that subsequently became valid has:

- remained consistent in the Government sector, with 58% reported in 2022/23 and 56% in 2021/22
- remained consistent in the Council sector, with 78% reported in 2022/23, compared to 76% in 2021/22
- significantly increased in the University sector, from 25% in 2021/22 to 50% in 2022/23
- moderately declined in the State-Owned Corporations sector from 100% in 2021/22 to 94% in 2022/23.

Figure 12: Invalid applications that became valid as a percentage of all invalid applications, by sector, 2018/19 to 2022/23