



Media release

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Information Commissioner's report confirms the importance of the 'Right to Know'

Ms Elizabeth Tydd, NSW Information Commissioner, CEO of the Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC), and NSW Open Data Advocate, today released the 2015/16 *Report on the operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), which has been tabled in Parliament.

View the Report [here](#).

The Report examines the performance of over 200 government agencies in meeting their obligations to uphold NSW citizens' right to information.

"The 2015-16 Report confirms a 14% increase in information access applications and recognises the increasing importance citizens are placing on their right to information," said Ms Tydd.

"Pleasingly, the Report shows that citizens are gaining access to information more quickly.

"The Report also evidences that redoubled efforts are required to proactively release information, including government contracts, to realise the full intent of the GIPA Act and fulfil the commitment to Open Government."

Application to the Information Commissioner is now the preferred channel for review of agency decisions, with the IPC conducting 47% of all reviews.

"This outcome reflects improved timeliness and service standards by the IPC, notwithstanding an increasing workload, and ensures that, as Information Commissioner, I have greater visibility over agency performance," said Ms Tydd.

Other positive trends highlighted in the Report:

- 93% of information access applications are being decided on time.
- The number of applications deemed to be refused because of delays have fallen to an all-time low of 3%.

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- The compliance rate for mandatory proactive release of information by government agencies has increased to 89%.
- There has been an increase in the number of citizens who recognise the importance of the right to access information, now at 89%, up from 84% in 2014.

The Report also highlights issues for attention:

- A continued focus is required to elevate compliance with contract reporting requirements.
- There has been a decline in the number of agency reviews of their proactive release programs (from 85% in 2012/13 to 71% in 2015/16), primarily due to a decline in the percentage of councils conducting reviews.
- The overall information release rate in response to applications has remained steady at 68% since 2014/15.
- Information release rates vary markedly by type of applicant, e.g. 71% for applications by members of the public and private sector business, and 51% for not-for-profit organisations or community groups.

“There remain some challenges to ensuring faster and easier access to government information in NSW,” said Ms Tydd.

“I am committed to ensuring that we realise the benefits of Open Government and promote responsible stewardship by the government sector. The forward focus for the IPC includes monitoring and building a culture of accountability to drive commitment by agencies, continuing to lead national efforts to measure the effectiveness of information access regimes and apply that knowledge to promote an enhanced information access regime in NSW.”

Ms Tydd is available for interviews to discuss the outcomes of the Report – contact the number below.

For more information on the IPC and to view the Report, visit www.ipc.nsw.gov.au

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