



## Media release

14 February 2018

# Information Commissioner's report reveals access applications on the rise

Ms Elizabeth Tydd, NSW Information Commissioner, CEO of the Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC), and NSW Open Data Advocate, today released the 2016/17 Report on the operation of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), which has been tabled in Parliament.

[View the Report on the operation of the Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009: 2016 – 2017 here](#)

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

"The 2016/17 Report shows the GIPA regime continues to grow and evolve with citizens lodging more applications and agencies releasing more information," Ms Tydd said.

"There has been a 20% increase in the number of applications received by agencies over the past two years, reflecting the increasing value the community is placing on their right to access government information."

The Report notes that:

- significantly, the public are increasingly requesting information about how government works, with a 20% increase in the number of applications for 'other than personal information' in 2016/17;
- pleasingly the overall information release rate was 71%, a 3% increase from the previous year;
- agency timeliness in decision-making declined with 5% of applications not decided within time (compared to 3% in 2015/16);
- agency decisions were less likely to be upheld across all review types, with 43% of all internal and external reviews upholding agency decisions in 2016/17 (54% in 2015/16); and
- a continuing decline in reported reviews of programs for release of government information by agencies to 63% in 2016/17 (previously 71%).

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"Significantly, citizens are seeking access to 'non personal' government information demonstrating that citizens are increasingly interested in how government works", Ms Tydd said.

"These results highlight the opportunities we have to bring citizens back into government; to provide citizens with information they care about and harness their ideas for innovation and service delivery."

### **Launch of interactive GIPA agency dashboard**

"One important initiative I wish to highlight is the launch in March 2018 of a public-facing interactive GIPA agency dashboard," Ms Tydd said.

"Using publicly available agency-level GIPA data and improved data visualisation tools, the dashboard will allow agencies and the public to quickly and easily display agency and sector performance against benchmarks across eight key metrics.

"The IPC's provision of Open Data in the form of an agency dashboard will assist agencies in monitoring application volumes and facilitate a more timely application of resources to meet demands," Ms Tydd said.

The dashboard will also:

- improve transparency and greater understanding by agencies and the NSW community about GIPA operations;
- enable agency leaders to monitor compliance, and uphold their statutory responsibilities;
- improve visibility and self-assessment of performance of GIPA Act obligations;
- allow agencies to compare their performance against peers to seek improvements in compliance, efficiency and performance reporting;
- encourage greater collaboration between agencies on areas of common interest such as timeliness; and
- offer enhanced engagement opportunities for the community.

"Increasing awareness and a more mature understanding of the right to information requires enhanced responsiveness by agencies. Applying our collective capabilities to deliver Open Government reforms will enable us to improve existing services and unlock ideas, networks and capacity to ensure delivery of services that profoundly impact the lives of citizens," Ms Tydd said.

To schedule an interview with the NSW Information Commissioner, Ms Elizabeth Tydd, please contact Kate Jobling on 0435 961 691 or email [ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au) to make your request.

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