Australian Government

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

International Access
to Information Day

International Access to Information Day stakeholder toolkit

28 September 2022

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Background

On 28 September, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) will join members of the United Nations and Australian states and territories in marking **International Access to Information Day**. This year we are joined by Freedom of Information Commissioner Leo Hardiman PSM KC who commenced his appointment with the OAIC in April 2022, advancing the OAIC's important work to uphold the community's access rights.

This global event is also celebrated as Right to Know Day and recognises the importance of the community's right to know and to access information from governments around the globe.

In October 2019, the 74th United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 28 September as the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI).

Our right to access Australian Government information is enshrined in the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) which acknowledges government-held information is a national resource that should be managed for public purposes.

This year's theme chosen by UNESCO is artificial Intelligence, e-governance and access to information. It encourages us to consider how our digital world can improve access to information and enhance **openness through e-governance**.

We encourage Australian Government agencies to mark International Access to Information Day with us, to show support for building both robust e-governance systems and digital platforms that enable access to information for all members of the Australian community.

It's also an opportunity to acknowledge the important role of your agency's FOI practitioners and decision-makers and their work to manage government-held information as a national resource.

> Find more resources at our International Access to Information Day website: oaic.gov.au/iaid

This toolkit provides material that can be used across your networks, including a draft internal email and newsletter copy for you to adjust to your agency needs, sample social media posts for your communications teams, and posters you can share.

Please use this toolkit as a guide and feel free to add your logo to the materials provided. If you need additional support, please get in touch – and if you are marking Access to Information Day in your agency, we would love to hear what you have planned.

You can reach us at corporate@oaic.gov.au.

Discover:

- Information Contact Officers Network
- Resources
- Email and newsletter copy
- Social media posts
- Downloadable content

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Information Contact Officers Network

Our [Information Contact Officers Network](#) (ICON) has more than 600 members who work as information access and freedom of information (FOI) contact officers for Australian Government departments and agencies.

The work of FOI teams is essential to upholding the objects of the FOI Act. This #AccessToInfoDay, we recognise the work of FOI practitioners supporting the effective management of government-held information. Your role is essential to our democracy.

The OAIC sends ICON members our Information Matters email bulletin, along with targeted updates about information access issues, resources and events. We also hold regular ICON information sessions to share news about our activities and discuss areas of interest such as FOI processing, Information Commissioner reviews and the Information Publication Scheme. Currently held as webinars, these events are also a chance for members to network and share knowledge with information professionals from other government agencies.

ICON members are invited to join us at out next virtual information session to mark International Access to Information Day. Please visit oaic.gov.au/iaid for more information and to register for this event.
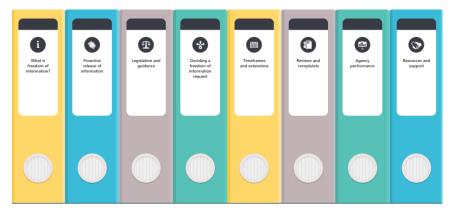
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Resources

For agencies

Explore our resources to support agencies in providing access to information for the community.

Share these resources with your staff and collegues this #AccessToInfo Day.

FOI Essentials

Freedom of information (FOI) plays a vital role in supporting openness and transparency in the operations of government. This toolkit has been designed for FOI decision makers in Australian Government agencies and ministers' offices and will help you understand the principles of FOI, the benefits of releasing government-held information and how the OAIC can assist you.

Agency FAQs

We answer questions frequently asked by agencies on FOI topics like searching for documents, transferring requests, lodging FOI statistics and more.

Processing FOI requests: taking all reasonable steps to find documents

This resource will help your agency identify the steps it should take to meet its obligations when processing requests for information to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to find documents within the scope of an FOI request.

Making a decision on an FOI access request

This checklist aims to help decision makers to identify the key steps in making a decision on a request for access to documents under the FOI Act.

How can agencies meet statutory timeframes following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?

We recommend agencies consider a range of measures to ensure they can meet their statutory FOI obligations following the impact of the pandemic, including

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greater use of self-service or administrative access schemes and proactive publication of information.

Information Publication Scheme overview for Senior Executive Staff

A guide to the Information Publication Scheme (IPS) for senior executives, including their role in setting the standard for agency compliance with IPS requirements to publish information proactively.

For community

We have developed a range of resources to help the community access government-held information and navigate the FOI system.

Share these resources with your stakeholders to show your support for #AccessToInfoDay.

How to access Australian Government information

We encourage agencies to link to our new step-by-step guide to help members of the public find the right agency or process for their information access request.

Accessing agency information

Individuals may find the information they want from an Australian Government agency without needing to lodge an FOI request. This may include through disclosure logs or an Information Publication Scheme.

Requesting official documents held by a minister

Our website covers the community's rights to access a minister's documents, what is and is not an official document and applicants' review rights.

FAQs for applicants following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

See our FAQs about FOI and COVID-19 including information on what to expect when making an FOI request or applying for an Information Commissioner review of an FOI decision following the impact of the pandemic.

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Email copy

Dear colleagues

International Access to Information Day is approaching on Wednesday 28 September. It's an event that recognises the importance of the community's right to access information from governments around the globe.

#AccessToInfoDay is also an opportunity to acknowledge the important role that government agencies play in managing information for public purposes.

In Australia, our *Freedom of Information Act 1982* is intended to support our democracy by increasing scrutiny and review of government activities and public participation in government processes.

It recognises that government-held information is a national resource to be shared with citizens, unless there is an overriding reason not to do so.

This year's #AccessToInfoDay theme set by UNESCO is artificial Intelligence, e-governance and access to information. It encourages us to consider how our digital world can improve access to information and enhance **openness through e-governance**.

As we continue to experience an increase in the business of government, including service delivery conducted online, there is a need to consider the importance of designing these information management systems and processes with access to information at the forefront. And as the business of government continues to be conducted digitally, information must be searchable and retrievable and should be prepared with proactive publication in mind.

The work of our FOI team and officers across our agency is essential, not only upholding our FOI laws and managing information as a national resource, but in creating a default culture of openness by design.

This International Access to Information Day, we are joining with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) in supporting the value of access to government-held information and its role in helping all Australian's participate in our democracy.

You can see some of the information we publish including our disclosure logs **[insert link]** and our Information Publication Scheme **[insert link]**.

Take some time to discover the important of International Access to Information Day at the OAIC's #AccessToInfoDay website.

Kind regards

[sender's name]

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International Access to Information Day on Wednesday 28 September recognises the importance of the community's right to access information from governments around the globe.

The annual event was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly and is being marked by Australian states and territories and around the globe.

#AccessToInfoDay also acknowledges the vital role that Australian Government agencies play in managing information for public purposes.

This year's theme is artificial Intelligence, e-governance and access to information. It encourages us to consider how our digital world can improve access to information and enhance **openness through e-governance**.

As we continue to experience an increase in the business of government, including service delivery conducted online, there is a need to consider the importance of designing these information management systems and processes with access to information in mind.

The work of our FOI team and officers across our agency is essential, not only upholding our FOI laws and managing information as a national resource, but in creating a default culture of openness by design.

Visit the #AccessToInfoDay website and discover the importance of access to government-held information.

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Social media posts

These posts have been compiled to serve as a guide – please feel free to adjust them to better suit your agency.

Remember to tag the OAIC in your posts and use the #AccessToInfoDay hashtag.

Twitter

- Did you know that Wednesday 28 September is International Access to Information Day? Learn more about how we manage information as a national resource, and how to access it at **[insert link to your IPS]** #AccessToInfoDay

- #AccessToInfoDay reminds us of our commitment to consider access to government-held information up front in projects and decision-making and proactively releasing information of value to open government. Learn more for #AccessToInfoDay on 28 September: oaic.gov.au/iaid

- This #AccessToInfoDay we are joining @OAICgov and supporting the value of access to government-held information. See our disclosure logs: **[insert link]**

- The #RightToKnow is a foundation for increasing scrutiny and review of government activities. Mark #AccessToInfoDay and learn more about how access to information supports public participation in government processes: oaic.gov.au/iaid

- This International Access to Information Day, on 28 September, discover the importance of government-held information and support its use as a national resource: oaic.gov.au/iaid #AccessToInfoDay

Facebook

- September 28 is International Access to Information Day. This #AccessToInfoDay discover the important role that access to government-held information plays in our democracy and support its use as a national resource: oaic.gov.au/iaid

- Did you know that Wednesday 28 September is International Access to Information Day? This #AccessToInfoDay we are joining the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and supporting the value of access to government-held information. Learn more about how we manage information as a national resource, and how to access it at **[insert link to your IPS]**

- This year's #AccessToInfoDay theme, artificial Intelligence, e-governance and access to information, encourages us to consider how we enhance openness through e-governance. Because considered e-governance design enables better access to information, creating a culture of openness by design. Discover more: oaic.gov.au/iaid

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LinkedIn

International Access to Information Day on September 28 recognises the fundamental right of citizens to access government information.

This year's theme is artificial Intelligence, e-governance and access to information. It encourages us to consider how we enhance **openness through e-governance**.

It recognises the importance of building robust e-governance systems and platforms that enable access to information for all members of the Australian community.

Because access to information helps all Australians participate in our democracy.

Find out more about the event at oaic.gov.au/iaid.

You can access our information through our website at **[insert link to your IPS]** and learn more about how we manage information as a national resource.

> Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn for more updates, and use the hashtags #AccessToInfo and #RightToKnow and joing the global conversation.

Other ideas to show your support

- Promote your agency's Information Publication Scheme or Disclosure Log

- Promote other ways to access information from your agency, such as self-service or administrative access schemes

- Let people know where to go to lodge an FOI request with your agency

- Brainstorm how you can make more information available to your clients or customers

- Share and retweet the OAIC's social media posts during September

- Encourage your colleagues to explore the OAIC campaign website and watch our new video developed with our state and territory counterparts

- Share some of the OAIC's resources for the community, including:

    How to access Australian Government information
    There are a range of ways you can access different types of information from the Australian Government. Our step-by-step tool can help direct you to the right agency or process.

    Top 5 tips for FOI applicants
    The FOI Act gives you a right to access documents held by Australian Government agencies and ministers, unless an exemption applies. Read our tips to help you access documents.

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Downloadable content

The following materials can be downloaded from the OAIC's International Access to Information Day 2022 website

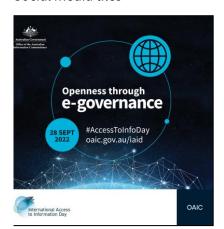Posters to print and share with option to co-brand or include the OAIC website

Social media tiles

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Email signature

PowerPoint template

International Access to Information Day logos

Please visit our campaign website to download the International Access to Information Day logos and promotional materials.

If you need additional support or have any questions, contact us at corporate@oaic.gov.au.

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