FOI and Privacy Regional Roadshow

Barwon Health's structure and informal release Kirsty Miller, Patient Information Release Unit Manager 23 February 2023





Acknowledgement of Country

We, Barwon Health, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present. We thank the Traditional Owners for custodianship of the land, and celebrate the continuing culture of the Wadawurrung people acknowledging the memory of honourable ancestors. We also welcome all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present today.







Vital statistics

- One of the largest and most comprehensive regional health services in Australia, providing care at all stages of life and circumstance
- Annual budget over \$700 million
- Employ more than 8,300 staff and volunteers
- 21 sites
- One of the largest employers in the region
- Services covering nearly all specialities, with the exception of organ transplant and neurosurgery
- 406 acute hospital beds and >1000 beds in total



Overall FOI team

- In 2021/2022 FY 1,040 FOI requests
- Vast majority are for health records
- Remainder are termed "corporate requests"
- Some requests for "amendments" to health records
- In 2021/2022 ROI processed over 8000 requests for information, including requests for on-going patient care



Heath Information Services – PIRU Team

- One Manager .8 FTE
- 2 FOI officers 1 FTE
- 3 ROI Officers 1.2 FTE
- 3 Reviewers .64 FTE
- (in addition to this Legal Services deals with some requests where required)



How are requests for documents processed at Barwon Health

- Formally under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) ('the Act'), and
- Informally under s16 of the Act where we can properly do so, taking in to consideration legislation such as the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic) and the *Health Records Act 2000* (Vic)
- FOI Team handles the most formal requests
- ROI Team processes most informal requests



Documents made available outside of the Act as an informal release

- Discharge Summaries,
- Medications charts,
- Operation Reports,
- Pathology reports,
- Radiology reports requests for copies of films,
- Time of Birth,
- Certificate of attendance,
- Any release of information request for ongoing patient care with authorisation,
- Invoices,
- Repeated requests seeking the same information i.e. patient changed solicitor with appropriate authorities, and
- Consideration is always made for 'Corporate Requests'



Benefits of processing outside of the act

- Allows for efficiencies
 - Less administration work required per request
 - Patients get their information quicker
 - Usually smaller requests requiring less time to process
- No fees are charged
- Less burden on our reviewers and FOI Officers
- Negotiate what is received by the patient and how provided



When would we process via the FOI Act

- When the patient wants to request the record under Act to preserve their rights
- If we hold concerns regarding patient safety i.e. if we needed to consider s33(4)
- If information will need to be redacted (without consent) under a permissible exemption, i.e. information communicated to us in confidence, family violence concerns or a secrecy provisions applies such as child protection report
- Specific authorities are required such as Third party requests



Going forward

- Considering making more documents available as a standard practice
- The hospital is looking at developing platforms for patients to view their records via an online portal in conjunction with our EMR, in line with relevant legislation.
- Allows for more openness and transparency with treatment and increased patient trust



How do you get onboard with informal release?



- OVIC in conjunction with the HCC have put together guidance via a Practice note from November 2022 to assist
- Put together a procedure so all team members are clear as to what the parameters are
- Create a request form so it can be clearly documented





FOI & Privacy Regional Roadshow

23 February 2023

Shantelle Ryan, Assistant Commissioner - Public Access
Operations & Compliance

Office of the Victorian Information

Commissioner

Freedom of Information | Privacy | Data Protection

The Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner



Rachel Dixon, Joanne Kummrow, Sven Bluemmel

OVIC is an independent regulator with combined oversight of information access, information privacy, and data protection.

We support Victorians by:

- overseeing access to government information;
- protecting information privacy rights;
- advising on the lawful sharing of information; and
- promoting effective information security.



FOI Professional Standards



The Victorian FOI Professional Standards Framework



www.ovic.vic.gov.au

- The Professional Standards commenced operation on 2 December 2019.
- The Standards are binding and apply to every Victorian agency subject to the FOI Act.
- The Principal Officer of an agency is responsible for ensuring any officer or employee concerned with the operation of the FOI Act complies with the Professional Standards.
- The FOI Professional Standards Framework includes information about how OVIC identifies, records and monitors agency compliance with the Standards.
- Professional Standards Self-assessment Tool for agencies to measure their adherence to, and compliance with, the Standards.



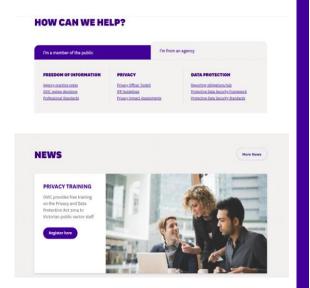
The FOI Agency Information Service

- A service to provide FOI Practitioners with tailored information and guidance in administering the FOI Act and compliance with the Professional Standards.
- FOI Practitioners can email their query to our dedicated mailbox: AskFOI@ovic.vic.gov.au
- Published guidelines available at ovic.vic.gov.au











FOI Education and Training

- Over 730 de-identified Notice of Decisions published on OVIC's website and AUSTLII
- 25 Procedural Practice Notes
- 17 Exemption Practice Notes
- Templates
- Monthly Information Access Series live and recorded webinars
- Monthly training webinars for VPS Staff
- E-Learning modules across Privacy and FOI
- Consumer videos







Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways.

Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, and present.

Planets align

Position Description

- FOI Officer
- Privacy Officer

Legislation

- FOI Act 1982
- PDP Act 2014
- LGA Act 2020

Access to information

- FOI Request
- FOI Decision
- Informal release

Tale of two Councils

East Gippsland Shire Council

- Information Management
- Governance
- Experienced FOI Officer
- Dedicated, part-time
- Effective systems / processes
- Succession planning
- Collaboration

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

- Governance
- Inexperienced FOI Officers
- Not only responsibility
- Legacy systems / processes
- Transition issues
- System challenges
- Ongoing contractor support

Challenges



Resourcing



Proactive release



Document retrieval



Staff awareness



Variability / unpredictability



Legislative process

Council meeting proceedings for Councillor Conduct Officer Send Indiagenenic Geographical Place Rathing Conditions of the Condition o Conflict of Interest Rolling Continues Conflict of Interest Conflict of Agenda management Exector of Information of the cor Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator Personal Interest Returns Council business Records Management Information Security Lead Onbudsman complaints Register management Complaints Officer Charter of Human Rights teviens Delegations Strategy Plans and Policy management Councillor Briefings Legislative compliance Ce

Opportunities



Proactive release



Upskilling



OVIC resources

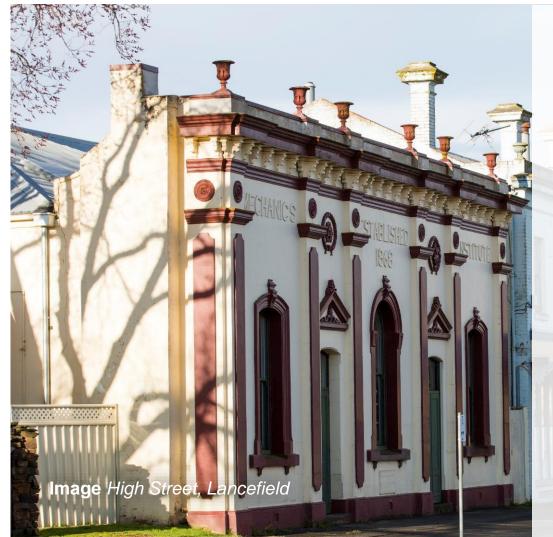




materials



Collaboration



Patricia Clive

Coordinator Governance Macedon Ranges Shire Council

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Working Together | Honesty | Accountability | Innovation | Respect

mrsc.vic.gov.a







Policy team February 2023

Accessing Victorian government-held information



Proactive release



Informal release



Freedom of information



New guidance available



Welcome to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

We are the primary regulator and source of independent advice to the community and Victorian government about how the public sector collects, uses and discloses information.

Contact OVIC here



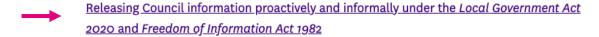
Sector specific guidance

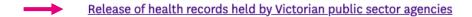
PROACTIVE AND INFORMAL RELEASE

These practice notes cover informal and proactive release generally, and also provide sector specific guidance

Proactive release of information

Informal release of information







All resources available online

Guidance materials for agencies

- Introduction to public access to information in Victoria
- Proactive release of information practice note
- Informal release of information practice note
- Releasing Council information proactively and informally under the LGA and the FOI Act
- Release of health records held by Victorian public sector agencies

Guidance material for the public

Proactive and informal release – guidance for the public

Webinar recordings

 Recorded proactive and informal release webinars for agencies

Video (Vimeo)

 How to release information proactively and informally

Research papers

- Enhancing Victoria's FOI culture to be open by design (OVIC)
- Proactive and Informal Release Behavioural Change report (Decision Design)
- Monash University Part II Study on the Culture of FOI in Victoria (Monash University)









OVIC's Professional Standards

23 February 2023

Contents



The basics – Review v Complaint

Reviews

- 'merits review' of Agency decision, conducted by OVIC
- OVIC's powers set out in Part VI of the FOI Act
- Commissioner's decision made in place of the agency's
- Outcome can be appealed to VCAT

Complaints

- o Investigation into non-compliance with the FOI Act
- o OVIC's powers set out in Part VIA of the FOI Act
- Outcome cannot be appealed to VCAT

Public Access Reviews process

Informal Resoluti on

• Case Manager contact with Applicant and Agency

Further enquiries

Request for further information or written submissions

nt assessm ent In-depth assessment of all documents

Enquiries to the agency and or the applicant

• Proliminary viou

Recom mendat on and

• "Fresh decision" by Agency

Formal decision by Decision Maker

Decision

Reviews – how to assist OVIC



Document transfer forms / marked up documents



Written submissions

YES √	NO X
Detailed, specific information about the FOI request and the documents	Merely quoting legislation
Comprehensive answers to OVIC questions	Repeating decision letter
Clear and concise	Long and legalistic
s49H(1) – as little formality and technicality as possible	

Public Access Complaints process

Further enquires

- Case Manager contact with Complainant and Agency
- Request for further information or written submissions

Closure

- With consent of the Complainant OR
- Formal dismissal by Decision Maker

Complaint Handling







Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness considerations Collection of new and relevant information prior to determination

Resolution can come as a result of 1 point, or multiple





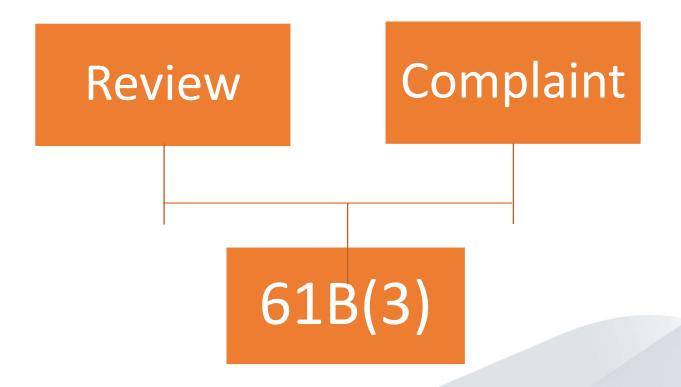
The value of information learned during a complaint

Communicating in a tailored manner, plain English





Review AND Complaint



Professional Standards



33 Standards based on 11 Themes



Engagements and Breaches



Non-compliance



GENERAL - The basics

Commenced 2 December 2019

- Apply to and bind all Victorian Agencies subject to the FOI Act
- Elaborate on obligations under the FOI Act
- Articulate expectations for FOI practitioners when performing their FOI function
- Referred to as "engagements" when a PS matter is recorded

GENERAL - What do they aim to do?

improve communication between agencies and applicants;

ensure agencies process FOI requests in a timely manner;

clarify any unclear terms or tests of the Act; and

help agencies apply the FOI Act in a modern way.

GENERAL – Types of breaches

- Minor or technical
 - where an agency's action or inaction results in a minimal risk of detriment to members of the public or OVIC

- Substantial, persistent or systemic
 - relate to an agency's action or inaction where there is moderate to high risk of detriment to members of the public or OVIC

OVIC - Dealing with non-compliance

Minor or technical

- Request further information, a written submission or response from the agency
- Request that an agency participate in an educational activity or refer agency to online resources
- Meet with agency to discuss obligations
- Address non-compliance in covering letter to the agency
- Ongoing monitoring of performance

Substantial, persistent or systemic

- Request further information, a written submission or response from the agency
- Request that an agency participate in an educational activity or refer agency to online resources
- Meet with agency to discuss obligations
- Address non-compliance in covering letter to the agency
- Ongoing monitoring of performance
- Make a finding of breach
- Report breach in OVIC's annual report
- Internal referral for consideration of an own motion investigation

OVIC – existing resources

- FOI Professional Standards Framework:
 - https://ovic.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/resources-for-agencies/professional-standards/the-foi-professional-standards-framework/
- Practice Note 1: The Professional Standards
 - https://ovic.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/resources-for-agencies/practice-notes/the-professional-standards/
- Professional Standards introduction and interpretation
 - · https://ovic.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/resources-for-agencies/professional-standards/# Introduction and interpretation
- Professional Standards Self-assessment tool
 - https://ovic.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/resources-for-agencies/professional-standards/professional-standards-self-assessment-tool/

Professional Standards – Self-assessment tool

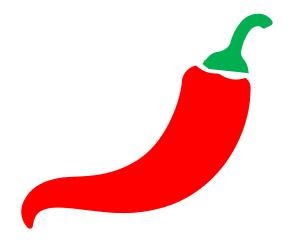
Developed to assist in identifying PS engagements, a "how to"

Covers 18 of the 33 standards

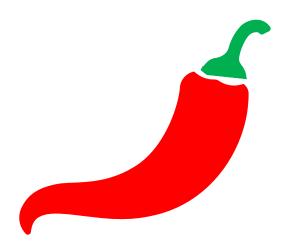
• Designed to help drive regular "checks" of files, particularly by case managers following the allocation of a new review or complaint.

https://ovic.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/resources-for-agencies/professional-standards/professional-standards-self-assessment-tool/





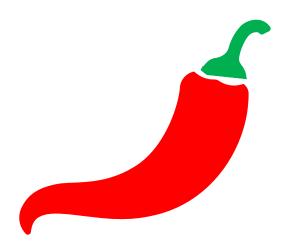
Share information with the Applicant from the relevant area of your Agency



A clear record makes for an easy answer

			,									
Record of d	ocument searcl	n under the <i>Freedo</i>	m of Information Ac	t 1982 (Vi	c)					_		
			y must ensure it keeps a plicable, the key words						e locations searched, the in the table below.			
			the FOI officer to reconstrained, where applicable		s conducted in	relation to the app	olicant's	s FOI request. Includ	e consultation with other			
Record of d	locument search	under the Freedom	of Information Act 19	82 (Vic)								
Applicant:	Jane Smith	nith			Date valid request received: 13 S			eptember 2018				
Agency reference:	FOI12345	345			Decision due date: 14 October			ctober 2018				
FOI officer:	Morgan Grey											
Date	Time taken	Name, position and area of officer who conducted the search	Locations searched	Describe searches (method or type of search)		If applicable, key words used		Result of searches	If relevant, why a document could not be located or why it does not exist			
18/09/2018	1 hour 25 mins	Jamie Chan, Project Officer, Infrastructure Projects team	Email accounts for Jamie Chan, Michael Brown and Sam Lines in the infrastructure Projects team TRIM	Key word search		Green wedge p Green wedge A project GWP Green project GW project		Located 20 emails, one report and one briefing Did not locate consultant reports	Consultant reports not located because the		4	





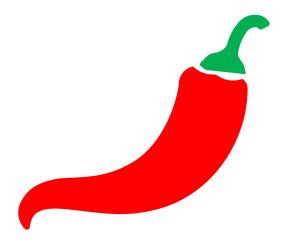
Schedule of documents

No.	Date of document	Document description	No. of pages	Decision	
1	[insert date]	[insert document description]	[insert number of pages]	[insert your decision on the document, including whether you decided to release it in full, in part or refuse in full. If you decide to release a document	
			OFFICE ABOUT US * FREEDOM OF INFORMATION * PRIVACY * INFORMATION SECURITY * EVENTS AN information of information / Resources for agencies / Practice notes	ormation security st events and education Q_{ϵ}	

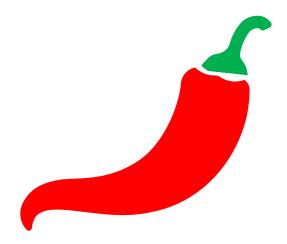
PRACTICE NOTES

These practice notes provide guidance on how to facilitate access to information under the Freedom of information Act 1982 (FOI Act) and the Professional Standards.

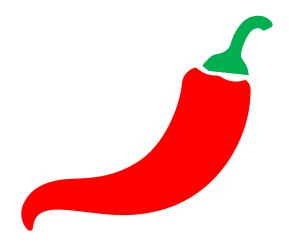
The are complemented by customisable <u>templates</u> that agencies can use when corresponding with applicants, third parties, and internal staff.



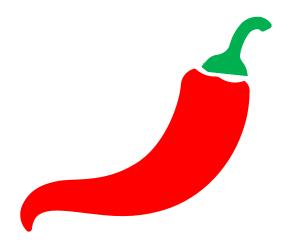
Agencies can use markup documents provided by OVIC at their discretion



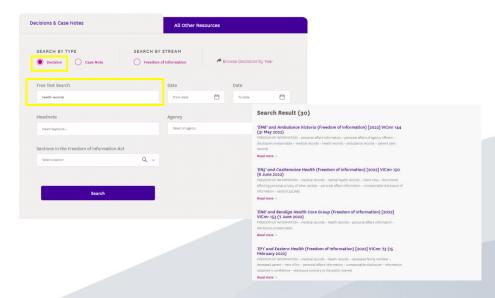
If you need more time to respond to OVIC, communicate it early

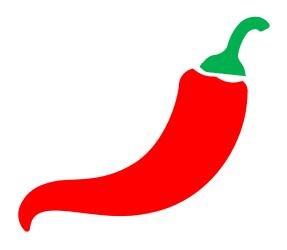


'Personal affairs information' may mean different things to different people



You can search for past decisions about a given document type





AskFOI@ovic.vic.gov.au!

HOW DO I ACCESS THE SERVICE?

Please include the following information in your email:

- 1. Your question to be answered;
- 2. The general nature of your query and relevant section of the FOI Act;
- 3. A short summary including any relevant background or contextual information; and
- 4. The outcome sought by seeking advice.

When emailing your questions and accessing the service please **de-identify** the subject matter and/or the applicant.

Prior to accessing the service, we encourage agencies to consider the <u>FOI agency resources</u> available on OVIC's website

FOI & Privacy Regional Roadshow February 2023

Day-to-day privacy

Anique Owen - Acting Manager, Privacy Guidance and Dispute Resolution Jack Kennedy – Privacy Guidance Advisor and Conciliator Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner



Agenda

Topics

- Privacy resources
- Collecting personal information
- Using and disclosing personal information

From this presentation, you will be able to:

- Identify, locate and use tools for privacy officers and employees
- Gain an appreciation of the common privacy themes seen in smaller and regional organisations
- Take practical lessons on how to collect, use and disclose personal information back to your workplace.



Privacy Officer Toolkit

ovic.vic.gov.au/privacy-officer-toolkit/



The importance of privacy



Role of the Privacy Officer



Privacy law
- an overview



The PDP Act



Reviewing and improving practices



Handling internal enquiries



Raising awareness of your role



Privacy Policies



Collection



Privacy impact assessments



Handling complaints



Data breaches



Working with OVIC



Training and networking



Most common topics



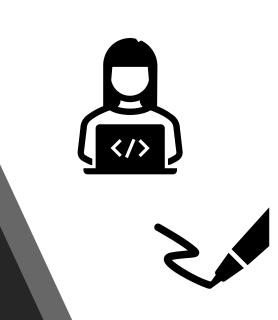
Shareable resources





Collection

The first step that attracts obligations under the PDP Act





Key considerations

- Collection must be necessary for one or more functions or activities
- 2. Collection can only be by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way
- Organisations are required to include a collection notice
- 4. It is best to collect information directly from the individual, but that may not always be possible



Collection via Surveillance devices

- 1. Clearly define and articulate the purpose of the collection via surveillance
- 2. Ensure the surveillance is limited in scope and duration
- 3. Consider whether third parties may have their personal information collected accidentally e.g. where you're using dashcams, or body-worn cameras
- Establish appropriate oversight and accountability mechanisms to detect any misuse.



Collection via surveys and public engagement

- 1. Undertake a privacy impact assessment to identify privacy risks early
- Prepare a collection notice specific to the activity or function and provide a copy to all participants when you are collecting their personal information
- If you are promoting the survey online, include reference to the collection notice
- Ensure your privacy policy is up to date and reflects your current information handling practices



IPP 2 - Use and Disclosure

- Customer service telephone calls
- External disclosure to thirdparties
- Internal use and disclosure









IPP 2 - Use and disclosure



• Is the use or disclosure for the same purpose it was collected as per IPP 2.1?

 Is the use or disclosure for a related <u>and</u> reasonably expected secondary purpose as per IPP 2.1 (a)?

 Does the use or disclosure meet one of the exemptions under IPP 2.1 (b)-(h)? (e.g. authorised by or under law, where consent has been provided, etc.)



Examples of external disclosures



Customer service telephone calls

Emails to customers

Emails to organisations (public or private)

Responding to requests by external agencies



Information disclosed via phone call



Sarah is a new customer service officer at a local council. She has been hired during a busy period where Council have received a large increase in phone calls. She received some training before being placed on the phones to help relieve the pressure on other staff and to help reduce wait times.

Sarah receives a call from James, who explains that his sister is getting married, and that he is helping to send out invitations but is unable to confirm a mailing address for their old family friend Alexandra, who lives within the region.

Sarah knows she can access Alexandra's contact details and believes that James appears genuine. She notices that the call queue continues to grow. She feels like she probably shouldn't disclose the address but likes to help people wherever she can.

James asks if she can quickly provide the address, because he has lots of invitations to mail out and is running out of time on his lunch break. Sarah knows that if she gives him the mailing address, she can quickly attend to the queues and avoid criticism from her new manager who has mentioned that short call times are a priority.

She discloses the address, thinking to herself "what's the worst that could happen?"



Slido: #OVIC2023

Information disclosed via phone call



What type of harm could arise from this disclosure?

What steps could Council take to prevent this from occurring?

- Training and processes is it specific and tailored to the role?
- Culture do employees feel comfortable to ask questions when they're unsure whether to disclose information?

 Access controls – should Sarah have access to Alexandra's personal information?



Disclosing personal information to a contracted service provider



A fictitious water corporation has signed a contract with a survey company to gauge customer's views on their services.

The third-party has asked the water corporation to disclose the entire customer database to them so they can begin the survey.



Disclosing personal information to a contracted service provider



 What information is required for the survey company to receive to fulfill their contract?

Are customers given the option to opt-out of the survey?

 How does the company assure the water corporation that they handle personal information securely?



Examples of internal use and disclosure



- Sending emails
- Phone calls

Meetings

Databases

Registers



Key considerations



Access controls

 Who needs access to what type of information? Who needs permission to edit data?

 Does your system allow you to restrict access to information based on role and relevance?

 Are there routine audits on which employees have accessed certain information?



Key considerations



Processes, policies and procedures

- Have you conducted a privacy impact assessment (PIA)?
- What type of privacy training is provided to staff? Is it general or tailored based on position and role?
- How often do you provide training?
- What resources can employees refer to if they're unsure? Is there a process manual or standard operating procedure?
- Are there routine audits on which employees have accessed certain information?

