



Agency FOI Reference Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Agency FOI Reference Group is to promote and advocate for good practice in FOI by:

- exploring ways that the OIC can further assist FOI officers in their role, particularly through the information provided via the OIC website, publications and training;
- improving FOI Coordinator and agency knowledge of the FOI process and current issues; and
- sharing information about trends in FOI decisions.

Overview

The functions of the Information Commissioner include ensuring that agencies are aware of their responsibilities under the FOI Act. To assist agencies meet their obligations, the Information Commissioner offers:

- training courses for FOI Coordinators and Decision-makers;
- targeted FOI briefings, both in the metropolitan and regional areas; and
- publications that offer guidance about FOI, which are available in hardcopy and on the FOI website.

The Agency FOI Reference group will provide an opportunity to ensure that the OIC is effectively assisting agencies meet their obligations under the FOI Act.

Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the Agency FOI Reference Group are that:

- agencies are better informed about how to fulfil their obligations under the FOI Act;
- the OIC receives fewer complaints arising from agency error or non-compliance with the letter or objects of the FOI Act; and
- agencies provide better FOI outcomes to the public.

Membership

Members of the Agency FOI Reference Group are agency FOI practitioners, appointed by the Information Commissioner, who have experience in the management of FOI processes in agencies as well as an interest in helping achieve the objects of the FOI Act generally.

Members will be appointed for a period of 12 months.

The tasks of members are to:

- contribute to effective sharing of information between agencies and the OIC;
- provide considered feedback about the OIC's advice and awareness activities, including proposed or existing publications and training activities;
- participate in raising the standard of FOI knowledge and practice in the public sector, and
- provide advice to the Commissioner, based on members' operational experience, regarding suggested legislative or administrative practices that could be made to help the objects of the FOI Act to be achieved.

Meetings

The group will meet quarterly at the offices of the OIC. Members who are located outside the Perth CBD may attend by teleconference.

Meetings of the group will be chaired by a senior officer of the Office of the Information Commissioner, with other staff of the OIC attending as necessary.

Meetings will be informal in style. An agenda will be circulated prior to meetings and action items will be provided to members after meetings.

All members will be encouraged to initiate topics for discussion and to share information received at meetings with their colleagues.