



Australian Government

Department of Communications

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Information Publication Scheme Plan

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Introduction

1. The Department of Communications (the department) is an agency subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) and complies with the Information Publication Scheme (IPS) requirements. The department's Information Publication Scheme plan (the plan) is in accordance with subsection 8 (1) of the FOI Act.
2. As the Australian Government's re-eminent advisor on communications, the department's purpose is to promote an innovative and competitive communications sector so Australians can realise the full potential of digital technologies and communications services.
3. The plan describes how the department administers the IPS in respect of its own information holdings, by addressing:
 - a. Administration of the department's IPS contribution
 - b. information architecture
 - c. information required to be published
 - d. other information to be published (optional information)
 - e. accessibility to information published
 - f. compliance review

Purpose

4. The purpose of this plan is to:
 - a. comply with s 8 (1) of the FOI Act detailing requirements relating to the publication of an Information Publication Scheme Plan
 - b. help the department to proactively disclose its information holdings, in accordance with the objectives of the FOI Act.

Objectives

5. The objectives of this plan are to outline the department's mechanisms and procedures to:
 - a. manage the information holdings relevant to the IPS
 - b. proactively identify and publish all information required to be published, including this plan (s 8(2))
 - c. proactively identify and publish any identified optional information (s 8 (4))
 - d. review and ensure that information published under the Information Publication Scheme is accurate, up to date and complete (s 8B)
 - e. ensure that information published under the Information Publication Scheme is discoverable, understandable and re-usable

- f. ensure that the format of online content conforms with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#)
- g. measure the success of the department's Information Publication Scheme

The Information Publication Scheme

- 6. The department's approach to complying with the Information Publication Scheme is:
 - a. the department's existing information asset management framework will meet the new Information Publication Scheme requirements. This includes an established records management policy
 - b. a register of information required or permitted to be published under the Information Publication Scheme and a 'disclosure log' for information released in response to FOI requests is maintained
 - c. the department identifies information that is required to be published under s 8(2), information that may be published under s 8(4), and information that is made available to the public otherwise than by publication (s 8A(2))
 - d. the department takes steps to ensure that information published under the scheme is discoverable, understandable, machine-readable, accessible, useable, as well as accurate, up-to-date and complete

Information architecture

- 7. The IPS information holdings that are available on the department's website, will be published under the following headings:
 - a. IPS plan (s 8(2)(a))
 - b. who we are (s 8(2)(b) and 8(2)(d))
 - c. what we do (s 8(2)(c) and 8(2)(j))
 - d. our reports and responses to Parliament (s 8(2)(e) and 8(2)(h))
 - e. consultation arrangements (s 8(2)(f))
 - f. routinely requested information and disclosure log (s 8(2)(g) and 11C)
 - g. our priorities (s 8(4))
 - h. our finances (s 8(4))
 - i. our data sets (s 8(4))
 - j. contact us (s 8(2)(i))

8. To ensure that the IPS information holdings (and individual IPS documents) are easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable, the department will:
 - a. publish an IPS icon on the homepage of its website, which will link to the IPS section of the website
 - b. publish an FOI disclosure log icon on the homepage of its website, which will link to the FOI disclosure log
 - c. design and publish an IPS entry point on its website
 - d. create a link between the IPS page, FOI disclosure log and the existing FOI page
 - e. wherever possible, provide online content in a format that can be searched, copied and transformed
 - f. update the sitemap for its website, to help individuals identify the location of information published under s 8(2) and 8(4)
 - g. enable the IPS page and disclosure log to be located via the search function for its website
9. The department will make its IPS documents available through a link from the IPS section of its web site.
10. The department intends to publish the information in multiple formats, where possible. Information will be published in English.
11. The department will deposit copies of information in other locations where appropriate. For example:
 - a. information published in hard copy form that may be provided to the Commonwealth Library Deposit and Free Issue Scheme
 - b. information published in audio or audio-visual form may be provided to the National Sound and Film Archive
 - c. documents published on the internet may be provided to the National Library of Australia, through its Pandora program
 - d. datasets may be published at www.data.gov.au

Information required to be published

12. In accordance with s 8(2) of the FOI Act, the department will publish and regularly update the following types of information (including data sets):
 - a. IPS plan
 - b. who we are, including the [organisational structure](#), the department's Enterprise Agreement, details of the statutory appointment of the Secretary, listing of [key people](#), listing of [portfolio agencies](#), and [contact information](#)
 - c. what we do, including information about the department's functions and decision making powers. This section will also include the department operational information including

rules, guidelines, practices and precedents that assist the department to make decisions or recommendations affecting members of the public

- d. our Reports, including annual reports prepared by the department and documents routinely tabled (or requiring publication) in Parliament
- e. The department will adopt a principle-based approach for identifying routine information which includes considering whether publication of the information proactively will:
 - promote the objects of the FOI Act
 - be in the public interest
 - pre-empt further FOI requests for the information

This includes:

- [Department annual reports](#)
 - Senate Order on Indexed Lists of departmental files
 - [Senate Order on departmental contracts](#)
 - Senate Order on Board Appointments—Vacancies/Appointments
 - Senate Order on departmental Grants
- f. consultation information, including regulatory plans and consultation arrangements for members of the public. This includes:
 - [consultations and submissions](#)
 - [Regulatory plan](#)
 - g. routinely requested information and disclosure log in relation to FOI requests. This includes information in documents that the department routinely gives access to in response to FOI requests.
 - h. [contact information](#) for the department, including the [FOI Officer contact details](#).

Optional Information

13. In accordance with s 8(4) of the FOI Act, the department publishes optional information (including data sets). This includes:
 - a. priorities, including the [Corporate Plan](#), assessments and reviews
 - b. finances, annual budget, procurement procedures, and tendering. This includes:
 - Portfolio budget statement
 - [Annual procurement plan \(AusTender website\)](#)
 - [tenders](#)

- [procurement support to other agencies](#)
 - [Legal Services expenditure](#)
 - [funding reporting](#), including discretionary grants and 7 day listing of grants
 - [contracts notices \(AusTender website\)](#).
- c. data sets:
- [data sets \(data.gov.au\)](#).

Administering the department IPS

14. The department will continue to meet its IPS obligations by:
- a. maintaining a robust information and asset management framework
 - b. publishing, on an ongoing basis, information to members of the public through the website and the FOI disclosure log
 - c. identifying, on an ongoing basis, any information that is required to be published under s 8(2) of the FOI Act—information that must be published
 - d. identifying on an ongoing basis any information that may be published under s 8(4)—optional information
 - e. identifying on an ongoing basis any information that is already otherwise available (s 8A(2))
 - f. ensuring the information published continues to be discoverable, accessible, useable, as well as accurate, and up-to-date
 - g. ensuring the information about any charges to be imposed and how they will be calculated continues to be published (s 8D(4) and 8D(5))
 - h. continually updating and developing its IPS plan.
15. IPS documents, which are not available on the department’s website, will be made available upon request through a nominated contact officer. The department may charge a person for accessing any IPS document which it is impracticable to publish online.
16. The department will publish on its website a list of any IPS documents that are impracticable to publish online. The list of documents will include indicative charges that may be imposed for making that information available and an explanation for the charge. These charges will be consistent with charges in the Freedom of Information (Charges) Regulations 1982 (which generally apply to access requests under Part III of the FOI Act).

Accessibility under the IPS

17. The department will ensure, to the extent possible, that all online information it is required to publish under the IPS (s 8(2)) conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2) (WCAG 2.0).
18. The department will ensure that optional information published on its website conforms with WCAG 2.0 in accordance with the time frames in Annexure B.
19. The department's dedicated IPS section of its website will state that where a document is not yet available in an accessible format, it will be made available in an accessible format on request, by contacting the department (contact details will be provided). This may be subject to a small number of exceptions identified in Annexure B.

Review

20. The department will review the operation of its Information Publication Scheme from time to time and at least every five years, in accordance the guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner about IPS compliance review (better practice guidance material to assist agencies to comply with the IPS—to be published in the Information Commissioner's regulatory capacity with the Information Commissioner).

Annexure A

Indicative timetable—WCAG 2.0 conformance

The department will ensure, to the extent possible, that all documents available on its website before 1 May 2011 conform with WCAG 2.0 in accordance with the following timetable (subject to exceptions described below):

No.	Document category	Format	Indicative WCAG 2.0 conformance date
1.	All documents required to be published under s 8(2)	RTF, PDF and HTML	30 June 2012
2.	Optional information published under s 8(4)	RTF, PDF and HTML	30 June 2012

The majority of documents listed on the IPS section of the department's website will be converted into HTML to meet accessibility requirements. A small number of exceptions may apply to:

- PDFs made of images of scanned documents
- documents that are out of date, but that are provided for historical reference (these will be supplied in the formats in which they are currently available)
- charts, tables and forms (these can be supplied in accessible formats on request).

Where possible, documents covered by these exceptions will be published in two alternative formats.

The department may use automated tools to convert documents in PDF and Word formats into HTML. These documents will be proof read and new metadata applied.

The department will ensure that all new documents to be published in the IPS section after 1 May 2011 conform with WCAG 2.0 as soon as possible.