Open Access Information Scheme – Compliance Strategy

# Purpose

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is committed to meeting its obligations under the ACT *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act) from 1 January 2018 – including under the Open Access Information Scheme (OAIS).

Due to the volume of information that must be identified, assessed, and for which public interest determinations must be made under the OAIS, complete publication by the start of January 2018 is not achievable. The approach below sets out the Directorate’s 12-month plan for achieving compliance.

EPSDD is also committed to its obligations to make information accessible under the web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.0).

# Background

Information Officers, appointed under the Act, are responsible for ensuring the agency meets its obligations to publish Open Access Information under part 4 of the Act.

Section 23 of the Act sets out the categories of Open Access Information. The types of Open Access Information for which further activity is required throughout 2018 are:

* s23 (1)(c) The agency’s policy documents, and
* s23 (1)(g)&(h) a statement listing all boards, councils, committees, panels and other bodies that have been established by the agency (whether under an Act or otherwise) for the purpose of advising the agency or a Minister responsible for the agency; and any report or recommendation prepared by any such bodies.

# Strategy for achieving compliance

## Awareness Campaign

* All Information Officers are to attend training on operations and responsibilities under the Act.
* Staff communications and information sessions are delivered by the Information Management Team across the EPSDD portfolio.
* Training under the Act will be available to ACTPS staff from 2018.
* An internal governance working group has been established to promote regular engagement with the Communications Team and collaborative governance approaches to ensuring compliance.

The Directorate is also represented on the Justice and Community Safety Directorate Implementation Project (whole of government) Working Group and the ACT Territory Records Office OAIS Implementation (whole of government) meetings.

## 2018 Staged Release

For Open Access Information not captured in the first release by 1 January 2018, the following periods are identified.

The stages of release of government information coincide with executive assurances that all relevant information is accurate, up-to-date, and complete.

* **First quarter release** will focus on final public policy matters, high level significance/influence on advice/decision-making by the EPSDD portfolio, information necessary to understand the operations of the portfolio agencies, and those policy documents for which disclosure ensures a person is not subjected to any prejudice due to it not being publicly available as set out in section 27 of the Act.
* **Second quarter release** will recognise the delays associated with Territory authority/instrumentality Information Officer appointment and committee (or other body) consultation and focus on final policy matters that were under review during the first quarter.
* **Third quarter release** will begin to focus on lower levels of significance/influence on advice/decision-making by the EPSDD portfolio, final policy matters that were under review during the second quarter, and completion of committee (or other body) consultation.
* **Fourth quarter release** will continue focus on lower levels of significance/influence on advice/decision-making by the EPSDD portfolio, final policy matters that were under review during the third quarter, and completion of committee (or other body) consultation. Fourth quarter release prepares for standardised business processes under OAIS recognised from 2019.

Open Access Information created during 2018 will be included no later than in the quarter subsequent to its finalisation unless delayed due to exceptional circumstances.

The staged release by calendar year quarter is not intended to limit government information release to once per quarter.

## Identifying significance/influence

Pending whole of Government policy advice, the approach focuses efforts on identifying information against the listing below. This approach is proposed to be taken to ensure earliest release of information likely to be of greatest interest and benefit to the public.

* Policy documents for which disclosure ensures a person is not subjected to any prejudice due to it not being publicly available as set out in section 27 of the Act.
* Public policy matters of public interest (including those setting out agency operations).
* Information necessary to understand the operations of the agency for which it is in the public interest to release.
* Final agency policy for EPSDD portfolio administration of Acts or Schemes.
* Advisory bodies on significant public policy matters/agency decision-making.
* Advisory bodies with permanent/ongoing appointments.
* Advisory bodies that report to Ministers or Senior Executive (across EPSDD portfolio/ Government).

### Examples

Inclusions: Executive Management Board, Performance and Business Management Committee, and ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013-2023.

Exclusions: Recruitment Panels, whole of government policy delivered by an agency outside of the EPSDD portfolio, and whole of government committees run by an agency outside of the EPSDD portfolio.

## Accessibility

Accessibility assessments for open access material is continuing and where documents do not meet accessibility guidelines or cannot be made compliant under the accessibility guidelines, the Directorate will publish a statement advising of the support available.

We apply our best efforts to comply with WCAG 2.0 and provide relevant information and training to our employees. We have developed templates that are designed for accessibility, and also review documents before publication.