



## Applying the legislation

GUIDELINE *Right to Information Act 2009*

### Administrative Access Scheme checklist

The *Right to Information Act 2009 (RTI Act)*<sup>1</sup> creates a right of access to government-held information unless doing so would be contrary to the public interest. All documents of an agency are required to be open unless there is a specific reason for them not to be, for example, if they are subject to legal professional privilege. Agencies are required to proactively push as much information as possible out to the community, or release it administratively, so that formal access applications under the RTI Act are a last resort.

Maximum disclosure of information to the community under the RTI Act requires agencies to identify new and existing information that can be proactively released and published in an accessible format. Agencies need to be aware of what information they hold and what the community wants to know and use. It is important to put procedures in place to identify existing and future information which is suitable for publication or access without requiring an application under the RTI Act. Establishing processes to monitor and report on your agency's performance in maximising proactive disclosure of information underpins continuous improvement in compliance with the RTI Act.

Administrative Access Schemes<sup>2</sup> are an important means of ensuring formal access applications are a last resort and can avoid unnecessary processes and costs for applicants and agencies. Information about an agencies' administrative access schemes, including relevant contact details, should be easily accessible on agency websites and communicated to all staff.

The Office of the Information Commissioner (**OIC**) promotes open government and can assist agencies:

- to identify information which is suitable for administrative access
- to develop standards for implementing administrative access schemes
- by providing information and assistance about monitoring performance in maximising proactive disclosure of information; and
- by developing tools, training and guidelines in support of proactive publication and administrative access schemes.

This checklist is designed to assist agencies to identify information that may be suitable for administrative access, implement an administrative access scheme and monitor performance.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to the RTI Act include chapter 3 of the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) (IP Act)*.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of administrative release and access schemes see the OIC Guideline: [Administrative Release of Information](#).



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Administrative Access Scheme Checklist			
1	Know your information holdings	Complete	Follow-up
1.1	Information holdings are described in a complete and up-to-date information asset register. <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
1.2	Information holdings which include personal information or other sensitive material have been identified and appropriately classified. <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
1.3	Information can be extracted and made available in accessible formats. <sup>5</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
1.4	Metadata describes information holdings in a manner which is meaningful to external stakeholders. <sup>6</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
1.6	Third-party information is licensed for electronic distribution. <sup>7</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
1.7	Publication schemes, disclosure logs and existing administrative access schemes are reviewed to identify key information holdings already available. <sup>8</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>3</sup> See [Information Standard 44](#) for further details. While not a requirement, OIC supports publication of information asset registers as a means of informing and engaging with stakeholders on information needs.

<sup>4</sup> See the [Queensland Government Information Security Classification Framework](#).

<sup>5</sup> Some information will be stored in inaccessible or proprietary formats. For accessibility, information needs to be published using open information standards. For more information see AusGOAL's description of [open formats](#).

<sup>6</sup> Metadata is critical for making information discoverable and searchable. See the Queensland State Archives [Recordkeeping metadata standard and guideline](#) and the minimum requirements set out in [Information Standard 34](#).

<sup>7</sup> Copyright in most agency information will be owned by the agency and can be licensed for reuse under [Information Standard 33](#). In some cases information will be sourced from third parties or subject to restrictive copyright licensing arrangements. Licensing should be reviewed in accordance with the [Information Licensing Review Checklist](#).

<sup>8</sup> Requirements for publication schemes and disclosure logs are set out in [Ministerial Guidelines](#). Agency progress in implementing these requirements can be self-assessed using the OIC [desktop audit tool](#).



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Actions:			
1.8	Any charges for administrative access to information are regularly reviewed. <sup>9</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
2	Know the needs of your information stakeholders	Complete	Follow-up
2.1	Community engagement strategies seek input on stakeholder's information requirements. <sup>10</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
2.2	Frontline staff are engaged in identifying frequent information requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
2.3	Right to Information and Information Privacy applications are analysed to identify common information requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
2.4	Website usage statistics, phone and e-mail contacts data is analysed to identify frequent information requests. <sup>11</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
2.5	Agency communications and media units are consulted on frequent information requests and proactive information campaigns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
3.0	Establish administrative access	Complete	Follow-up
3.1	Projects for the development of administrative access schemes are identified in information management planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			

<sup>9</sup> Agencies should compare revenue generated through cost-recovery activities with administration overheads. Often efficiencies can be achieved through automating information access. See Houghton and Gruen's paper [Transparency and Productivity](#), on the effects of open and transparent Public Sector Information management practices on costs and productivity, for example, economic modelling conducted on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' removal of cost-recovery on statistical data.

<sup>10</sup> For examples and discussion of stakeholder consultations on information needs see appendices four and five of the OIC's [Compliance Review of Department of Transport and Main Roads](#).

<sup>11</sup> [Information Standard 26](#) requires processes to continually improve internet sites through performance monitoring and management of customer feedback and information requests.



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3.2	Personal information (other than the requestor's), in-confidence and defamatory material is removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
3.4	Quality assurance is conducted based on an assessment of risk. <sup>12</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
3.5	Appropriate terms and conditions are applied to the use of information accessed administratively. <sup>13</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
3.6	Administrative access schemes are approved through appropriate governance arrangements. <sup>14</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
4.0	Promote and monitor administrative access	Complete	Follow-up
4.1	Administrative access is given prominence on the agency website. <sup>15</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
4.2	Frontline staff are well informed about administrative access available and are able to assist the public in requesting access. <sup>16</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			
4.3	Performance data on volume, timeliness, cost, user satisfaction and complaints is included in executive management reports and the agency's annual report.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>12</sup> Queensland Treasury publishes detailed guidance on [Risk Management](#).

<sup>13</sup> Unlike access under the RTI Act, access to information under an administrative scheme can be made subject to conditions. [Information Standard 33](#) encourages non-restrictive creative commons copyright licensing via [AusGOAL](#).

<sup>14</sup> Statutory protections against defamation and breach of confidence do not apply to administrative access. Access arrangements need to be approved by the chief executive or an officer operating with an appropriate delegated authority. The suitability of information for release can be established during its creation, see the QGCIO Guideline: [Determining the ex ante release status of information](#).

<sup>15</sup> RTI and Privacy web pages should promote the use of administrative access schemes prior to making a RTI or IP application. Links to the schemes, a clear description of the information available and the process for requesting access, should be included from these pages. Links might also be included on general contact pages and pages frequently visited by information requestors.

<sup>16</sup> The availability of information via administrative access schemes should be included in staff induction and regularly updated through internal communication channels.



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Actions:			
4.4	The operation of administrative access schemes and the opportunities for new schemes is reviewed on a regular basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions:			

For additional information and assistance please refer to OIC's other guidelines, or contact the Enquiries Service on 07 3234 7373 or email [enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au).

This guide is introductory only, and deals with issues in a general way. It is not legal advice. Additional factors may be relevant in specific circumstances. For detailed guidance, legal advice should be sought.

If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this document, please submit them to [feedback@oic.qld.gov.au](mailto:feedback@oic.qld.gov.au).

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