

# INFORMATION SHEET

## AUDIT AND EVALUATION FUNCTION



Office of the Information Commissioner  
Queensland

December 2022

Initially established under the repealed *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (Qld), the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) continues under the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld) (RTI Act) and the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) (IP Act) as Queensland's independent statutory body promoting access to government-held information and protecting people's personal information as held by the public sector.

We conduct audits, reviews and surveys of Queensland government agencies to assess their practices and compliance with their right to information and information privacy obligations. We also audit topical issues relevant to a range of agencies. Government agencies include departments, local governments, hospital and health services, statutory bodies and universities.

Under the RTI Act, the Information Commissioner presents our audit reports to the responsible Parliamentary Committee, and, under the IP Act, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. These reports are tabled in Parliament on the next sitting day.

### The audit process

We use a framework to assess potential audits and reviews. We consider their value, achievability and likely impact when putting together a risk-based balanced program of work for the next 12 to 18 months. The type of audits and reviews depends on the topic, the risk and the desired level of assurance. They include:

- compliance audits of individual agencies
- self-assessments and surveys
- audits of a particular topic across multiple agencies
- desktop reviews
- follow up audits where we assess how well agencies have implemented our recommendations.

Our audit methodology, available on our website,<sup>1</sup> is based on standards from the Australian Assurance Standards Board, in particular *ASAE 3000 Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Review of Historical Financial Information*. The methodology outlines how we plan, conduct and report on audits and reviews.

Our process is flexible to accommodate different types of audit and reviews. It generally consists of four phases: planning, conduct, reporting and finalisation. During an audit we seek to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to draw reasonable conclusions. Where practical, we liaise regularly with the audited agencies and seek their views on the audit findings and conclusions.

We prepare reports that present the audit results. Where possible, the reports include comments or case studies of good practices we identified during the audits. They also contain our recommendations to improve agencies' practices and compliance. We publish the reports on our website once they have been tabled in Parliament.

### Highlights of 2021-22

In 2021-22, we tabled two reports in Parliament about agencies' compliance with right to information and information privacy obligations:

- Compliance audit - Sunshine Coast Regional Council
- Administrative access to information - How the Department of Education manages access to documents held in schools

All our tabled reports are available at [www.oic.qld.gov.au/publications/reports](http://www.oic.qld.gov.au/publications/reports)

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/28149/Assurance-Engagements-MethodologyV3.pdf](https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/28149/Assurance-Engagements-MethodologyV3.pdf)

A range of factors affected our ability to complete and table five audit reports in the financial year. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced our capacity, as well as the availability of staff at the audited agencies. Lockdowns and other restrictions affected our ability to conduct site visits. And several audited agencies were involved in critical flood recovery activities in early 2022, thus extending the audit's timeframe.

The compliance audit of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council identified gaps in information governance at the strategic and operational levels. The council's practices were not always consistent with the Acts.

Sunshine Coast Regional Council had recognised that it needs to improve how it manages information and commenced an ambitious overhaul of its information and records management practices. This is a great opportunity to incorporate the push model and privacy by design into the new framework, including policies and procedures that support a coordinated and consistent approach around releasing information.

We made 22 recommendations which the council supported. We will monitor the council's progress.

We examined how the Department of Education manages its administrative access arrangement to documents held in schools. Administrative access arrangements facilitate easy, fast access to information. This supports open, transparent and accountable government and helps build trust.

Most of the requests schools receive are for information relating to students. Requests for non-student information are rare. The department's central office, regional offices and audited schools take students' safety, wellbeing and privacy seriously and carefully consider all requests for student information.

The department had identified some of the issues before the audit. We made six recommendations. The department supports our recommendations and intends to implement them. We will monitor the department's progress.

## Contact us

The Office of the Information Commissioner  
Level 7, 133 Mary Street, Brisbane  
PO Box 10143, Adelaide Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000  
Phone: (07) 3234 7373 or 1800 642 753  
Email: [administration@oic.qld.gov.au](mailto:administration@oic.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [www.oic.qld.gov.au](http://www.oic.qld.gov.au)