

# INFORMATION SHEET

## AUDIT AND EVALUATION FUNCTION



Office of the Information Commissioner  
Queensland

October 2021

Initially established under the repealed Freedom of Information Act 1992 (Qld), the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) continues under the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) (RTI Act) and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 2020-21

In 2020-21, we tabled five reports in Parliament about agencies' compliance with right to information and information privacy obligations:

- Privacy and public data - Managing re-identification risk
- Disclosure logs - Queensland Government departments
- Follow up audit - Awareness of privacy obligations
- Follow up audit - Bundaberg Regional Council
- Minimum reporting requirements - Personal interests, gifts and benefits, overseas travel

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)

The audit on Privacy and public data raised critical issues about re-identification risk that are relevant to the broader sector. We identified good practice and areas for improvement and made five recommendations to all government agencies. This audit report was widely acknowledged in Australia and overseas. It led to several presentations to a broad range of stakeholders like ICT officers and risk managers, and to international and national forums.

Our audit on disclosure logs found that departments maintain mostly compliant logs but there are gaps. The logs are not always current or complete. And while it is generally easy to find the disclosure logs on the departments' websites, not all logs are easy to read or use.

## Contact us

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The three agencies in the follow up audit on Awareness of privacy obligations have fully implemented all 12 recommendations we made in 2018-19. This means that their training and education regime is now more effective at mitigating information privacy and security risks.

We examined the minimum reporting requirements about personal interests, gifts and benefits and overseas travel of Queensland elected and government officials and found that they generally support open and transparent government. However, the requirements are not always consistent between the sectors. We identified a range of improvement opportunities and encouraged government agencies to consider adopting some of the good practices in place in other jurisdictions to increase openness and transparency, thus trust in government.