

## Open Government Research Topics for Researchers

- 1 Identifying and evaluating models of government decision making for the extent of public participation.
- 2 Identifying examples of public sector agencies strategically using their information assets and evaluating the effectiveness in involving the community in problem solving, or in managing demand or the extent to which the information has contributed to knowledge building and innovation.
- 3 Ascertaining the views of agency stakeholders about the public sector information not currently available but that would be valuable to them, how they might use it and whether information currently available is in a useable form.
- 4 The extent of community demand for greater participation in government decision making.
- 5 The diversity of users of information over time, to measure any change in the categories of people requesting information.
- 6 Media content analysis about openness of government, to identify any trends over time.
- 7 Assessment of the direct and indirect cost, revenue and social benefits of the RTI and IP legislation
- 8 Openness vs equity: does government openness empower previously marginalised groups, or does it simply increase the risk that well resource special interests will gain undue influence?<sup>1</sup>
- 9 How can public awareness of and capacity to use, openness provisions be enhanced?<sup>2</sup>
- 10 Agencies covered by legislation as against possible population of agencies, and whether or not the scope of the legislation is appropriate.
- 11 Participatory vs representative democracy: will the inclusion of a wider range of actors and open decision making undermine or enhance representative institutions? Will elected officials have to invest more time and energy in explaining their proposals, seeking citizen's views and providing reasons for their decisions?
- 12 Systemic issues and recommendations for reform, for example, arising through complaint handling systems, and the implementation of reforms.
- 13 Where does Queensland sit on the International FOI index?<sup>3</sup>
- 14 To what extent, if at all, do the different FOI/RTI regimes in Australia influence journalistic content?<sup>4</sup>
- 15 Private partners and public scrutiny: can independent media, businesses, think tanks, professional associations and civil society organisations play a greater role in fostering open government and monitoring its performance.
- 16 Are requests for information more likely to be granted by agencies under RTI than under the FOI Act? Identify examples of where an agency has a legitimate basis not to release information, but has exercised a discretion to release it anyway.
- 17 Is there a direct correlation between the quality and accountability of public service and public confidence in government?
- 18 What is the impact of transparency on the quality of public service?
- 19 Is there a direct correlation between more open management styles and greater productivity?
- 20 Have the Right to Information Reforms objectives been met?
- 21 Reasons for the rate of internal review and external review and a comparison of various jurisdictions.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD. 2005 *Public Sector Modernisation: Open Government*. Policy Brief, p7

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Lidberg, J., "The International Freedom of Information Index", *Nordicom Review*, 30 (2009).pp 167-182

<sup>4</sup> Lidberg, J and McHoul, A., "Freedom of Information and Journalistic Content in WA and Sweden", School of Media Communication and Culture, Murdoch University