

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

CERTIFICATION OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

I hereby certify that the performance indicators are based on proper records, are relevant and appropriate for assisting users to assess the Office of the Information Commissioner's performance and fairly represent the performance of the Office of the Information Commissioner for the financial year ended 30 June 2002.



T P KENNEDY
ACTING INFORMATION COMMISSIONER
14 August 2002

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2001/2002

- **DESIRED OUTCOME:** Access to documents and observance of processes in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (the Act).
- **DESCRIPTION:** The Office of the Information Commissioner provides a freedom of information (FOI) complaint mechanism and advisory service which is independent, objective and fair; and which balances the competing needs of applicants, agencies and Parliament, subject to the requirements and processes prescribed in the Act. The Information Commissioner has a statutory duty to undertake these functions and the office accordingly has two outputs – Output 1: Resolution of Complaints and Output 2: Freedom of Information Advice and Awareness.

When dealing with disputes, the objective is to avoid being unduly legalistic or formal in the way proceedings are conducted, which is the intent of the legislation. When a resolution by way of conciliation between the parties cannot be achieved, the Information Commissioner is required to make a determination by publishing a written decision with reasons.

Advice and Awareness activities also emphasise the spirit of the legislation and, wherever possible, agencies are either encouraged to release information outside the FOI process or, where necessary, follow the correct processes for dealing with an application under the Act. Policy development within agencies is encouraged so that the obligations placed on agencies under the Act have minimal effect on their day-to-day operations. Many potential disputes are also resolved informally with assistance from the office.

Therefore, the performance indicators of the office reflect the satisfaction of parties who utilise the services of the office, show the extent to which conciliation is achieved and measure efficiency by relating workload to costs.

EFFECTIVENESS

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Satisfaction of parties with the external review process	Target	-	90%	88%	87%	90%
	Outcome	88%	88%	86%	92%	86%

A survey of all 157 participants in the external review process was administered and 65% (102) responded by returning a completed questionnaire. The survey is administered immediately following finalisation of each review. The indicator shows the level of satisfaction with the review process, including the professionalism of our staff; the extent to which feedback was provided as matters proceeded; and the extent to which parties were given the opportunity to have input. The survey seeks the participants' views on whether there was an independent, objective and fair hearing with an emphasis on user-friendly processes which met their needs.

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Satisfaction of agencies with advice and guidance provided	Target	-	100%	98%	98%	98%
	Outcome	97%	98%	98%	(a)	98.5%

(a) Survey is now conducted every 2 years

There is a range of advisory services encompassing publications, advice on request, Internet based services, briefings and workshops and formal presentations to agencies. Since the commencement of the FOI Act, surveys have been administered annually to all state and local government agencies. The trend has indicated a consistently high level of satisfaction with the advisory services provided by the office, so in order to reduce the burden on agencies, the survey is now conducted biennially.

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
The extent to which applications for external review were resolved by conciliation		75%	80%	70%	61%	60%

Conciliation is the preferred method of dispute resolution where possible, provided undue delay does not occur. This indicator shows the extent to which a conciliated outcome is achieved. The measure shows the percentage of cases where a complainant and other involved parties are satisfied with the conciliated result, and thus do not require a formal determination to be prepared and published by the Information Commissioner. A conciliated outcome has the benefit of avoiding an unduly legalistic approach and minimises the number of published decisions, thus minimising costs. The variation in the conciliation rate from year to year reflects fluctuations in the complexity of complaints and the extent to which parties choose to seek a published determination.

EFFICIENCY*Output 1: Resolution of Complaints*

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Average cost of external reviews finalised	Budget	-	\$4605	\$5044	\$3552	\$4779
	Actual	\$4800	\$4992	\$3380	\$5321	\$4206

This reflects the costs incurred in resolving complaints, which is reported in more detail in the annual report and in the WA Government annual budget statements for the Consolidated Fund. The variation in the actual and budget average cost is due primarily to fluctuations in the number of applications for external review received in particular financial years.

Output 2: Advice and Awareness Services

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Average cost of advice and awareness per application lodged	Budget	-	\$75	\$86	\$75	\$60
	Actual	\$81	\$68	\$71	\$68	\$56

This indicator shows the average cost of advice and awareness services, for each application lodged with agencies across the public sector. Further detail about this output is also provided in the annual report and the published budget statements for the Consolidated Fund. The reduction in cost per application is due to steadily increasing numbers of applications from year to year, while rises in costs have been contained and, in recent years, reduced.



AUDITOR GENERAL

To the Parliament of Western Australia

**THE OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2002**

Matters Relating to the Electronic Presentation of the Audited Performance Indicators

This audit opinion relates to the performance indicators of the Office of the Information Commissioner for the year ended June 30, 2002 included on the Office's web site. The Information Commissioner is responsible for the integrity of the Office's web site. I have not been engaged to report on the integrity of the Office's web site. The audit opinion refers only to the performance indicators named below. It does not provide an opinion on any other information which may have been hyperlinked to or from these performance indicators. If users of this opinion are concerned with the inherent risks arising from electronic data communications, they are advised to refer to the hard copy of the audited performance indicators to confirm the information included in the audited performance indicators presented on this web site.

Scope

I have audited the key effectiveness and efficiency performance indicators of the Office of the Information Commissioner for the year ended June 30, 2002 under the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985.

The Information Commissioner is responsible for developing and maintaining proper records and systems for preparing and presenting performance indicators. I have conducted an audit of the key performance indicators in order to express an opinion on them to the Parliament as required by the Act. No opinion is expressed on the output measures of quantity, quality, timeliness and cost.

My audit was performed in accordance with section 79 of the Act to form an opinion based on a reasonable level of assurance. The audit procedures included examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the performance indicators, and assessing the relevance and appropriateness of the performance indicators in assisting users to assess the Office's performance. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the performance indicators are relevant and appropriate having regard to their purpose and fairly represent the indicated performance.

The audit opinion expressed below has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the key effectiveness and efficiency performance indicators of the Office of the Information Commissioner are relevant and appropriate for assisting users to assess the Office's performance and fairly represent the indicated performance for the year ended June 30, 2002.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D D R Pearson'.

D D R PEARSON
AUDITOR GENERAL
October 4, 2002