

**Office of the
Information Commissioner**

Freedom of information for Western Australia

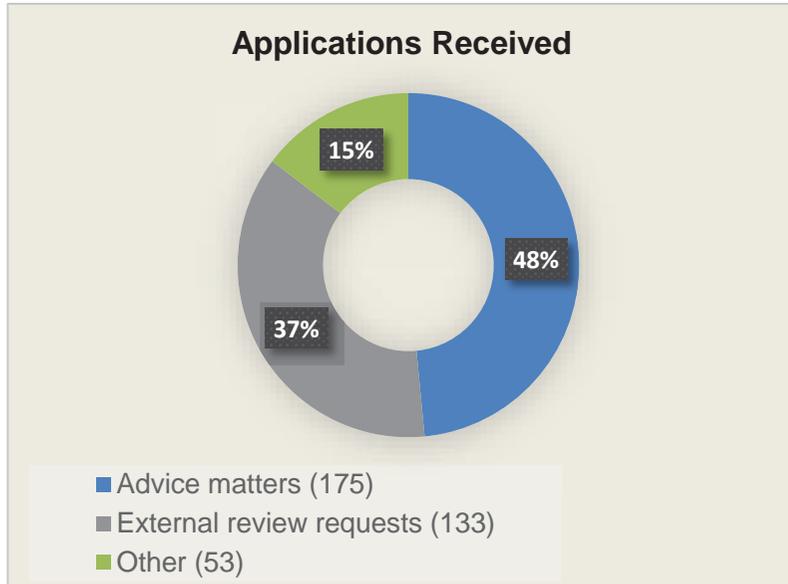
ANNUAL REPORT

2015/2016



Agency Performance

4. Report on operations



- Advice matters refer to the more formal written requests for advice regarding freedom of information from the public sector and the general public. Also included are written requests that have been misdirected to the OIC whereby a response outlining the correct process is provided. It does not include verbal advice.
- External review requests are valid applications for external review requesting the Information Commissioner's determination.
- Other matters refer to requests for the Information Commissioner's determination such as: informal/invalid requests whereby it is not clear if the Information Commissioner has jurisdiction; requests to waive the requirement to consult third parties; requests to extend or reduce the time required for an agency to deal with an application; applications for external review without applying for internal review; and requests to apply for external review out of time.

Our financial performance

	Estimate \$000	Actual \$000	Variation \$000
Total cost of services	2,513	2,268	245
Net cost of services	2,509	2,268	241
Total equity	233	294	61
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	(8)	155	163

The OIC realised cost savings and an increase in cash assets as a result of a reduction in salary expenditure. This is due to the fact that not all positions that had been vacated were filled as at 30 June 2016.

The OIC's audited financial statements can be found in the Financial Statements chapter. Due to the OIC's total cost of services being below the required threshold of \$3 million, the financial statements do not contain explanatory statements in respect of variances.

Overview of our performance indicators

	Estimate	Actual	Variation
<i>Outcome: Access to documents and observance of processes in accordance with the FOI Act</i>			
Resolution of Complaints	80%	89%	9%
<i>Key effectiveness indicators:</i>			
Participants satisfied with complaint resolution and external review processes			
Applications for external review resolved by conciliation ^(a)	60%	70%	10%
<i>Key efficiency indicator</i>			
Average cost per external review finalised	\$11,133	\$7,751	(\$3,382)

- (a) An unexpected increase in the number of complaints resolved by conciliation in the financial year and the first full year effect of classifying as conciliated a particular type of complaint closure resulted in the variation to the conciliation rate.

	Estimate	Actual	Variation
Advice and Awareness			
<i>Key effectiveness indicator</i>			
Agencies satisfied with advice and guidance provided	98%	99%	1%
<i>Key efficiency indicator</i>			
Average cost of service per application lodged ^(b)	\$208	\$262	\$54

- (b) An unexpected decrease in the number of recipients of advisory services was experienced this year. This impacts the unit cost as the total cost of this output is largely fixed, being made up of staffing and accommodation costs.

To measure the satisfaction of the external review service, a post review questionnaire (**PRQ**) is sent to all the parties involved at the completion of every external review matter.

- 320 PRQs sent
- 221 reminders sent
- 181 responses received

We focussed on improving the response rate to PRQs during the year by revising the format and sending the PRQ after one week as opposed to 28 days, allowing respondents to reply when the outcome is still fresh in their mind. The time within which to send reminders was also reduced from 28 days to two weeks (from the date the initial PRQ was sent). As a result, the response rate increased by 8%.

The level of satisfaction with the advice and awareness services provided by the OIC is determined by responses received from agencies in a state-wide survey issued at the end of each financial year. Satisfaction with the advice and awareness service encompasses advice provided by telephone or email; agency training and briefings; and guidance provided by online material.

5. Key Highlights

Strategic and operational planning

Our first three year operational plan was developed in 2013 and expired on 30 June 2016. During the year, the initiatives outlined in the plan were reviewed and updated for the 2016-2019 plan.

The review showed that we:

- established an early assessment, resolution and conciliation process including an initial ‘blitz’ of outstanding external review matters that were conciliated in a new conciliation conference process;
- evaluated and updated our legal research tools;
- developed drafting guidelines for decisions and style guides for publications;
- undertook better utilisation of our knowledge management system for capturing precedents;
- developed a case management framework;
- revised advice and training materials, focussing on proactive disclosure of documents;
- reviewed and updated the agency survey in respect of agency obligations regarding information disclosure;
- reviewed the training program including content, taking into account agency preferences;

- investigated and decided upon an effective mechanism for delivery of online training;
- reviewed existing publications, and identified and prioritised publications to be updated, created or deleted;
- gathered information from agencies on their needs for FOI resources; and
- developed a framework and guidelines for drafting, approving and reviewing publications.

Our focus during our first strategic planning period was the external review process, training materials and our online publications. In the next three years we aim to build on the initiatives already completed and focus more on raising awareness of FOI in the public sphere by:

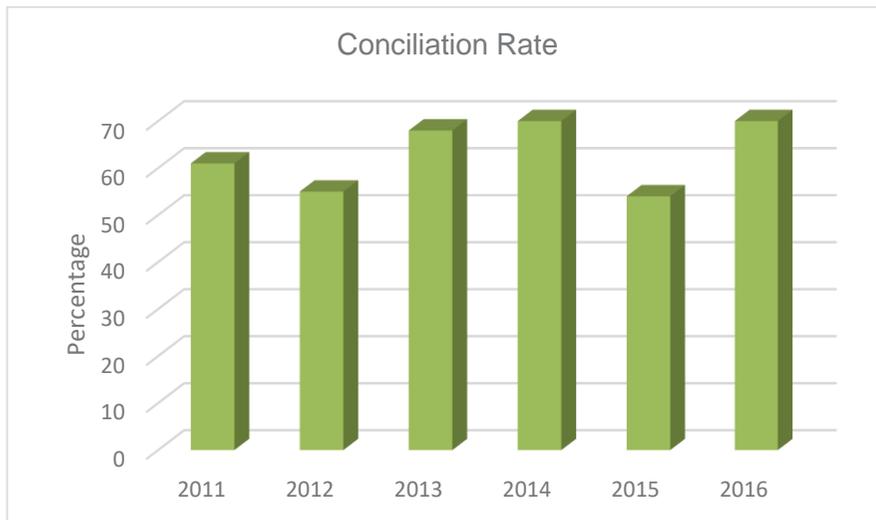
- exploring the use of social media;
- working with relevant user groups and targeted organisations to promote awareness; and
- conducting surveys to gauge the level of awareness.

We will also build the capacity of our staff by:

- developing a program for individual professional development;
- reviewing the structure of the OIC; and
- developing a more flexible and healthy work environment.

Conciliation

The Commissioner has powers to deal with complaints in a number of ways including by conciliation, negotiation and compulsory conferences. These are in addition to the Commissioner's power to resolve a complaint by issuing a binding determination. It has always been the focus of the OIC to ensure that the conduct of external review proceedings is not unduly legalistic or formal, preferring to negotiate a conciliated outcome between the parties rather than preparing a formal determination.



New external review matters generally proceed to a compulsory conciliation conference unless it is considered the circumstances of the matter do not warrant it. Conciliation conferences provide complainants with the opportunity to put their case directly to the agency and hear the agency's

response. It also allows matters to be addressed without undue delay or formality.

Conciliation is an important element of the external review process and can result either in settlement of the complaint, or clarification or narrowing of the issues in dispute, making the external review process more efficient for those matters that require further review.

Conciliation case study 1

The complainant had sought a substantial number of documents relating to particular commercial arrangements of the agency. The agency had provided some, but not all, of the documents to the complainant before the matter came before the Commissioner on external review.

At a conciliation conference conducted by the OIC, the agency considered the threshold question 'what is the harm if the documents are released?' After concluding that much of the material was already known or in the public domain and any potential harm in disclosure was minimal, the agency released the remaining documents to the complainant.

Under the FOI Act agencies have a discretion to release documents that are technically exempt. This office encourages agencies to always consider, before claiming an exemption, the threshold question of whether any real harm will result from disclosure of the requested documents.

Conciliation case study 2

The agency refused the complainant access to documents on the grounds that they contained information concerning the commercial or business affairs of a third party.

During the conciliation process, the complainant advised the Commissioner that he only wanted information that revealed the actions of the agency, not the commercial affairs of the third party. The complainant agreed to accept access to the disputed documents with information concerning the commercial or business affairs of the third party deleted.

The Commissioner informed the agency and the third party of this agreement and identified the information in the documents that could be deleted on that basis. The Commissioner told the agency and the third party that he considered the remaining information in the documents was not exempt and invited them both to reconsider their positions. As a result, the agency and the third party both agreed to disclosure of the documents to the complainant in the form proposed and the matter was resolved.

Clear communication and the cooperation of all parties resulted in what could have otherwise been a drawn out dispute being resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all of the parties.

Decisions of the Information Commissioner

The Commissioner may need to resolve a complaint by issuing a binding determination. If a complaint cannot be resolved by conciliation the Commissioner may, after considering all of the material and the disputed documents, inform the parties of his preliminary view of the complaint, including reasons. Each party then has the option of reconsidering its position and may withdraw or provide additional material in support of its view.

If any matters remain in dispute the Commissioner will, after considering any further information and submissions, formally determine the issues in dispute between the parties. The Commissioner informs the parties in writing of his final decision and the reasons for it. The Commissioner is required to have his decisions published in full or in an abbreviated, summary or note form and those are published on the OIC's website. It is the usual practice of the Commissioner to identify all of the parties to the complaint in the published decision, except in certain circumstances.

During the reporting period the Information Commissioner published 21 decisions.

Case Study 1 – Traffic infringements issued to senior public office holders including Ministers

Re Seven Network (Operations) Limited and Western Australia Police [2015] WAICmr 14

The complainant applied for access to documents relating to traffic infringements involving government vehicles assigned to certain senior public office holders including Ministers. The agency gave the complainant access to an edited copy of the documents but withheld the name of the person to whom each traffic infringement related.

The Commissioner accepted that the deleted names amount to personal information which is, on its face, exempt. Two of the people named in the traffic infringements informed the Commissioner that they consented to disclosure of their names. In determining whether disclosure of the remaining names was in the public interest, the Commissioner recognised that there is a strong public interest in maintaining personal privacy. The Commissioner was of the view that election to office or appointment as a Minister, or appointment to a senior public office, does not mean that the office holder forfeits the right to privacy.

In favour of disclosure, the Commissioner considered that there is a public interest in senior government officers being accountable, and being seen to be accountable, for acting in accordance with the law.

The Commissioner also considered that the objects of the FOI Act and the Ministerial Code of Conduct reflect a public interest in Ministers being individually accountable to the public for acting in accordance with the law, particularly when they are using publicly funded resources. The Commissioner was also of the view that senior public officers who are provided vehicles at expense to the taxpayer should be accountable to the public for their use of publicly funded resources.

The Commissioner concluded that disclosure of the names was in the public interest.

Case Study 2 – Documents relating to the adoption of a child

Re 'L' and Department for Child Protection and Family Support [2015] WAICmr 16

The complainant applied to the agency for documents relating to her son and his adoptive parents, including notes of an interview between the complainant and a named person around the time of her son's birth relating to the adoption.

An agency can refuse access to requested documents without identifying them if it is apparent, from the nature of the documents as described in the access application, that those documents are exempt and there is no obligation to give access to an edited copy of any of the documents.

The Commissioner considered that it was apparent from the nature of the documents described in the complainant's access application that they would all reveal information relating to the adoption of a child, and that those documents are all exempt. The Commissioner also decided that the agency was not obliged to give the complainant access to an edited copy of any of the requested documents. The Commissioner considered that the very nature of the documents requested by the complainant suggested that disclosing any part of them would reveal information relating to the adoption of a child, which is exempt information. The Commissioner confirmed the agency's decision to refuse access.

Case Study 3 – Documents relating to a proposed rail extension

Re Travers and Public Transport Authority [2015] WAICmr 20

The documents in dispute in this matter related to the potential extension of the Thornlie train line to Cockburn Central.

The Commissioner was not satisfied that disclosure of the documents would reveal the deliberations or decisions of Cabinet or another Executive body, or that the documents contain policy options or recommendations prepared for possible submission to an Executive body.

The Commissioner accepted that the documents contain opinion or advice obtained in the course of the agency's deliberations to determine the route, station locations and other associated works involved in the development and construction of a potential rail extension. However, the Commissioner was not persuaded that disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

The Commissioner recognised that there may be a public interest in agencies carrying out their deliberations on particular issues without those deliberations being undermined by the premature disclosure of relevant documents. However, the Commissioner noted that there was already a large amount of information about the proposed rail link and station locations in the public domain and considered that disclosure would facilitate, not hinder, future debate within the community.

While the Commissioner considered that sectional interests may use the information in the documents to support or undermine options according to their own interests, the Commissioner was of the view that it is part of the role of government to make project decisions which are in the best interests of the public, even in the face of various lobbying efforts.

The Commissioner found that the documents were not exempt.

Case Study 4 – Confidential information given to an investigation

Re Alexander and Department of Fisheries [2015] **WAICmr 23**

The document in dispute in this matter was a report into an investigation. The agency gave the applicant access to an edited copy of the report. Most of the information deleted from the report consisted of notes of interviews with people as part of the investigation. The Commissioner found that disclosure of that information would reveal information of a confidential nature obtained in confidence. The investigator had advised the interviewees that the information they provide would be treated in confidence.

The Commissioner also found that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the future supply of information of that kind to the Government or to an agency. As there was no statutory obligation on any party to assist the investigation, and the investigator relied upon full and frank disclosure by the people interviewed, the release of the disputed information would impact adversely on relevant individuals' inclination to take part in such investigations in the future.

The Commissioner considered that the provision of an edited copy of the report to the complainant went a considerable way to satisfying the public interest in agencies being accountable for how they discharge their duties and obligations. The Commissioner decided that disclosure of the remaining information was not in the public interest.

Case Study 5 – CCTV footage of an altercation outside a business

Re Papalia and Western Australia Police [2016] **WAICmr 1**

The documents in dispute in this matter consisted of CCTV footage of an incident outside a business premises that was investigated by the Police. The complainant was acting on behalf of a constituent who was involved in the incident.

The Commissioner was satisfied that the CCTV footage would, if disclosed, reveal personal information about individuals. The Commissioner was satisfied that the public interest in ensuring community confidence in the way the agency conducts investigations into incidents such as those captured in the footage had been largely satisfied by the information already given to the complainant's constituent. The Commissioner decided that the public interest in protecting the privacy of third parties outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

Case Study 6 – CCTV footage at a prison

Re Seven Network (Operations) Limited and Department of Corrective Services [2016] WAICmr 8

The complainant applied for access to any documents, including CCTV footage, relating to items that had been thrown over the fence at Western Australian prisons or detention centres. The Commissioner accepted the agency's claim that disclosure of some of the CCTV footage identified could reasonably be expected to endanger the security of a prison and found that that footage was exempt. Disclosure of that footage could reasonably be expected to compromise the agency's systems for the detection and prevention of the introduction of contraband into the prison, taking into consideration factors such as camera angles, footage quality and camera location.

However, the Commissioner was not satisfied that disclosure of the remainder of the CCTV footage in dispute could reasonably be expected to endanger the security of a prison, noting that that footage was captured from cameras that were easily discernible from the exterior of the prison and that the locations captured are obvious from outside the prison. The Commissioner found that that footage was not exempt and varied the agency's decision.

Case Study 7 – Information given to the Ombudsman for an investigation

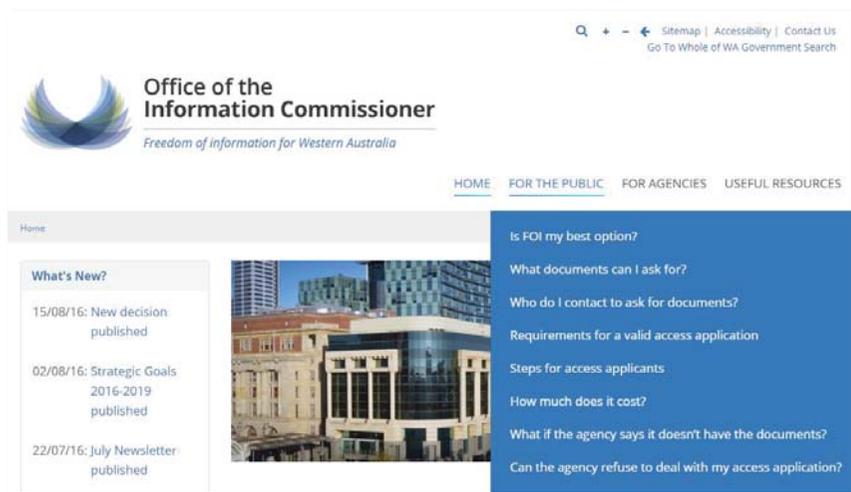
Re Helm and Department of Planning [2016] WAICmr 9

The document in dispute in this matter was a briefing note from a department to a Minister. The Commissioner found that the information deleted from the edited copy of that document given to the complainant was exempt under clause 14(1)(c) of Schedule 1 to the FOI Act.

Clause 14(1)(c) provides that matter is exempt if it is matter of a kind mentioned in section 23(1) of the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971* (WA) (**the PC Act**), being information obtained by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (**the Ombudsman**) or their staff in the course of, or for the purpose of, an investigation under the PC Act. The agency had provided the disputed document to the Ombudsman's office for the purposes of an investigation under the PC Act. Consequently, the Commissioner was satisfied that the disputed information is exempt under the FOI Act.

New website

Our new website launched in September 2015 is organised to allow members of the public and agencies to obtain clear information about freedom of information that is relevant to them. The site includes drop-down menus with information according to its relevance to members of the public and officers of agencies respectively. Detailed publications available include guides to certain exemptions under the FOI Act, the FOI Coordinators Manual and OIC Annual Reports.



Links to relevant legislation and all published decisions of the Commissioner are included. The online search tool allows the user to search the Commissioner's formal decisions based on specific exemptions, sections of the FOI Act and catchwords.

Agency FOI Coordinators Reference Group established

The Agency FOI Coordinators Reference Group was formed in August 2015. The group meets quarterly and currently consists of officers from ten agencies that are representative agencies subject to the FOI Act. The terms of reference for the group are available on our website at [http://www.foi.wa.gov.au/materials/Agency FOI reference group Terms of Reference Aug 2015.pdf](http://www.foi.wa.gov.au/materials/Agency%20FOI%20reference%20group%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20Aug%202015.pdf). Meetings provide an opportunity to obtain feedback on current issues facing agencies in respect to freedom of information and about continuing and proposed advice and awareness activities of the OIC.

FOI Newsletter

The new OIC newsletter was launched in May 2015 and six editions of the newsletter were produced in the financial year. The newsletter aims to provide brief and clear information about freedom of information. While the information contained in the newsletter is primarily targeted for agency staff, it includes information that may be of interest to members for the public. There are currently 216 subscribers to the newsletter who also receive alerts when decisions of the Commissioner are published on our website. Subscriptions can be registered at: <http://foi.wa.gov.au/en-us/UR100>.

Training and briefings for individual agencies

An understanding of the basics of freedom of information should be part of the competency for any public sector employee, and the OIC is prepared to provide in-house briefings to agency staff to assist with this. In addition, the OIC participates in the Public Sector Commission's induction briefings given to new public servants. The decision to give more specific onsite decision-making training is based on the needs of particular agencies and the resources of the OIC. Where possible agency decision-makers are encouraged to attend the training that is offered at OIC premises.

Training provided:

- Eight FOI Coordinator Workshops run for agency staff.
- Two Decision-makers Forums and two Decision Writing Workshops run for agency staff.
- 26 general FOI briefings and training to agencies onsite.
- Two community groups received onsite briefings.
- Eight speeches and presentations by the Commissioner
- One information session for the public

Advice and Awareness trip to the Pilbara

In April 2016, the Commissioner and the Senior Advisory Officer visited Port Hedland and Karratha to provide briefings and training to agencies in the Pilbara. Training and briefings were provided to Department of Health staff at the Hedland Health Campus and Karratha's Nickol Bay Hospital. This training was also accessed by various health services using videoconferencing technology.

Training was also provided to local government staff in the Town of Port Hedland and the City of Karratha. Staff from a number of government agencies in the City of Karratha also attended the FOI decision-making training. Elected members from the Town of Port Hedland received a briefing about FOI from the Commissioner.

Regional trips are a useful way for the Commissioner to gain an understanding of some of the issues facing regional officers when dealing with freedom of information. It is also an opportunity for officers of agencies based in the regions to receive FOI training without the expense of travelling to Perth.

Speeches by the Commissioner

The Commissioner has been a guest lecturer at a number of WA Universities and has introduced students to important legal issues associated with freedom of information legislation. He has also accepted invitations to talk about freedom of information to a variety of groups that recognise the importance of freedom of information to their members and to the wider society.

Briefings for community service groups

This year the OIC has provided briefings for the Health Consumer Council and other health advocates and for members of Community Legal Centres Association (WA) Inc.

Briefings for community groups and not-for-profit groups can equip advocates to make effective access applications. While briefings for advocacy groups include advice about rights to access documents under the FOI Act, they also stress the desirability of working with agencies to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome. The role of those briefings can be to ensure that applicants are realistic in their expectations of what an agency can provide.

Law Week seminar for members of the public

In May 2016 as part of Law Week 2016, the OIC offered a seminar for members of the public entitled '*FOI – Ever wanted to access government documents in WA?*' The session included information about how the FOI Act works in practice, the types of documents a person can expect to access and some tips for making an FOI application. A small but enthusiastic audience found the presentation worthwhile and asked pertinent questions, indicating that there is a demand for more of this type of session in future. We intend to participate in Law Week in 2017 and will be more proactive in promoting the seminar to members of the public and to advocacy groups that may benefit from the information.

FOI Coordinator and Decision Writing workshops

The FOI Coordinators Workshop is the key training forum provided by the OIC. Participants in this workshop include officers who have responsibility for information access processes and decisions within their agencies. Some participants are new to freedom of information and some use the workshop as a refresher to ensure that the processes and policies continue to accord with best practice.

In 2016, the OIC replaced the Decision-makers Forum with a Decision Writing Workshop. This change was made in response to our perception of the needs of officers attending the Decision-Makers Forum, and to concerns about the quality of some agencies' decisions.

The OIC introduced an online feedback survey following completion of the training sessions. This has enabled participants to give considered feedback about what was or was not helpful about the training. That feedback is reviewed and suggestions from participants have already been implemented.

The Decision Writing Workshop aims to build on the same material addressed in the FOI Coordinators Workshop (which can also be obtained by pre-reading the FOI Coordinators Workshop manual) to assist attendees understand what is needed to write a notice of decision that complies with the requirements of the FOI Act. It also demonstrates an appropriate process to use in reaching a decision in response to an FOI access application.

Enrolment at each workshop was capped at 20 participants to create a workshop format – rather than lecture format – to encourage greater participation from attendees. A waitlist was also introduced to ensure we can backfill workshops when there are cancellations.

The feedback received about our training has been very positive. It is recognised that feedback from participants with a variety of experience and needs can sometimes result in contradictory feedback. The OIC seeks to address these concerns by providing a clear idea of what will be provided in training and by having more materials available outside of training.

OIC publications

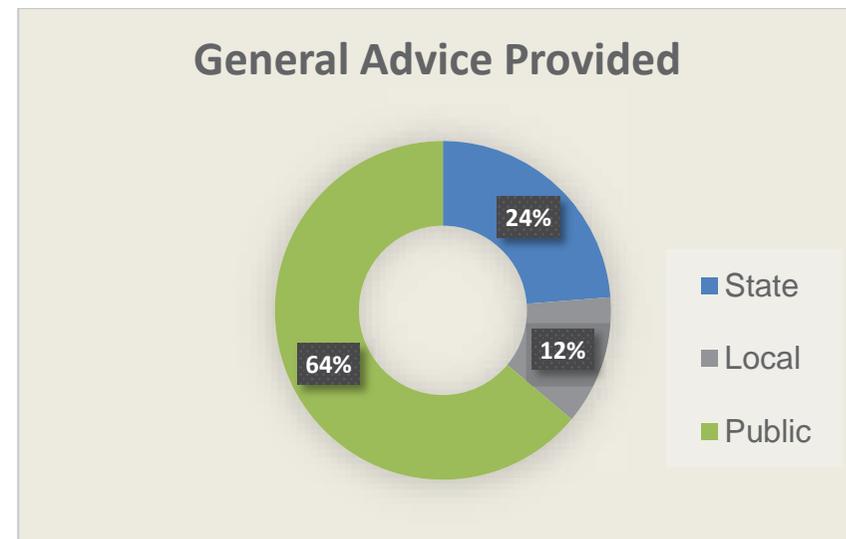
A revised suite of publications was launched with our new website in September 2015. This followed a six month communications project that incorporated a review of our current publications and consultation with the Agency FOI Coordinators Reference Group.

The OIC publications as at 30 June 2016 are listed in the OIC Statistics chapter of this report and are all available on our website under 'Publications'.

Advice service

The OIC provides a general advisory service for members of the public and agency staff. The intention in giving advice is to ensure members of the public are equipped with the knowledge to access to documents both outside the FOI Act, where possible, and in accordance with the FOI Act when an access application is appropriate. Agency officers are assisted to understand their obligations under the FOI Act.

Advice given does not include legal advice or specific rulings on particular issues or sets of facts.



“Very informative website, pertinent training and timely responses to requests for advice.”
(survey respondent)

Audit

Personnel risk

As part of the strategic audit plan, we engaged Braxford Consultancy in September 2015 to assess our personnel risk. The audit objective was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of our controls to ensure:

- adequate staff allocation;
- adequate staff knowledge and regular training;
- ability to multi-task and support other roles;
- adequacy of workload;
- staff planning; and
- strategic performance management.

The key findings of the audit identified issues that are faced by many small agencies in respect of structure, career development and the risks associated with investing key

responsibilities to single employees. Nonetheless, as one of our strategic goals is to ‘build the capacity of our people’ by being a workplace of choice and having a clear structure that supports productivity, we have taken the recommendations on board to be incorporated into our structure review.

Recommendation	Action
Introduction of a team structure to improve work efficiency and better monitoring of employee performance and development/training needs.	A review of the organisational structure, performance management plan and the professional development needs of staff was incorporated into the reviewed strategic operational plan.
Introduction of another administrative person to provide back-up when key staff are unavailable and provide additional administrative support to those staff, allowing them to focus on strategic matters.	To be included in the review of the organisational structure.

Internal financial audit

In July 2016 an internal audit was conducted by Braxford Consultancy of the OIC's finance and payroll processes during 2015/16. Nine recommendations of low to medium risk were made, including finalisation of the OIC's finance manual. Recommendations were also made for additional quality checking of transactions and checklists as a result of discrepancies found, or missing supporting documentation.

These recommendations have been taken on board and can be linked with the personnel risk audit outlined previously, as all financial and HR transactions are processed by the Chief Finance Officer in the absence of other administrative support. All reports and transactions are broadly reviewed by the Commissioner on a monthly or quarterly basis. However, there is no scope for appropriate segregation of duties and quality assurance checks at the time of transaction.

Being able to transfer general transactions to another officer would allow the Chief Finance Officer to have a more quality assurance role and focus on other outstanding tasks, such as completion of the finance manual.

External audit

As with the previous two years, the OIC's external audit by the Office of the Auditor General has been conducted in two stages: the financial statements in mid-July and the key performance indicators in mid-August. Delaying the audit of key performance indicators allows survey data collected

throughout July from State and local government agencies to be properly collated and reviewed.

This approach continues to suit the OIC and the Office of the Auditor General, and the OIC has been named a best practice agency in the small agencies category in the Auditor General's Audit Results Report for the past three years.

Our workplace

The Commissioner employs 11 staff to assist him in his functions under the FOI Act. One of the benefits of a small office is the close-knit environment. The OIC maximises the benefits of this through the long standing establishment of a staff funded social club that organises events throughout the year to unwind and strengthen relationships.

Our operational plan includes the development and implementation of an office wellness policy to formalise our commitment to looking after our employees. The physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of staff is vital in a happy and productive environment. Volunteering in community events is encouraged and is an area staff have already agreed to build on.

Law Week Walk for Justice

On 17 May 2016 OIC fielded a team of four walkers to participate in the Law Week Inaugural Walk for Justice along the Perth foreshore with representatives from the major law firms, barristers and judicial officers. The walk was led by the Chief Justice of Western Australia and celebrated pro bono

work carried out by the legal profession. OIC staff raised \$367.50 for the Law Access Pro Bono Referral Service, which provides free legal assistance for those who cannot afford legal fees. Altogether the walk raised over \$26,000.

Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation

In 2014/15 the OIC became a signatory to the Psychological Wellbeing Best Practice Guidelines for the Legal Profession developed by the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation. The Foundation is an independent, volunteer, charitable organisation whose objective is to decrease work-related psychological ill-health in the legal community and promote workplace psychological health and safety.

OIC hosted a morning tea for Marie Jepson, the mother of Tristan Jepson, on 24 August 2016. Mrs Jepson addressed the staff and discussed the importance of psycho-social factors and also the benefits of maintaining healthy workplaces in the legal profession.

Standing desks

The majority of employee work involves PC based work, and it is commonly known that many hours spent sitting at a desk can be harmful. The OIC has trialled height adjustable desks that sit on existing desks and can be raised and lowered as required, allowing officers to do their PC based work while either sitting or standing.

After an initial trial, the majority of staff agreed they felt physically more comfortable being able to change between seated and standing positions and individual desks were ordered for those employees.

Continuing professional development for legal officers

Individual Continuing Development Plans are maintained for each legal officer, which now includes our Paralegal who was admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Western Australia on 1 September 2015.