



NT Information Act - Overview

Information Act Guideline

The NT *Information Act* is about:

- Keeping people better informed about how the NT government does its job for the community.
- Protecting your privacy when government needs to collect or deal with information about you.
- Improving how the NT government records and manages information.

The *Information Act* does this in 3 ways.

1. Freedom of Information (FOI)

You have a right to apply for access to **government information** held by NT public sector organisations, including information about you. For more, see our *Your Right to Know* brochure.

You also have a right to apply for correction of your own **personal information**. For more, see our *Correcting personal information* guideline.

Each organisation must also:

- publish an annual Information Statement about its functions and the information it holds;
- make available to the public as much information as is reasonably possible.

Information can be disclosed in many ways, for example, by putting information on websites, publishing written materials, placing information in libraries and by other access schemes.

2. Privacy Protection

The Act sets out 10 Information Privacy Principles that state how government organisations must collect, manage, use and disclose your **personal information**.

It also gives you the right to complain about interference with your privacy. For more, see our *Your Right to Privacy* brochure.

3. Records management

The Act provides a legal framework for continuing improvements to the way that government activities are recorded, and the way that those records are managed. That means better management of government operations.

It also assists FOI and Privacy processes by providing systems and procedures that enable applications and complaints to be dealt with more quickly and more efficiently.

What is government information?

Government information means records (including computer records) that are required to be kept by NT public sector organisations as evidence of their activities or operations. It covers most records held by an organisation, including information about individuals and businesses.

Some information held by organisations is not covered by the Act. That includes information that is already publicly available (even if there is a cost), some records of courts and tribunals, and non-personal information held by government business organisations like TIO and PowerWater.

Inter-governmental relations exemption

What is personal information?

Personal information is government information from which an individual's identity can be ascertained.

It does not include information about companies or organisations. It does include personnel information about a staff member of an organisation.

What rights do I have over my personal information?

The Act gives you rights to:

- apply for access to your personal information
- apply to have your personal information corrected, if it is inaccurate, incomplete or out of date
- complain that your personal information has been collected or handled contrary to the Information Privacy Principles.

Also, if another person has applied for information under the FOI access provisions that includes your personal information, the organisation must make all reasonable attempts to consult you, before it decides to disclose information that might interfere with your privacy.

What is a public sector organisation?

Public sector organisations include:

- NT government departments
- NT statutory corporations
- the NT Police Force
- municipal and community councils.

Private sector contractors to government will also be covered by the Act to the extent of the services provided to government.

Section 5 of the Act describes the types of person or body that are public sector organisations.

Does it cost anything?

There are no fees for making a complaint about a breach of your privacy or for making an application to correct your own personal information.

Providing access can be costly, so fees are payable for most FOI access applications. The fees are more limited if you only apply for your personal information.

Fees may be waived or reduced in special cases.



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This guideline is produced by the Information Commissioner to promote awareness and understanding about the *Information Act*. It is **not a substitute for the Act**. You should read the relevant provisions of the Act to see how it applies in any particular case. Any views expressed in this guideline about how the Act works are preliminary only. In every case, the Commissioner is open to argument by a member of the public or a public sector organisation that a different view should be taken.