



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

Agency plan

1 May 2011

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Purpose.....	4
Objectives	4
Establishment and administration of the department’s IPS contribution.....	4
Establishing the department’s IPS contribution by 1 May 2011.....	4
Administering information published under the IPS from 1 May 2011	5
IPS information architecture	7
Information required to be published under the IPS	8
Agency plan	8
Who we are	8
What we do	8
Our reports and responses to parliament.....	8
Routinely requested information and disclosure log.....	8
Consultation	8
Contact us.....	8
Optional information to be published under the IPS.....	9
Our priorities.....	9
Our finances	9
Our lists.....	9
Accessibility under the IPS	9
IPS compliance review	9
Annexure A.....	11
Access charges for documents available on request	11

Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) is an agency subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). Part 2 of the FOI Act establishes an Information Publication Scheme (IPS). The IPS commences on 1 May 2011 and requires agencies to publish a broad range of information on their websites. This agency plan explains how the department intends to implement the IPS, in accordance with s 8(1) of the FOI Act.

The department's role is to develop and implement policies and programs that ensure Australia's agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries remain competitive, profitable and sustainable. The department employs about 4,200 staff in Australia and overseas, including policy officers, program administrators, scientists, economists, meat inspectors, veterinary officers and quarantine inspectors. Consequently, it holds information on a range of subjects and issues.

The agency plan describes how the department proposes to implement and administer the IPS in respect of its own information holdings, by addressing:

- the establishment and administration the department's IPS contribution
- information architecture
- information required to be published
- other information to be published (optional information)
- accessibility to information published
- compliance review
- initiatives to promote community engagement.

Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, took carriage of the FOI legislation through parliament in 2010 and is a champion of the reforms. The Secretary of the department is committed to a culture of disclosure and greater openness in government. The Chief Executive's Instructions 1.5 – *Protection and disclosure of information*, state that, subject to approval by the Senior Executive Service employee, information that can reasonably be released should be, unless otherwise prohibited by legislation.

Staff are encouraged to routinely make information in the public's interest available on the department's website and other mediums, rather than to wait for access to be provided following an FOI request.

The department will continue to build and foster a culture within the agency in which appropriate proactive disclosure of its information holdings is embraced. This is in recognition that public sector information is a national resource managed for public purposes.

Purpose

The purpose of this agency plan is to:

- assist the department in planning and developing its contribution to the IPS
- facilitate public consultation about that contribution
- show what information the department intends to publish, how and to whom the information will be published and how the department will otherwise comply with the IPS requirements.

Note: in this plan, information to be published by the department under the IPS is referred to as the IPS information holdings, or as the IPS documents when referring to individual documents.

Objectives

The department's objectives are to outline appropriate mechanisms and procedures to:

- manage the IPS information holdings
- proactively identify and publish all information required to be published (s 8(2))
- proactively identify and publish any optional information to be published (s 8(4))
- review and ensure on a regular basis that information published under the IPS is accurate, up to date and complete (s 8B)
- ensure that information published under the IPS is easily discoverable, understandable, machine-readable, re-useable and transformable
- ensure satisfactory conformance with the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2)* (WCAG 2.0)
- measure the success of the department's IPS contribution by reference to community feedback and compliance review processes.

Establishment and administration of the department's IPS contribution

The department's Chief Operating Officer, Executive Manager of the department's Corporate Services Division, is the senior officer responsible for ensuring the department's compliance with the IPS.

Establishing the department's IPS contribution by 1 May 2011

The Chief Operating Officer held meetings with other senior executives in the Corporate Services Division, Corporate Policy Division and the Biosecurity Services Group to discuss how the department would implement the IPS and give direction to the IPS Project Team. The IPS Project Team coordinated the establishment of the department's IPS contribution and the creation of its IPS information architecture.

IPS Project Team comprised managers and assistant managers from the Governance Policy Section (which oversees FOI matters) in the Corporate Services Division and the Production and Strategy & Innovation Sections in the Corporate Policy Division.

Business areas within the department were responsible for identifying and assessing the IPS documents.

The IPS Project Team collated and, where necessary, created the information required to be published under s 8(2) and s 8(4), in accordance with guidance material issued by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) and other forums held by the OAIC.

The IPS project team spent approximately four months:

- informing itself of the IPS requirements and developing strategies for implementing the IPS within the department
- meeting with business areas and drafting guidance material to help them understand the FOI reforms and identify and assess their IPS documents
- auditing documents published on the department's website and identifying the documents that will form part of the department's IPS information holdings
- creating the IPS information architecture
- developing an information register that lists the department's 'operational' information (defined in s 8A), as identified by the business areas
- collating information about current consultation arrangements.

The draft register facilitates compliance with WCAG 2.0, as it:

- contains links to an accessible version of an IPS document where one is available
- provides contact details for members of the public to request an IPS document that is listed in the information register but is not yet available on the department's website or to request an alternative version if not available on the website.

The department's focus was to ensure it published at least a list of the information required under s 8(2) and the 'optional' information recommended by the OAIC on its website by 1 May 2011.

Administering information published under the IPS from 1 May 2011

From 1 May 2011, the Chief Operating Officer will have ongoing overview of the department's compliance with the IPS.

Corporate Services Division will continue to oversee the department's compliance with the FOI Act, including the IPS requirements, in conjunction with the Communications Branch. The business areas within the department will continue to have responsibility for identifying, assessing and publishing the information they publish on the department's website, including their IPS documents. Business areas will also have responsibility for reporting to the Executive on progress.

As part of managing the ongoing administration of the IPS information holdings, the Governance Policy Section developed a guide to publishing information under the IPS for departmental staff. The guide:

- describes processes to be followed internally to ensure the accuracy, currency and completeness of published information

- helps staff to identify on an ongoing basis any required or optional information to be published under the IPS
- describes the process for publishing information and identifying IPS documents that are not published on the website but will be available on request, via the department's FOI Coordinators.

It is anticipated that the business areas will have completed updating, removing superseded material and publishing their operational information on the department's website by 30 April 2012.

The information published under the IPS must be 'accurate, up-to-date and complete' (s 8B). Divisions will be asked biannually to review their IPS documents.

Staff will continue to be encouraged to routinely make information in the public's interest available on the department's website and other media, rather than waiting for access to be determined as a result of an FOI request.

IPS documents that are not available on the department's website will be available upon request. The website will state that a person seeking access to any of these documents may contact the FOI Coordinators by email at foi@daff.gov.au or by telephone to arrange access.

The department may charge a person for accessing any IPS document which it is impracticable to publish online:

- at the lowest reasonable cost
- to reimburse specific reproduction costs or other specific incidental costs (s 8D(4)).

The FOI page on the department's website includes information about charges associated with FOI requests, and an explanation for the charge. These charges are consistent with charges in the Freedom of Information (Charges) Regulations 1982 (which generally apply to access requests under Part III of the FOI Act). **Annexure A** to the agency plan also lists applicable charges for the reproduction of documents available under the IPS.

The department will engage with the community about the department's contribution to the IPS. These include:

- publicising the agency plan and IPS via departmental electronic newsletters and web forms
- over time, making IPS documents as easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable as possible
- inviting members of the public to contact the FOI contact officer via the departmental website with comments on the IPS information holdings, particularly where documents are found not to be discoverable, understandable or machine-readable
- inviting users to provide comments via a feedback option at the bottom of IPS pages on the department's website.

The department's draft information management framework is currently undergoing review.

IPS information architecture

In accordance with guidance issued by the OAIC, the IPS information holdings available on the department's website have been published under the following headings:

- Agency plan (ss 8(2)(a))
- Who we are (ss 8(2)(b) and 8(2)(d))
- What we do (ss 8(2)(c) and 8(2)(j))
- Our reports and responses to Parliament (ss 8(2)(e) and 8(2)(h))
- Routinely requested information and disclosure log (ss 8(2)(g) and 11C)
- Consultation arrangements (s 8(2)(f))
- Our priorities (s 8(4))
- Our finances (s 8(4))
- Our lists (s 8(4))
- Contact us (s 8(2)(i)).

To ensure that the IPS information holdings (and individual IPS documents) are easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable, the department has:

- designed and published IPS and FOI icons on the homepage of its website, consistent with the department's branding policy, which links to the IPS section of the website
- wherever possible, it has provided online content in a format that can be searched, copied and transformed
- published a sitemap for its website, to help individuals identify the location of information published under ss 8(2) and 8(4)
- provided a search function for its website
- provided an alert service to notify subscribers of new entries in the disclosure log, new publications under the IPS or other developments in relation to the department's contribution to the IPS
- have provided links to this agency plan and to the department's sitemap to the administrators of www.directory.gov.au
- established a feedback mechanism to seek and respond to community feedback about the IPS information holdings (and individual IPS documents).

The department will make its IPS documents available and easily discoverable by providing links to the IPS documents published on the department's website from the IPS section of the website.

The department will, so far as possible, make its IPS information holdings available for reuse on open licensing terms.

Information required to be published under the IPS

The department has published documents and a list of other documents that are required to be published under the IPS (s 8(2)) in the IPS section of the website at www.daff.gov.au/foi/ips. The department has published these documents, and other optional material, under the following headings:

Agency plan

- There is a hyperlink to this document.

Who we are

- This includes information about our organisation and its structure, governance arrangements, ministers, our senior management team, our Collective Agreement and information about statutory appointments.
- For statutory appointees, the department has published the name of the organisation to which the person has been appointed, the position to which the person is appointed, the name of the person appointed, the length or term of appointment, and the Act under which the person is appointed.

What we do

- This includes information on the department's functions and decision making powers and other powers affecting members of the public. It also includes the information register of the department's operational information (s 8(2)(j)).

Our reports and responses to parliament

- This includes the full text of the department's recent annual reports, Portfolio Budget Statements, and other reports tabled in Parliament.

Routinely requested information and disclosure log

- This includes information in documents to which the department routinely gives access in response to FOI requests.
- The department will clearly identify these documents in its disclosure log, published under s 11C of the FOI Act – which requires agencies to publish information contained in documents to which the agency has provided access under the FOI Act.

Consultation

- This includes information about how and to whom a comment may be submitted by members of the public, where the department undertakes public consultation on a specific policy proposal.

Contact us

- This includes the contact details of the FOI Coordinators, who can be contacted about access to the department's information or documents under the FOI Act. It also includes lists of departmental contacts.

Optional information to be published under the IPS

The department has also published on the IPS section of its website other, ‘optional’ information that it holds under the following headings:

Our priorities

- This includes information on what our priorities are and how we are doing, including the corporate plan and annual reports.

Our finances

- This includes information on what we spend and how we spend it, including financial statements, grants we administer, and financial information relating to pay and grading structures, procurement procedures, tendering and contracts.

Our lists

- This will include agency contracts, grants and appointments.

Accessibility under the IPS

The department will ensure that all information published on its website under the IPS will comply with current web content accessibility requirements.

The department’s dedicated IPS section of its website will state that where a document is not yet available in an accessible format, it will be made available in an accessible format on request, by contacting the FOI Coordinator (whose contact details will be provided).

From commencement of the IPS, the department will publish any new IPS documents as soon as they are available for publication.

The department will ensure that all information newly published on the department’s website conforms with the WCAG 2.0 as soon as possible.

All content on the department’s website will meet level ‘A’ compliance to the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2)* (WCAG 2.0) by December 2012 and Double (AA) by 2014, in line with the Australian Government’s National Transition Strategy.

IPS compliance review

The agency plan is a living document, and will be reviewed periodically—at least annually—to ensure it remains relevant and to incorporate feedback.

The department will review the operation of its IPS from time to time and at least every five years, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner about IPS compliance review.

The department is one of seven agencies that have agreed to participate in the OAIC's pilot of its IPS compliance review in the second half of 2011.

Annexure A

Access charges for documents available on request

Photocopy	10 cents per page
Copy (other than photocopy)	\$4.40 per page
Copy of the document in the form of a computer tape or a computer disk	An amount not exceeding the actual costs incurred by the OAIC in producing the copy
Copy of the document to be sent to the applicant by post or delivered to the applicant	An amount not exceeding the cost of postage or delivery