

## What is right to information?

The *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld) (RTI Act) and *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) (IP Act) requires us to make information available to the public unless there is a good reason not to.

Government information should, where possible, be available through informal means like on our website, publication scheme or administratively released on request.

A formal application for government-held information under the RTI Act or IP Act should only be made as a last resort.

## Which Queensland agencies can I access information from?

- Government departments.
- Ministers.
- Local government (e.g. your local council).
- Government owned corporations (with some exceptions).
- Public hospitals and health services.
- Public authorities.
- Public universities.

## Where do I start?

### Step 1

The first step is to think about the type of information you are looking for (e.g. Is it a report or email? What date was it created? Is there a reference number?).

Being specific will make it easier for both you and the agency to find the desired information, and could reduce any fees you may need to pay.

### Step 2

The next step is to see if the information is already available through the agency's website.

Agencies are required to have a publication scheme, which is available through their website.

Publication schemes detail what information is already publicly available including financial information, services, decisions, policies and priorities.

Websites may also contain information that has already been released under previous RTI applications. These will be listed in a disclosure log but only government departments are required to have them.

Note: Queensland Government Ministers generally do not have websites about the work they do in their role as a Minister.

If you can't find the information you are looking for contact the Minister's office via [www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au)

### Step 3

If the information you want is not available online, you can contact the agency directly.

Provide agency staff with as much detail as you can about the information you seek. This will help them to provide the best possible service and may also reduce any potential charges, if you need to make a formal application.

You should also ask if the information can be accessed through one of the agency's administrative access schemes.

This means you may be provided with the information without the need for a formal application under the RTI or IP Act.

## What if the agency won't give me the information I want?

If you cannot access the information informally, you can submit a formal application under the RTI Act or IP Act.

- If you would like any documents that do not contain your personal information you will need to apply under the RTI Act.
- If you are only seeking documents that contain your personal information, then you can apply under the IP Act.

Your application should be made to the relevant agency by submitting the form available at [www.rti.qld.gov.au](http://www.rti.qld.gov.au), or apply online via the same website.

## Will there be a cost?

Making an application for documents containing your personal information is free.

RTI Act applications have a fee.

Additional charges may apply for processing the application and accessing documents e.g. searching and photocopying.

A Charges Estimate Notice will be provided to you by the agency if additional charges apply.

Accessing documents containing your personal information is free if you request them to be sent by email or CD.

Ask the relevant agency about fees and charges prior to submitting your application.

## Waiver of fees

If you hold a concession card you may apply for a waiver of processing and access charges. The application fee can't be waived.

## How long will it take to process my application?

An application is generally processed within about five weeks or 25 business days, but this can be extended in some circumstances.

***The RTI Act and IP Act promote a more open, transparent and accountable government***

## What if I don't have access to the internet?

Phone the relevant agency or the Queensland Government general enquiries line 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

Ask to be directed to an appropriate representative to see if the information you are looking for is already publicly available or if it can be released freely to you.

You can also contact your local library to see if you can access the internet there.

## Need more information?

Our customer service staff may be able to assist you.

You can contact us on:

Phone: (07) 4970 0700

Alternatively, the Office of the Information Commissioner also provides guidance about how the legislation operates through a range of guidelines and brochures on the website [www.oic.qld.gov.au](http://www.oic.qld.gov.au).

The Office of the Information Commissioner's Enquiries Service (8:30am-4:30pm, Monday-Friday) can provide general advice about how to obtain information from Queensland government agencies.

Phone: (07) 3234 7373

Email: [enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au)

# HOW TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT HELD INFORMATION

*A guide for the community*