



March 2017

March has been a month of 'firsts' for our Office. Our first FOI Introduction and Master Class training program gets underway with all our Metro workshops fully booked out. On Monday our new responsive website was launched, together with the release of our first FOI Awareness online eLearning Module.

In addition, I hosted a visit to our Office by the Accountability and Oversight Committee and I have the privilege of hosting the Association of Information Access Commissioner's biannual conference for the first time next week. The Special Minister of State, the Hon Gavin Jennings MLC, is also attending this conference.



Photo left to right: Neil Angus MLA (Accountability and Oversight Committee Chair) and Michael Ison (Acting Freedom of Information Commissioner)

Update on the FOI Amendment (Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner) Bill 2016

On 3 March 2017, the Acting Assistant Commissioner, Sally Winton and I gave evidence to the Public Inquiry on the Freedom of Information Amendment (Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner) Bill 2016 to the Legal and Social Issues Committee of Parliament. The Committee's report was tabled in Parliament on Monday 21 March 2017.

More information about the Committee's Inquiry can be found at <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lsic/inquiries/article/3537>

You can access a copy of our Submission to the Committee's Inquiry at: <http://foicommissioner.vic.gov.au/17-march-2017-submission-to-the-legal-and-social-issues-committee/>

International Women's Day

On 8 March 2017 the Office celebrated International Women's Day. The day is a call to action to improve equality for women and build a gender inclusive world. The theme for International Women's Day this year is - Be Bold For Change. As an employer I am committed to ensuring a workplace of gender equality and equal opportunity. We were lucky enough to have Tammy O'Connor, Senior Corporate Counsel from Monash Health speak to our staff about an FOI project she worked on in South Africa for the South African History Archive.

Tammy was involved in various community based grass roots projects including running workshops for decision makers, developing a written resource for lawyers and paralegals and drafting the Model Law on Access to Information for Africa that has been adopted by a number of African countries. Tammy and her team were Bold for Change to promote not only Freedom of Information in Africa, but also to promote the equal treatment of men and women.



Photo left to right: Michael Ison (Acting Freedom of Information Commissioner). Tammy O'Connor (Senior Corporate Counsel - Monash Health) and Sally Winton (Acting Assistant Freedom of Information Commissioner)

Redeveloped OFOIC Website

Our new responsive website was launched this week and provides greater accessibility and improved resources and support for agencies and the general public. Please visit foicommissioner.vic.gov.au. We are interested in your feedback about the site. Tell us what you think via an email to our Office at: training@foicommissioner.vic.gov.au.

FOI Awareness Online Module

Our new 45 minute interactive FOI Awareness Online Module is now available and free of charge to all agencies across Victoria. This module is a useful resource for those attending FOI Introduction Training next week and who are new to FOI in Victoria. It encourages users to improve their understanding and knowledge of the FOI process through the completion of the self-paced module, with interactive quizzes throughout, to enhance learning outcomes.

To register for access to the FOI Awareness Online Module click here <http://foicommissioner.vic.gov.au/training-and-education/learning-module/>. Once your details have been provided, click on the link, which will take you directly to the module. On completion of the module, you will be asked to complete a brief survey. Your feedback is important to us and we appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

Freedom of Information

Course Introduction

Welcome to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Overview course! This course is your introductory guide for various aspects related to FOI requests.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

Page 02/51

Freedom of Information Training and Education Program

We are pleased to advise that all March Metro sessions for our new training program have been booked out. A few places remain for our session in Geelong on Friday 31 March 2017. Regional sessions are also being planned in North East Victoria and Ballarat/Bendigo.

If you are interested in training please contact us to express your interest by adding your name to our waiting list. If demand is sufficient we may roster a session prior to those currently scheduled for 21-23 June 2017.

Please do not hesitate to visit foicommissioner.vic.gov.au for course information. Or call the FOI Hotline - **1300 842 364 (1300 VIC FOI)**.

Email enquiries to: training@foicommissioner.vic.gov.au

Recent VCAT FOI Decisions & related Practice Issue Brief from the VGSO



Hon Tim Smith MP v Hon Daniel Andrews MP (Premier) [2017] VCAT 340 (10 March 2017)

Available at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2017/340.html>

In this application to VCAT, the applicant was seeking review of a decision by the respondent to refuse access to screen shots of web browser histories of each person employed in or seconded to the Office of the Premier (OTP). VCAT affirmed the decision of the respondent not to grant the FOI request.

This Practice Issues Brief can be found on our website at: <http://foicommissioner.vic.gov.au/resources>.

Further Information



To register additional staff to receive our monthly Bulletin, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Hotline - 1300 842 364 or email

training@foicommissioner.vic.gov.au.

Our Office is committed to assisting agencies to administer the FOI Act as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Yours sincerely

Michael Ison

Acting Freedom of Information Commissioner