

Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism

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Information Publication Scheme

Agency Plan

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Information Publication Scheme – Agency Plan

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Introduction

Introduction

The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (**RET**) has prepared this Agency Plan (**the Plan**) in accordance with section 8(1) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) as amended (**the FOI Act**).

Part II of the FOI Act, which deals with the Information Publication Scheme (**the Scheme**), comes into effect on 1 May 2011.

All references to sections in this Plan are to sections of the FOI Act.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this Plan is to comply with section 8(1).

Under section 8(1), the Plan must show:

1. what information RET proposes to publish for the purposes of Part II of the FOI Act;
2. how, and to whom, RET proposes to publish information for the purposes of Part II; and
3. how RET otherwise proposes to comply with Part II.

The Plan will help RET to put in place appropriate procedures to proactively disclose its information holdings, in accordance with the objects of the FOI Act.

Objectives

RET's objectives in relation to this Plan are to outline appropriate mechanisms and procedures to:

1. manage RET's information holdings relevant to the Scheme;
2. proactively identify and publish all information required to be published, including this Plan (in accordance with section 8(2));
3. proactively identify and publish other information held by RET (in accordance with section 8(4));
4. review and ensure on a regular basis that information published by RET under the Scheme is accurate, up-to-date and complete (in accordance with section 8B);
5. ensure that information published under the Scheme is able to be discovered by the general public, is understandable and re-useable;
6. ensure that the format of online content conforms with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0; and
7. measure the success of RET's implementation of the Information Publication Scheme.

Implementing the Scheme

1. Establishing the Scheme at RET

1.1 Who is responsible for leading RET's work on implementing FOI reforms, including establishing and administering the IPS

RET's Chief Lawyer is responsible for leading RET's work on implementing FOI reforms generally. This includes establishing and developing the Scheme at RET, maintaining the Scheme at RET in accordance with any assistance or guidelines provided by the Information Commissioner, and ensuring that all requests for access to documents of RET received from 1 November 2010 are processed in accordance with the amended FOI Act.

The Chief Lawyer is supported by RET's Legal Services and Corporate Services Division generally, notably in relation to ICT services.

1.2 RET's existing information asset management framework and meeting the Scheme's requirements

From 1 May 2011, RET is required to publish and make publicly available a range of information. The information required to be published is specified in section 8(2).

(a) Information published by RET prior to the implementation of the Scheme

RET publishes a range of a material on its website, www.ret.gov.au, including:

- (i) a description of RET's responsibilities and mission on the title page;
- (ii) RET's Corporate Plan 2009-2013;
- (iii) a statement of RET's priorities;
- (iv) details regarding the Portfolio Ministers;
- (v) the Portfolio bodies (the Minister; RET; the Australian Solar Institute; Geoscience Australia; the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority; Tourism Australia) with hypertext links to their websites;
- (vi) the RET organisational chart;
- (vii) RET's funding programs (what they are and how to access them) and other programs (eg Energy Efficiency Opportunities Program);
- (viii) the RET operational Divisions with descriptions of each Division's programs, strategic alliances, corporate documentation, publications, registers and current issues and activities;
- (ix) the RET Service Charter which includes:
 - (A) Our Vision – Our Mission;
 - (B) The Department and its clients and stakeholders;
 - (C) What you can expect from us;
 - (D) Our service standards;
 - (E) How you can help us;
 - (F) How you can give us feedback;
 - (G) How a complaint will be handled;

- (x) Freedom of Information arrangements, including contact details for officers who can assist regarding access to RET's information or documents;
- (xi) a list of Portfolio legislation;
- (xii) RET's annual reports (2007-2010);
- (xiii) the Portfolio Budget Statements (2007-2010);
- (xiv) Senate Order on Agency Contracts Listing (2010);
- (xv) Continuing Order of the Senate - Indexed List of Departmental and Agency Files (2008-2010);
- (xvi) Reporting of Grants (2009-2011);
- (xvii) the Annual Procurement Plan;
- (xviii) the Annual Regulatory Plan;
- (xix) RET's Statement Pursuant to Section 9(2)(C) of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (as it was prior to 1 November 2010), being a list of documents provided by RET for the use of RET officers in making decisions or recommendations, and available to the public for inspection and purchase from RET.
- (xx) RET's responses to Departmental Inquiries (eg Montara Inquiry; Offshore Petroleum Safety Regulatory Inquiry);
- (xxi) accessibility standards for the RET website and how to utilise them;
- (xxii) current Ministerial media releases in the Media Centre; and
- (xxiii) contact details for RET and Portfolio agency offices.

(b) Partial satisfaction of some Scheme requirements

Most of the information published on RET's website prior to the implementation of the Scheme satisfies section 8(2). However, some information is absent or requires amendment. This includes the following items.

- (i) The RET organisational chart does not provide telephone contact numbers for each branch as recommended by the Information Commissioner. RET proposes to publish a single telephone number which will be answered by an operator who can direct the caller to the relevant section or branch.
- (ii) The Media Centre does not contain archived media statements as recommended by the Information Commissioner. These are on the Minister's website. A link to the relevant page on the Minister's website will be established.
- (iii) Publication of details of arrangements for members of the public to comment on specific policy proposals for which RET is responsible is required under section 8(2)(f) and RET does not at present publish such information. The RET website will direct users to the Govspace website for this purpose. That website is www.govspace.gov.au.
- (iv) Publication of information in documents to which RET routinely gives access in response to FOI applications is required under section 8(2)(g). RET does not publish this information at present. RET can now identify certain materials repeatedly requested under the FOI Act which can be listed.

- (v) There is no disclosure log (as required by section 11C(3)) on the RET website. Legal Services will prepare the required documentation after each FOI application is resolved and provide it to RET's Webpublishing unit for inclusion on the website.

(c) Measures to be taken by RET to satisfy remaining Scheme requirements

To satisfy remaining Scheme requirements, RET will review the RET website as it stands to ensure that it is accurate, up to date and that the revisions noted above as required are carried out.

1.3 Register of information for publication and a disclosure log

RET regards the RET website as its register of information subject to any interference outside RET's control. The website is constructed so that material likely to be of interest to the public or stakeholders appears on the website or is accessible through hypertext links.

The RET website currently contains no disclosure log but a disclosure log, as required by section 11C(3), is scheduled to appear on the website for FOI decisions made as of 1 May 2011. RET's aim will be to publish material released under the FOI Act on the disclosure log on the same day as the material is provided to the FOI applicant although this may not always be achievable.

1.4 Identification of information that is required to be published, or may be published, or may be available in other forms

RET has reviewed its website to assess its current compliance with the revised requirements in the FOI Act. The next step will be a data collection. RET Legal Services will request all operational units to review their contributions to the website and to:

- certify that the information currently on the website is the sum total of RET information that can be made available to the public and stakeholders in accordance with the FOI Act. Where additional information could be published, managers will be requested to itemise the information and estimate when it should be ready for publication;
- certify that the information currently on the website is accurate, complete and up to date;
- confirm that the Divisional Web Coordinator will be responsible for the ongoing function of identifying material for publication and for checking periodically that the published material is accurate, complete and up to date; and
- reassess over time what data is routinely provided under FOI with a view to publishing it on the website.

RET Legal Services will periodically require that these functions be repeated and the website updated accordingly.

Where information should be available other than through the website users will be advised how to access the information.

1.5 Ensuring that information published under the Scheme is discoverable, understandable, machine-readable, accessible and useable

The RET website has been developed to ensure content is available to the widest possible audience, including readers using assistive technology or accessibility features. By adhering to guidelines for accessible web design, RET acknowledges the diversity of communication methods, available technologies and abilities of web-users in the community. The Department has commenced a process to bring RET's public web presence to WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard by 2014.

The website is HTML 1.1 compliant. RET aims to make its website content as accessible as possible and follows the guidelines and standards of the W3C. RET uses cascading style sheets (CSS) to ensure a consistent 'look and feel'. Users of the latest browsers (such as Firefox, IE6, Opera 2, Netscape 6 and Safari) which comply with the W3C guidelines and standards will view content as it was designed. Older browsers (such as Netscape 4 or Internet Explorer 4) will not show the design as it was intended, however, all content will still be available.

For PDF files the Adobe website provides a service to convert PDF files to HTML via an online form.

The Adobe website and the Trace Research Centre provide services to convert Acrobat PDF files to plain text or HTML via e-mail.

Many PDFs used on www.ret.gov.au have been tagged and most screen readers can access these files without requiring conversion. However if a user would like RET to send another format for any of its PDF files the user can request a copy using RET's address details on the contact us page.

1.6 Creative commons licensing

RET notes that the Commonwealth has made the policy decision to regard Commonwealth copyright materials as licensed according to creative commons principles (<http://creativecommons.org.au/tag/australian-federal-government>) as the default position. Original materials on RET's website and most materials appearing on, or linked through, RET's website will be available for use by anyone on a creative commons licence. Exceptions will be documents appearing on, or linked through, the RET website where the copyright is owned by a non-Commonwealth entity. In most cases the publication will contain a copyright notice identifying the copyright owner.

1.7 Access charges

RET does not propose charging access fees, other than those permitted under the FOI Act, for access to RET information.

2. Information architecture

RET will publish information to members of the public through its website, www.ret.gov.au.

The format, language and accessibility arrangements are as described above in paragraph 1.5.

RET may deposit copies of information as appropriate, and as the relevant types of publication are utilised. These may include over time:

- hard copy documents deposited in accordance with the Commonwealth Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes; and
- audiovisual documents provided to the National Film and Sound Archive.

It is not anticipated that RET will have any material suited to publication on www.data.gov.au in the first instance. However, this issue will be kept under constant review and as opportunities to publish on this website arise publication will be arranged.

3. Information required to be published

In accordance with section 8(2) RET will publish on the website, as of 1 May 2011:

- (a) The Agency Plan (section 8(2)(a));
- (b) Who we are, including an updated organisational chart (section 8(2)(b));
- (c) What we do, including information on RET's functions, decision making powers, operational guidelines and other materials used within RET in making decisions or recommendations affecting members of the public (section 8(2)(c) and (j));
- (d) RET's reports and responses to Parliament (section 8(2)(e) and (h));
- (e) RET's information (if any) routinely requested under the FOI Act and RET's disclosure log (sections 8(2)(g) and 11C);
- (f) Arrangements whereby members of the public may comment on specific policy proposals (section 8(2)(f)); and
- (g) Contact details for RET generally and for RET's FOI contact officer (section 8(2)(i)).

4. Optional information

RET already publishes much of the optional information on the website. In accordance with section 8(4) RET will publish:

- (a) RET's Corporate Plan 2009-2013;
- (b) a statement of RET's priorities;
- (c) details of Portfolio Ministers;
- (d) the Portfolio bodies (the Minister; RET; the Australian Solar Institute; Geoscience Australia; the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority; Tourism Australia) with hypertext links to their websites where relevant;
- (e) RET's funding programs (what they are and how to access them) and other programs (eg the Energy Efficiency Opportunities Program);
- (f) the RET operational Divisions with descriptions of each Division's programs, strategic alliances, corporate documentation, publications, registers and current issues and activities;
- (g) the RET Service Charter which includes:
 - Our Vision – Our Mission;
 - the Department and its clients and stakeholders;
 - what you can expect from us;
 - our service standards;
 - how you can help us;
 - how you can give us feedback;
 - how a complaint will be handled;
- (h) a list of Portfolio legislation;
- (i) the Portfolio Budget Statements (2007-2010);
- (j) the Annual Procurement Plan;
- (k) the Annual Regulatory plan;
- (l) accessibility standards for the RET website and how to utilise them;
- (m) current Ministerial media releases in the Media Centre; and
- (n) contact details for RET and Portfolio agency offices.

5. Administering RET's Scheme

The Chief Lawyer will have overall responsibility for administration of the Scheme within RET.

RET Legal Services will perform most of the administrative functions, under the direction of the Chief Lawyer.

RET Media and Communications will be responsible for establishing the Communications Plan for the Department, of which the RET website will form a part. RET ICT, in conjunction with the business owners, is responsible for standards, best practice and coordination toward publication.

RET Legal Services will periodically request all operational units to review their contributions to the website and to:

- certify that the information currently on the website is the sum total of information available that can and should be made available to the public and stakeholders in accordance with the FOI Act. This will not necessarily be all of the material that might be disclosed pursuant to a particular FOI request. Personal and commercial information would not be published, nor would email messages. Where additional information could be published, managers will be requested to itemise the information and submit it to RET ICT for publication;
- certify that the information currently on the website is accurate, complete and up to date;
- reassess what data, or types of data, are routinely provided under FOI with a view to publishing it on the website.

RET Legal Services will also ask operational units to identify any information they have created or obtained that is only available in hard copy or audiovisual form with a view to depositing it under the Library Deposit Scheme or with the National Film and Sound Archive.

RET is committed to publishing a disclosure log in accordance with section 11C.

Should RET introduce charging for access to information, apart from charges imposed under the FOI Act, full details of the charging regime will be published on the website.

6. Review

RET will review this Agency Plan at least annually. RET will review the operation of the Scheme within RET at least every five years in accordance with the Australian Information Commissioner's guidance on Scheme reviews.