



# URGENT UPDATE

## AUDITOR GENERAL SLAMS VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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On 18 April 2012 the Auditor-General tabled in Parliament a report entitled *Freedom of Information* which examined the extent to which the 11 State Government Departments and Victoria Police met the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic).

The Auditor-General was, in general, highly critical of those agencies and made a number of recommendations. They included that other agencies should review the findings and apply lessons where necessary in their own organisation. A copy of the report is available at the following link: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/publications/20120418-FOI/20120418-FOI.html#s04>

Please take the time to forward this email to senior management within your organisation and draw their attention to the report. We strongly recommend that you read the report and become familiar with the shortcomings in relation to which the Auditor General expressed concerns.

Should you wish to discuss what the report means for your agency, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will outline how we can help your agency:

- Comply with mandatory requirements of Part II of the FOI Act.
- Ensure timely decision-making and compliance with FOI Guidelines.
- Ensure sufficient searches for documents are undertaken to address FOI requests.
- Increase organisational awareness at all levels, but particularly the 'tone at the top' as to the importance of FOI and awareness of the spirit of the FOI Act to embed an appropriate pro-disclosure culture.
- Audit existing processes and procedures to assess the risk of non-compliance with the letter and spirit of the FOI Act as part of a need to ensure continual improvement of processes.
- Assist with ensuring that FOI Officers receive adequate support, such as training, which are critical to enable your agency to meet its statutory obligation to provide appropriate and timely responses to the public.

**Dated: 19 April 2012**

We look forward to hearing from you:

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