



# Freedom of Information Management System (FOIMS)

The South Australian Freedom of Information Management System (FOIMS) has been developed as an across government tool for recording, processing and reporting freedom of information applications.

FOIMS also reports on contracts containing confidentiality clauses as required under clause 13 of schedule 1 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

## System considerations

### Functions

The FOIMS database records the administrative data created when receiving, processing, and determining an FOI application. It supports the processing of applications by assisting with workflow management and in the collection of information required for reporting. FOIMS functionality includes:

- recording the details of an application
- transferring an application (whole or in part)
- recording an approved or negotiated time extension for the application
- recording fees, charges and payments
- recording diary notes
- recording the application's determination
- recording external review activity
- generating draft letters to an applicant or third party
- generating reports on FOI applications
- searching applications recorded within the agency, and
- recording and reporting on confidentiality clauses in contracts.

The workflow management capability of FOIMS can assist FOI Officers, particularly those who do not regularly process FOI applications, by guiding them through the recommended steps required to fulfil an FOI request.

## Computer requirements

FOIMS has been designed to work on as many computers as possible without the need for upgrades or complicated licensing arrangements.

FOIMS can be accessed through the Internet using a web browser such as Internet Explorer 5.5 (or higher) or Netscape 6 (or higher) and needs the following software programs:

- Adobe Acrobat Reader to generate reports

- a word processor that supports RTF format, such as Microsoft Word to generate draft letters, and
- a spreadsheet program that supports CSV format, such as Microsoft Excel to report on search results.

## **Cost**

There is no cost to agencies for the use of FOIMS. State Records provides ongoing support and maintenance.

Agencies are required however to invest some time in learning to use the system. Training workshops are run by State Records for agencies at a small cost (see below for more information on FOIMS training).

## **Using the system**

### **Agency and user registration**

FOIMS is available to State Government agencies, Local Government Councils and South Australian Universities.

Each agency (defined as such under the FOI Act) must be registered on FOIMS to ensure they are meeting their statutory reporting obligations. Agencies that are not registered should complete a FOIMS Agency Registration form and submit it to State Records. The Agency Registration form is available from the State Records website at <http://www.archives.sa.gov.au/foi/foiadmin/index.html>.

Each agency has a nominated FOIMS Agency Administrator who is generally the primary day-to-day contact for that agency for both FOIMS and FOI. Once an agency is registered in FOIMS, this person is able to manage access by other people within their agency as required.

It is recommended that all FOI Officers and staff who assist in processing FOI applications are registered users. In addition, procurement staff may be registered as Contract Officers if they are responsible for reporting contracts containing confidentiality clauses.

FOI Officers who are registered in FOIMS are able to access details of their agency's FOI applications. The principal officer of an agency is able to access FOIMS to view reports of activity for their agency. These reports are statistical in nature, and do not identify FOI applicants or display details regarding personal applications.

### **Accuracy and security**

It is the responsibility of all agencies to ensure the FOI application data is accurate and kept up-to-date within FOIMS. State Records provides reports from FOIMS to the Minister responsible for FOI on a monthly basis. This report is run immediately following the 10<sup>th</sup> day of each month. At a minimum agencies need to ensure information is as accurate as possible by this date.

Agencies are also responsible for the registration and management of users who access FOIMS within their agency, this includes ensuring they are deregistered if they leave the agency.

FOIMS data resides in a secure government hosting facility and specific application data is only available to the registered users of the relevant agency.

FOIMS has extensive auditing capability that logs changes made to the information. This auditing facility is available to the FOIMS Agency Administrator as well as the FOIMS Systems Administrator.

## **Training**

The FOIMS test environment is available for new users to learn how to use FOIMS as well as for testing new or upgraded functionalities of the system.

New users are able to direct their own learning using the FOIMS User Guide and the FOIMS test environment. More experienced users within an agency can also use the test environment to train new users within their agency.

To register a user account in the FOIMS test environment, either complete the required information on the Agency Registration form or contact State Records.

State Records holds FOIMS training workshops subject to demand. FOIMS has been designed to be an intuitive system that follows the workflow for processing an FOI application. With a bit of support from more experienced users within an agency, or from State Records, most users become competent within a short time.

## **Contact**

Further information about FOIMS is available from State Records on 8204 8786 or via [foims@sa.gov.au](mailto:foims@sa.gov.au).