

Freedom of Information

This statement is provided in accordance with Section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act). The FOI Act extends to the Australian community the right to obtain access to information in the possession of the Commonwealth Government. Access is limited only by specific exemptions detailed in the FOI Act, which include the protection of essential public interests and personal information.

Section 8 of the FOI Act requires each agency to publish information about the way it is organised, its decision-making powers, and arrangements for external bodies or persons outside the agency and the Commonwealth to participate in the formulation of an agency's policy, administration or any enactment or scheme of an agency.

The Organisation, Functions and Decision-Making Powers of the Agency

This information is contained in the body of the Annual Report. Decision-making powers of the Agency are exercised under or in relation to the *Meteorology Act 1955*, the *Water Act 2007*, the *Public Service Act 1999* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.

Number of FOI Requests

The Bureau received five applications pursuant to the FOI Act and one request for internal review. There were no appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Categories of Documents that are Maintained by the Agency

The Bureau holds a large number of documents which are described below. In accordance with the *Archives Act 1983*, documents may have been transferred into archival custody or destroyed. Documents held include:

- policy advice and internal administration (financial, staffing, office procedures and similar documents);
- documents relating to management and administration including reports, briefings, minutes, submissions and other documents;
- tender proposals, evaluations, contracts, property documents, Memoranda of Understanding;
- Cabinet submissions, Ministerial briefings;
- guidelines, manuals and other reference material used by staff;
- audio and visual material used for training and other activities;
- paper and electronic records and databases including climate records, meteorological and hydrological data and other information related to weather, climate and water; and
- legal documents.

Outside Participation and Public Involvement

Arrangements for bodies or persons outside the Commonwealth to participate in the formulation of policy by the Bureau, or in the administration by the Bureau, of any enactment or scheme are as follows:

- Bureau of Meteorology Advisory Board;
- Bureau of Meteorology Audit Committee;
- Australian Water Information Advisory Council;
- Jurisdictional Reference Group on Water Information;
- Flood Warning Consultative Committees (States and Northern Territory);
- Executive Steering Committee on Australian Water Resource Information;
- Consultative meetings with private meteorological service providers;
- Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology Aviation Industry Consultative Meetings;
- State Marine Consultative Committees;
- Agricultural Weather and Climate Consultative Committees (South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria);
- Primary Industries Ministerial Council, Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, Environmental Protection and Heritage Council and their Standing Committees and associated committee structures;
- routine Public User Surveys;
- other meetings with agricultural groups, airport owners, etc.;
- Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) Governing Boards (Bushfire CRC, CRC for Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems);
- eWater CRC Participants Forum;
- Australian Government Counter Disaster Task Force;
- Australian Emergency Management Committee Working Groups:
 - National Community Safety Working Group;
 - National Risk Assessment Advisory Group;
 - National Flood Risk Advisory Group; and
 - National Spatial and Information Management Advisory Group;
- Regional Emergency Services joint meetings;
- Tropical Cyclone Committees and Advisory Groups (Western Australia, Queensland);
- State Emergency Management Committees;
- State Disaster Mitigation Committees;
- local government committees for disaster mitigation;
- Disaster Mitigation Assistance Package joint agency working groups;
- State Bushfire Councils and Advisory Committees;
- Australasian Fire Agencies Council;
- Technical Risk Assessment Advisory Committee; and
- research consultations with the CSIRO as part of the operation of the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research.

FOI Procedures and Facilities, Initial Enquiries and Access

Freedom of Information matters (within the Bureau) are handled by the Legal Section in the Bureau's Head Office. The FOI Officer may be contacted on 03 9669 4669.

Correspondence should be sent to:

Freedom of Information Officer

Legal Section

Bureau of Meteorology

GPO Box 1289

Melbourne Vic., 3001

A list of the Bureau's publications and other material is available on the Bureau's website at: www.bom.gov.au. Access is usually provided on the payment of an application fee (which is prescribed by the FOI regulations) and a formal written request. Details of a postal address and telephone contact number should be included in the request. If access to all or some of the material requested is denied, a written response with reasons is provided. Where access is granted, this is usually provided in the form of copies of requested material. A reading area can be made available for the inspection of documents by arrangement with the FOI officer.