

**Friday 31 October 2008**

NSW Ombudsman  
**Review of the *Freedom of Information Act***

**Progress so far**

Today is the closing date for submissions to the Ombudsman's review of the NSW *Freedom of Information Act*. Following a large number of requests for additional time, the Ombudsman has decided to receive submissions for an additional two weeks.

The final closing date for submissions is now **Friday 14 November 2008**.

**“Due to the level of public interest in FOI reform, I thought this was a good time to provide an update of what my office has done so far”** the Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour said. **“I met with the Premier some weeks ago, and provided him with a similar outline, as well as some initial comments.”**

So far, we have:

- obtained detailed information from the 18 agencies the subject of investigation, along with all NSW local councils and the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, about how they deal with FOI applications
- visited each of the 18 agencies and inspected a random selection of their FOI files
- interviewed 70 agency staff who regularly deal with FOI applications,
- published a discussion paper outlining a large number of issues for consideration, and
- conducted a comprehensive review of the different approaches to accessing government information across Australia and around the world.

The next stages:

- collect and review public submissions to the discussion paper
- complete the analysis of qualitative and quantitative information collected from the 18 agencies, and
- prepare a final report to Parliament.



**“I realise how important it is to complete this review as soon as practicable, and my staff and I are working hard to ensure it is finalised early in the new year” the Ombudsman said. “I welcome the Premier’s commitment to wholesale reform of FOI in this state, as well as his expression of support for my review.”**

Submissions to the review should be sent to:

[foireview@ombo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:foireview@ombo.nsw.gov.au)

or

FOI Review  
NSW Ombudsman  
Level 24  
580 George Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

For any further information, either email the above address, or contact:

Tom Millett, Project Officer on (02) 9286 0951

or

Helen Ford, Project Manager on (02) 9286 0993