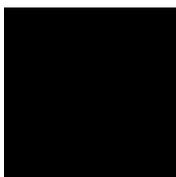


Angelene and Toni



**Angelene Falk** (she/her)  
Australian Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
Sydney | GPO Box 5288 Sydney NSW 2001  
P +61 2 9942 4213 E [executiveassistant@oaic.gov.au](mailto:executiveassistant@oaic.gov.au)

---

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**MOFFAT, Laura**

---

**From:** FALK, Angelene  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 August 2023 4:28 PM  
**To:** PIRANI, Toni; OAIC - Media; HAMPTON, Elizabeth  
**Cc:** WHIP, Caren  
**Subject:** RE: ABC Radio National interview request [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Regards  
Angelene

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**Sent:** Wednesday, August 30, 2023 3:10 PM  
**To:** OAIC - Media <media@oaic.gov.au>; FALK, Angelene <Angelene.Falk@oaic.gov.au>; HAMPTON, Elizabeth <Elizabeth.Hampton@oaic.gov.au>  
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s47C



Regards

Toni

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**Sent:** Wednesday, August 30, 2023 1:30 PM  
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Andrew

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- The need for a multi-faceted approach

Kind regards

Andrew

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**Sent:** Wednesday, August 30, 2023 11:42 AM  
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I understand this is a very busy time for your team, so I appreciate your assistance looking into this.

With respect,  
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Grace Stranger (She/Her)  
Producer  
Radio National

M: 0434277342

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**MOFFAT, Laura**

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**To:** FALK, Angelene; OAIC - Media; HAMPTON, Elizabeth  
**Cc:** WHIP, Caren  
**Subject:** RE: ABC Radio Naitonal interview request [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks Angelene – yes I prefer the decision making reference.

Regards

Toni

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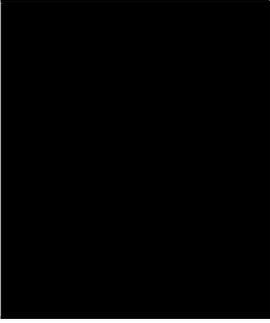
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Grace Stranger (She/Her)

Producer

Radio National

M: 0434277342

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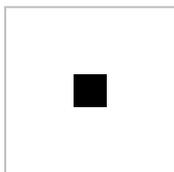




**From:** [HAMPTON,Elizabeth](#)  
**To:** [DRAYTON,Melanie](#)  
**Cc:** [CROXALL,Sarah](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 29 August 2023 5:30:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)  
[image003.jpg](#)

---

Spoke with AF – can Andrew please have a look at it? Looks great to me – thanks both



**Elizabeth Hampton**  
Deputy Commissioner  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
M [s47E\(d\)](#) E [Elizabeth.Hampton@oaic.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.Hampton@oaic.gov.au)

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**From:** DRAYTON,Melanie <Melanie.Drayton@oaic.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 29, 2023 5:27 PM  
**To:** HAMPTON,Elizabeth <Elizabeth.Hampton@oaic.gov.au>  
**Cc:** CROXALL,Sarah <Sarah.Croxall@oaic.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear Libby

As discussed here is a draft all staff email to come from Commissioner Falk.

Thanks  
Mel

.....

Dear Colleagues

Many of you would be aware that public hearings for the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee's inquiry into the operation of Commonwealth Freedom of Information laws occurred over the last couple of days. The Committee heard from a range of witnesses, including those from Government, the media and the legal sector. The OAIC appeared (insert day).

Committee members and witnesses covered a wide range of issues, including funding allocation within the OAIC, and ways to improve the FOI system in line with the objects of the FOI Act.

Some of the evidence provided may not align with your experience working for the OAIC. I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work of every team within the OAIC. Together, we do excellent work and make invaluable contributions to ensuring that the OAIC meets its statutory functions and strategic goals. Our FOI role is important and fundamental to Australia's

democracy.

If you have any concerns about the hearing or if any issues raised have caused you distress, please reach out to your manager or our EAP provider for support (insert details).

## OAIC - FOI

---

**From:** OAIC - Media  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 29 August 2023 11:00 AM  
**To:** FALK,Angelene; PIRANI,Toni; AGO,Rocelle; HAMPTON,Elizabeth; HARLOCK,Raewyn; DRAYTON,Melanie; ATTARD,Brenton  
**Cc:** OAIC - Media  
**Subject:** Media and social clips - FOI inquiry  
**Attachments:** Media clips - FOI inquiry.docx

Good morning

Please see below media and social media coverage of the FOI inquiry so far this morning.

- [‘Former FOI Commissioner Leo Hardiman blames Information Commissioner Angelene Falk for poor culture’](#), The Canberra Times (in attachment)
- Several items in [Guardian Australia live news blog](#) (in attachment)

Images below are linked to the posts.



**Paul Farrell**  
@FarrellPF



I've never seen an opening statement like this at a Senate inquiry before. This is a devastating assessment of the leadership of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the FOI system... by it's owner recently departed FOI Commissioner [aph.gov.au/DocumentStore...](#)

9:59 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **1,804** Views

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**4** Reposts   **1** Quote   **8** Likes   **1** Bookmark

**Ariel Bogle**

@arielbogle



As well as a withering assessment of the Information Commissioner's apparent lack of dedication to FOI, it also contains a pretty neat summary of how government departments do their best to undermine the FOI process while 'pretending' to facilitate it.

n the agency side of the equation also con often incorrect) basis that an exemptio  
 ge extent these factors are in my view symhe information was such that refusal of  
 relate to the administration of the FOI Ac tions were applied even where there v  
 nevertheless disappointingly common ac needed to remain confidential to gove  
 applicants to try and resolve a request  
 contrary to the apparent purpose and obj ay have been happy to receive inform  
 administer the Act on the basis that acces d initially requested but no attempt ha  
 d only be granted if it was not possible to t outcome with the applicant (indeed, i  
 ons. The Act of course contemplates some; o was not even contemplated).  
 unless an exemption applies and it is appr new issues and/or exemptions as an IC  
 tion in the particular case to apply that ex  
 gencies to claim multiple exemptions to st chronic, in responding to the OAIC in th  
 y possibly could. helpful defensiveness.

**Paul Farrell** @FarrellPF · 54m

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10:10 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **986** Views

Senator David Shoebridge is publishing to an [ongoing thread](#) about the inquiry:



**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 1h



Leo Hardiman the former FOI Commissioner has seen the system up close and tried to address the most serious concerns about delay, obfuscation, cost and a broken culture around FOI. He has concerns the FOI Commissioner doesn't have the powers or resources to actually do the job.



**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 1h



Leo Hardiman tells us he started in April 2022 and immediately encountered unproductive agency relationships, diversion of staff from FOI, constant reshuffles of staff, and focus on developing narratives re FOI management rather than doing the management itself



**David Shoebridge**  
@DavidShoebridge



Former FOI Commissioner Hardiman telling the inquiry the amount of funding allocated to FOI within OAIC was strictly the (insufficient) amount allocated directly by Government and this was much less than funding allocated to the OAIC corporate branch for example

9:13 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **696** Views

**2** Reposts **9** Likes

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 1h

The former FOI commissioner is expressing serious concerns about the status of the role within the broader office of the Australian Information Commissioner - a distinct sense it was treated as a junior officer position despite its clear importance for broader democracy



1



1



7



112

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 51m

Extraordinary evidence from the former FOI Commissioner.

We have heard how the FOI Commissioner was essentially not allowed to do his job, starved of resources and not given the independence needed in his statutory role.



1



6



164

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 49m

There has also been very troubling evidence that a false narrative was presented to the Federal Court about resources - and that this was designed to defeat a court challenge by former Senator Rex Patrick.



1



1



6



385

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 45m

Also note the OAIC has 7 people in the corporate communications team and only 22 in all of FOI! What priorities...



5



301

**Amy Kiely** (she/her)

Assistant Director, Strategic Communications  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
Brisbane

P +61 2 9942 4103 M s47E(d) E [amy.kiely@oaic.gov.au](mailto:amy.kiely@oaic.gov.au)

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'Former FOI Commissioner Leo Hardiman blames Information Commissioner Angelene Falk for poor culture', The Canberra Times



By [Miriam Webber](#)

**Updated** August 29 2023 - 10:37am, first published 10:30am

Former Freedom of Information boss Leo Hardiman has blasted poor culture at the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, and claimed this was "entirely a product" of the leadership of Information Commissioner Angelene Falk.

Mr Hardiman, who was Australia's first FOI boss in seven years, [quit the position in March](#), citing a lack of power to reform the backlogged system he was hired to fix.

On Tuesday, Mr Hardiman gave his detailed account of staffing, resourcing and cultural issues at the agency which houses the federal government's FOI office, appearing before a Senate committee into Commonwealth FOI laws.

The former FOI boss said he quit because the powers to change deep problems at the agency were not conferred on him, but on Ms Falk, who he claimed wanted to be "a super Privacy Commissioner".

Ms Falk and Acting FOI Commissioner Toni Pirani are due to appear before the Senate committee later on Tuesday afternoon.

In an opening statement to senators, Mr Hardiman described "serious staff and resourcing issues, a significant lack of appropriate focus on the main functions in performance of the FOI functions, [particularly the Information Commissioner](#) review function."

He painted a grim picture of the FOI branch , including cultural issues such as a lack of sufficient engagement with FOI technical issues, unproductive

relationships with regulated agencies and a diversion of staff away from core FOI work.

"... An associated feeling of complete overwhelm amongst the more senior staff members of the OAIC's FOI branch, a shifting of responsibility for failures to the staff of the FOI branch, together with a culture of the OAIC's FOI functions being of secondary importance to its privacy functions," Mr Hardiman continued.

"Cycles of panic at the most senior level, particularly around Senate estimates appearances at critical stages of the [Rex] Patrick unreasonable delay litigation.

"A lack of commitment to the three commissioner model established by the Australian Information Commissioner Act and a practice at the most senior level of developing narratives designed to present the OAIC's performance of the FOI functions in the best possible light while distracting from engagement with important issues affecting their performance.

Mr Hardiman gave examples of "two consistently articulated narratives," around work outputs and resourcing which were "of particular concern" to him.

**Former FOI boss blames culture on Information Commissioner**  
The former FOI boss told senators he had sought to engage with the issues closely in his time at the OAIC, and was able to create a more focused and stable working environment.

But Mr Hardiman claimed Ms Falk had stood in the way of change.

"The broader culture of the OAIC, including cultural bent away from FOI functions was entirely a product of the [Information Commissioner's] leadership.

"Try as I may I simply could not change that culture and it's impact on the performance on the FOI functions."

But Mr Hardiman said he had not been able to change resourcing and cultural issues, and claimed that the Information Commissioner Angelene Falk had not prioritised resourcing transparency functions."

He claimed Ms Falk was not supportive of the "three commissioner model" the agency had, nor effective resourcing for the FOI branch.

"In relation to the issue of resource allocation, it became increasingly apparent to me that the [Information Commissioner], following a communication with the former government had decided that she would never in any substantial sense allocate additional OAIC resources to the performance of the FOI functions."

"Rather only appropriated funds which had been formally earmarked by the government of the day for FOI purposes would be allocated to the performance of the FOI functions."

"In relation to cultural issues, I could not change the fact that the [Information Commissioner] was not committed to the three commissioner model, rather the [Information Commissioner] was committed to a model under which she would remain, in effect, a super privacy commissioner with a subordinate rather than equally independent co-commissioner for FOI.

"The IC had expressly said to me following the 2022 federal election that she was concerned about the possibility of and did not want the appointment of a separate privacy commissioner.

"It was also made abundantly clear to me that the [Information Commissioner] was only desirous of an appointed FOI Commissioner if the [Information Commissioner] could control that commissioner particularly insofar as they might say or do anything that called into question prior stewardship of the role."

### **More to come.**

[Guardian Australia live blog](#)

[1h ago](#) 09.51 AEST

Christopher Knaus

### **Staffing shortages contributed to huge backlog in FOI cases: former commissioner**

**Leo Hardiman**, the former freedom of information commissioner, is continuing evidence to a Senate inquiry.

He is not holding back.

Hardiman said that in September last year, he met with his boss, the head of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, **Angelene Falk**, to point out the "screamingly obvious issue" that he did not have enough staff to get through a massive backlog in FOI review cases. He said there were obvious structural changes that should have been made to resolve the issue earlier.

*I think it caused visible shock in the information commissioner. There was silence at that statement and a visible moving back in the chair at the suggestion. I concluded that conversation by saying to the IC that if it was not possible to get more resources... I felt*

*that I would likely have to resign my appointment because I just would not be able to fulfill my statutory obligations.*

Hardiman:

*My recollection is that in the next conversation that I had, that was after I returned to Canberra... the information commissioner said to me that I should not be involving myself in these matters, in other words in the restructure, thinking about the structure of the team, how to manage the workload, how to increase work flows within the IC review caseload.*

Greens senator **David Shoebridge** responded:

*You were the FOI commissioner, how could you not do that?*

Hardiman:

*I was flabbergasted.*

[47m ago](#) 10.01 AEST

Christopher Knaus

### **'Attempts to manhandle me': former FoI commissioner**

Circling back to former freedom of information commissioner, **Leo Hardiman**, who is speaking to a Senate inquiry.

Hardiman says there were “attempts to manhandle me” from the outset after his appointment in early 2022.

*I would say from the very outset there were attempts to manhandle me. Demands that I would tell the [information commissioner, Angelene Falk] absolutely everything I was doing. I wouldn't make a decision about FoI matters without discussing them with her first.*

He told the Senate that weekly meetings with Falk devolved into a one-way conversation and then said he had never encountered a “person like the information commissioner” in his 30-year career.

*With hindsight, I look back at this and I regret that I wasn't assertive enough in the relationship in the beginning. That said, I have never encountered a person like the information commissioner or her approach to relationships of that kind in my 30 years as a Commonwealth public servant.*

[30m ago](#) 10.19 AEST

Christopher Knaus

**Concerns over 'false narrative' in federal court case against Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

A Senate inquiry probing Australia's FoI system has heard concerns that the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner may have allowed a "false narrative to be given to the federal court" while defending itself in a case brought by former senator **Rex Patrick**.

Patrick is suing the OAIC in the federal court over its delays in processing applications for reviews of government FoI decisions.

Former FoI commissioner **Leo Hardiman** said the OAIC was promulgating a narrative to the court that it could do nothing about the lack of resources it had for its FoI work, and that only the government could earmark funds for the FoI function. Hardiman said he raised concerns about the narrative, because the OAIC itself had the power to divert departmental funding towards FoI.

He was asked whether the OAIC "corrected the narrative to the court". Hardiman said he was unaware of whether that occurred.

Greens senator **David Shoebridge** said:

*I am deeply disturbed about the agency allowing a, I'll use my term, false narrative to be given to the federal court to defend Mr Patrick's legal proceedings. I assume that is a matter that troubles you as well?*

Hardiman responded:

*Yes. I did sort of press the issue in my meeting with the legal officers in the OAIC and the deputy commissioner. My understanding is that the issue was raised with counsel, I wasn't involved in any of these discussions, but my understanding is that it was raised with counsel, and the message that came back to me was 'it's not a risk, and it's not going to be raised, and we're not worried about that issue'. And it was kind of left there.*

09.46 AEST

Christopher Knaus

### **FoI members felt 'complete overwhelm': former commissioner**

The former freedom of information commissioner **Leo Hardiman** said there was a feeling of "complete overwhelm" among senior members of the FoI branch, that senior members of the OAIC treated FoI as of secondary importance, and that cycles of panic gripped the office ahead of Senate estimates hearings and key points during a federal court case brought by former senator **Rex Patrick**. He said there was a practice at senior levels of developing narratives designed to put the office's performance on FoI in the best light while distracting from real issues.

Hardiman said the cultural problems were "entirely a product" of the leadership of the information commissioner, Falk.

*Try as I may, I simply could not change that culture and its performance on the FOI functions.*

He said he introduced structural changes but realised that the FoI review backlog would not be reduced without more staffing.

*Resignation was an incredibly difficult, in fact the most difficult decision of my career, to contemplate. but I could not, with the necessary sense of integrity, play the game of maintaining the status quo. Change was desperately required and it was not going to occur if I continued on.*

**OAIC - FOI**

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**From:** OAIC - Media  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 29 August 2023 11:43 AM  
**To:** FALK,Angelene; PIRANI,Toni; AGO,Rocelle; HAMPTON,Elizabeth; HARLOCK,Raewyn; DRAYTON,Melanie; ATTARD,Brenton  
**Subject:** RE: Media and social clips - FOI inquiry

Hello again

See below further coverage of the inquiry:

9 MINUTES AGO

## Former FOI Commissioner reveals watchdog failings, The Australian

JESS MALCOLM

The former FOI commissioner has blasted senior staff members working inside the FOI watchdog and suggested the agency is in chaos riddled with "significant" cultural issues.

In a submission to a Senate inquiry into Australia's freedom of information laws, Leo Hardiman revealed a series of issues inside the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner including that it maintained "unproductive" relationships with other government agencies.

Mr Hardiman, who quit in May after less than a year in the role, suggested senior management became overwhelmed with "cycles of panic" in the lead up to Senate estimates appearances and repeatedly shifted responsibility for the agency's failures to the staff of its FOI branch.

He warned the agency's staff also view its FOI functions as "being of secondary importance to its privacy functions" and that there was a practice at the most senior level of developing "narratives" designed to present the agency's performance in the best possible light while distracting from engaging with important issues.

Mr Hardiman said he attempted to introduce structural changes within the agency but that change would not be made without a boost to staffing levels.

"Resignation was an incredibly difficult, in fact the most difficult decision of my career, to contemplate. but I could not, with the necessary sense of integrity, play the game of maintaining the status quo," Mr Hardiman said.

"Change was desperately required and it was not going to occur if I continued on."

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 28m

The Law Council is our next witness. They're telling us a quirk of the law that allows requirements to publish information released under FOI to be satisfied just by noting you can get info by email instead of having docs directly available - that seems an obvious reform



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262

**David Shoebridge**

@DavidShoebridge

Law Council saying we need to err on the side of making the FOI system simpler, quicker and cheaper. There is a question of balance here where currently the focus is on extensive decisions from the Information Commissioner where the focus for most applicants is the documents

11:22 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **128** Views

1 Repost 3 Likes

**Amy Kiely** (she/her)

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**From:** OAIC - Media**Sent:** Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:59 AM

**To:** FALK,Angelene <Angelene.Falk@oaic.gov.au>; PIRANI,Toni <Toni.Pirani@oaic.gov.au>; AGO,Rocelle <Rocelle.Ago@oaic.gov.au>; HAMPTON,Elizabeth <Elizabeth.Hampton@oaic.gov.au>; HARLOCK,Raewyn <Raewyn.Harlock@oaic.gov.au>; DRAYTON,Melanie <Melanie.Drayton@oaic.gov.au>; ATTARD,Brenton <Brenton.Attard@oaic.gov.au>

**Cc:** OAIC - Media <media@oaic.gov.au>**Subject:** Media and social clips - FOI inquiry

Good morning

Please see below media and social media coverage of the FOI inquiry so far this morning.

- [‘Former FOI Commissioner Leo Hardiman blames Information Commissioner Angelene Falk for poor culture’](#), The Canberra Times (in attachment)
- Several items in [Guardian Australia live news blog](#) (in attachment)

Images below are linked to the posts.



**Paul Farrell**

@FarrellPF



I've never seen an opening statement like this at a Senate inquiry before. This is a devastating assessment of the leadership of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the FOI system... by it's owner recently departed FOI Commissioner [aph.gov.au/DocumentStore...](http://aph.gov.au/DocumentStore...)

9:59 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **1,804** Views

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**4** Reposts   **1** Quote   **8** Likes   **1** Bookmark

**Ariel Bogle**

@arielbogle



As well as a withering assessment of the Information Commissioner's apparent lack of dedication to FOI, it also contains a pretty neat summary of how government departments do their best to undermine the FOI process while 'pretending' to facilitate it.

n the agency side of the equation also con often incorrect) basis that an exemptio  
 ge extent these factors are in my view symhe information was such that refusal of  
 relate to the administration of the FOI Ac tions were applied even where there v  
 nevertheless disappointingly common ac needed to remain confidential to gove  
 applicants to try and resolve a request  
 contrary to the apparent purpose and obj ay have been happy to receive inform  
 administer the Act on the basis that acces d initially requested but no attempt ha  
 d only be granted if it was not possible to t outcome with the applicant (indeed, i  
 ons. The Act of course contemplates some; o was not even contemplated).  
 unless an exemption applies and it is appr new issues and/or exemptions as an IC  
 tion in the particular case to apply that ex  
 gencies to claim multiple exemptions to st chronic, in responding to the OAIC in th  
 y possibly could. helpful defensiveness.

**Paul Farrell** @FarrellPF · 54m

I've never seen an opening statement like this at a Senate inquiry before. This is a devastating assessment of the leadership of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the FOI system... by it's owner recently departed FOI Commissioner [aph.gov.au/DocumentStore...](http://aph.gov.au/DocumentStore...)

10:10 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **986** Views

Senator David Shoebridge is publishing to an [ongoing thread](#) about the inquiry:



**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 1h



Leo Hardiman the former FOI Commissioner has seen the system up close and tried to address the most serious concerns about delay, obfuscation, cost and a broken culture around FOI. He has concerns the FOI Commissioner doesn't have the powers or resources to actually do the job.



**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 1h



Leo Hardiman tells us he started in April 2022 and immediately encountered unproductive agency relationships, diversion of staff from FOI, constant reshuffles of staff, and focus on developing narratives re FOI management rather than doing the management itself



**David Shoebridge**  
@DavidShoebridge



Former FOI Commissioner Hardiman telling the inquiry the amount of funding allocated to FOI within OAIC was strictly the (insufficient) amount allocated directly by Government and this was much less than funding allocated to the OAIC corporate branch for example

9:13 AM · Aug 29, 2023 · **696** Views

**2** Reposts **9** Likes

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 1h

The former FOI commissioner is expressing serious concerns about the status of the role within the broader office of the Australian Information Commissioner - a distinct sense it was treated as a junior officer position despite its clear importance for broader democracy



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7



112

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 51m

Extraordinary evidence from the former FOI Commissioner.

We have heard how the FOI Commissioner was essentially not allowed to do his job, starved of resources and not given the independence needed in his statutory role.



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164

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 49m

There has also been very troubling evidence that a false narrative was presented to the Federal Court about resources - and that this was designed to defeat a court challenge by former Senator Rex Patrick.



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385

**David Shoebridge** @DavidShoebridge · 45m

Also note the OAIC has 7 people in the corporate communications team and only 22 in all of FOI! What priorities...



5



301

**Amy Kiely** (she/her)

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**OAIC - FOI**

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**Sent:** Tuesday, 29 August 2023 1:31 PM  
**To:** FALK,Angelene; PIRANI,Toni; AGO,Rocelle; HAMPTON,Elizabeth; HARLOCK,Raewyn; DRAYTON,Melanie; ATTARD,Brenton  
**Cc:** OAIC - Media  
**Subject:** RE: Media and social clips - FOI inquiry

Hello

Please see the latest media clips below and in the attachment.

- [‘Hardiman accuses information commissioner of FOI ‘spin’ and culture issues’](#), The Mandarin
- [‘Staff diverted from FOI despite long backlog: inquiry’](#), Australian Associated Press
- [‘Attempts to manhandle me’: ex-FOI head’s fraught relationship with info counterpart’](#), Crikey

Latest from Guardian Australia live blog:

**37m ago** 11.32 AEST

Christopher Knaus

Former FOI commissioner **Leo Hardiman** had told a Senate inquiry that agency head, information commissioner **Angelene Falk**, tried to intimidate him after publicly announcing his resignation in March. Hardiman issued a public statement at the time of his resignation, criticising the state of the FOI system and lamenting his lack of power to bring about change.

Following his statement, Hardiman said he caught the bus to Sydney to meet with Falk instead of flying, a practice he adopted to save money for his vastly under-resourced branch:

*When we went in there, I would say that her behaviour towards me was an attempt to intimidate me into spilling the beans about my resignation because she didn’t have control of this. She literally just stared at me, glared at me, would not take her eyes off me. She tried to gaslight me, put words in my mouth, and I just said ‘I am not discussing my resignation with you’.*

**Amy Kiely** (she/her)

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 Brisbane

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