



Our reference: D2026/010663

The Hon. Michelle Rowland MP
Attorney-General
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [REDACTED]

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) Statement of Intent

Dear Attorney-General

I am pleased to provide you with my Statement of Intent in response to your Statement of Expectations for the OAIC.

Since my previous Statement of Intent, my Office has significantly improved our regulatory capabilities and organisational efficiency, including a fit-for-purpose structure to support the three-Commissioner model, a new approach to complaints-handling, and a greater emphasis on regulatory intelligence and proactive disclosure of regulatory data. As reported in the past year, our performance particularly in case management efficiency and effectiveness has demonstrably improved notwithstanding increases in new and unfunded initiatives and regulatory responsibilities. The OAIC is well aligned with the current regulatory agenda and our advice to your Office and Department includes opportunities for greater productivity and effectiveness informed by recent and sustained externally driven increases in regulatory caseloads. I will ensure my Office continues to be a regulator of best practice.

In this mission, my fellow Commissioners and the staff of the OAIC look forward to working diligently and collaboratively with you and your Department to provide regulatory expertise to advance Australians' information access and privacy rights, ensuring that they are protected and upheld for all Australians. Our responsibilities will be delivered through the development of a 2026-28 whole-of-OAIC Strategic Plan.

I have also provided a copy of this statement to the Secretary of your Department and will publish a copy on the OAIC's website.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Elizabeth Tydd
Australian Information Commissioner

16 April 2026



Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

Statement of Intent – April 2026

This statement sets out my intentions as the Australian Information Commissioner regarding how the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) will meet the expectations outlined by the Attorney-General under the *Australian Information Commissioner Act (2010)* (AIC Act) in the Ministerial Statement of Expectations of 2026.

Overview

The OAIC is an independent statutory agency in the Attorney-General's portfolio. Our purpose is to promote and uphold privacy and information access rights and we are responsible for:

- promoting and enforcing compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act), including protecting individuals' personal information,
- protecting and upholding the public's right of access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act), and
- carrying out strategic information management functions within the Australian Government.

Additionally, almost 40 pieces of primary and subordinate legislation confer statutory responsibilities on the OAIC or require other bodies to consult us on privacy matters, including the Consumer Data Right, Digital ID, Digital Health, Social Media Minimum Age, Anti-Money Laundering, Telecommunications and Credit Reporting schemes.

The OAIC is committed to exercising our functions and powers in good faith and to the best of the OAIC's ability while ensuring they are delivered with a continued and strong focus on efficiency. We take a holistic, integrated and streamlined approach to protecting the information and privacy rights of Australians through a whole-of-OAIC approach.

Principles of regulator best practice

As an independent and contemporary regulator, we aim to embed and act in accordance with the Government's three principles of regulator best practice when conducting our operations.





1. Continuous improvement and building trust

The OAIC adopts a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving our performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence. We will continue to take a contemporary and proportionate approach to promoting and upholding Australia's privacy and FOI laws guided by four pillars in all aspects of our work.

			
Proactive	Proportionate	Purpose-driven	People-focused
We are proactive and adopt a risk-based, education and enforcement-focused posture.	Our approach is proportionate to prioritise our regulatory effort based on risk of harm to the community.	We are purpose-driven, focusing on harms and outcomes, and are driven by evidence and data.	Our work is people-focused to preserve expertise and talent, enabling us to make the best use of our resources and maximise opportunities for our people.

We will continually strive to innovate our practices by:

- Ensuring our external accountability policies and processes, such as our complaints process, are clear, accessible, and responsive;
- Maintaining trust with the public and regulated community by exploring new avenues to communicate our activities, priorities, and positions through new external publications alongside our well-established blog, newsletter, and direct communication channels;
- Learning from practices in other jurisdictions and other regulatory settings;
- Regularly reviewing and refreshing our priorities to be forward-focused and ambitious in how we meet the expectations set by government and the public.

Commissioner priorities				
<p>The OAIC develops annual Commissioner priorities as part of its corporate planning to coordinate activity across the OAIC.</p>	<p>FOI</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Promote Open Government to better serve the Australian community 2 Increase OAIC FOI regulatory and case management effectiveness 3 Uplift agency capability in the exercise of FOI functions 4 Make FOI compliance easier. 	<p>Privacy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Promote privacy in the context of emerging technologies and digital initiatives 2 Increase OAIC privacy case management efficiency 3 Embed a cohesive regulatory and enforcement strategy 4 Improve compliance through articulating what good looks like. 	<p>Enterprise</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Uplift our IT systems to be more effective and responsive to our contemporary needs 2 Effective operation of OAIC corporate functions 3 Enhance OAIC operational reporting. 	<p>Information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Data driven regulatory action – internal and external 2 Australian Public Service capability uplift 3 Rights preservation in new and emerging technologies 4 International leadership.

2. Risk based and data driven

The OAIC commits to managing risks proportionately, maintaining essential safeguards and leveraging data while also minimising regulatory burden by:

- Analysing information holdings and open-source intelligence to understand industry and operational trends and identify risks to support regulatory decision-making and action;
- Establishing and maintaining information sharing agreements with other regulators;
- Setting our Regulatory Priorities by assessing the regulatory environment, identifying emerging and serious harms, and monitoring risks and trends in non-compliance;

Regulatory priorities				
<p>The OAIC's regulatory priorities focus our work on areas of greatest impact and concern in both privacy and information rights, demonstrating our risk based approach to regulation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Rebalancing power and information asymmetries 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Rights preservation in new and emerging technologies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Strengthening the information governance of the Australian Public Service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Ensuring timely access to government information

- Deploying our regulatory tools in an escalating and proportionate manner, encouraging voluntary compliance through education and guidance to prevent harm, but confidently enforcing privacy obligations and information access rights when necessary;
- Maintaining compliance and enforcement policies and regulatory strategies that articulate our approach to risk, including for our specialist privacy regulatory roles such as the Consumer Data Right and Digital ID;
- Sharing data we collect about case management; notifiable data breaches and agency FOI statistics through public dashboards to elevate rights awareness and compliance.

Alongside this Statement of Intent, our Statement of Regulatory Approach also publicly articulates how the OAIC takes regulatory action and why. This Statement reflects the principles of the Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework, including commitments to minimise regulatory burden and costs together with risk identification and management.

3. Collaboration and engagement

Consistent with regulator best practice principles, the OAIC will seek opportunities to engage and consult genuinely with stakeholders, be receptive to feedback and diverse stakeholder views, seek to increase transparency in decision-making processes, and provide up-to-date, clear and accessible guidance and information to assist regulated entities with compliance.

We will engage with stakeholders by:

- Conducting and reporting against stakeholder feedback surveys to assess our performance through measurable data;
- Conducting an Australian Community Attitudes to Privacy Survey every three years to understand the expectations of the public and share insights with regulated entities and government decision-makers;
- Conducting another FOI Practitioners' Survey to help uplift agency capability in the exercise of FOI functions through identifying priorities such as updating guidance or establishing new education practices;
- Connecting with FOI practitioners and agency decision-makers through our Information Contact Officers Network alerts, our regular Information Matters newsletter, FOI Regulatory Update webinars, convening roundtables with senior leadership across the APS, and domestic and international participation in International Access to Information Day activities;
- Working with State and Territory counterparts to deliver the cross-jurisdictional study of community attitudes on access to government information;
- Continuing to consult stakeholders when developing codes, guidelines, and other enforceable and voluntary instruments within the Information Commissioner's power, including planned roundtables to consult with industry and other stakeholders on the Children's Online Privacy Code;

- Continuing to engage with regulatory partnerships such as the Digital Platform Regulators Forum and the AI Safety Institute to coordinate our resources efficiently and open important dialogue channels for regulatory intelligence;
- Continuing to engage in international forums to build cross-border partnerships on global regulatory issues.

The Government’s policy priorities and objectives

The OAIC is committed to contributing to the policy and priorities outlined in the Statement of Expectations.

As outlined under the ‘*Principles of Regulator Best Practice*’ heading above and the ‘*Regulatory reform agenda and regulator best practice*’ heading below, the OAIC will continue efforts to uplift its processes to enhance its performance, efficiency and financial sustainability; continue developing a capable, multidisciplinary workforce; and strive to take proportionate, appropriate and timely regulatory action reflective of our core statutory responsibilities. This will be achieved through activities including: a focus on ensuring that the OAIC operates with a whole-of-OAIC culture and capability approach; uplift projects operating in the enforcement and case management divisions; the OAIC’s risk-based and data driven approach; the delivery of the OAIC Learning and Development Strategy 2025-27, and OAIC’s activities under the ‘Continuous improvement and building trust’ best-practice regulator principle.

This management approach is informed by recent significant externally driven increases in regulatory demand from agencies and the community we serve.

Privacy in the online environment and emerging technologies

The OAIC will promote privacy in the context of emerging technologies and digital initiatives. We will raise awareness of privacy risks and provide guidance to individuals, organisations and agencies about how to protect personal information online, and will use coercive and compulsory powers when required. We intend to:

- Fulfil our Regulatory Priorities for 2025-26 which include “rebalancing power and information asymmetries” and “rights preservation in new and emerging technologies” and outline specific areas of focus of technology (e.g. artificial intelligence (AI)) and higher risk sectors (e.g. data brokerage);
- Deliver significant measures in the Tranche 1 reforms to the Privacy Act, such as the development of a Children’s Online Privacy Code and guidance on transparency in automated-decision making, directly improving the ability of Australians to manage privacy choices online and protections for children and other vulnerable groups;
- Continue to regularly publish guidance, engage in public events and media including Privacy Awareness Week, and engage with stakeholders to promote and advance online privacy protection and raise awareness of privacy risks;
- Build our capabilities to respond swiftly and effectively to new and emerging challenges in the digital sphere such as AI with a holistic approach to guidance;
- Identify opportunities for new technology to assist in driving new efficiencies and increasing the effectiveness of government services, such as the use of chatbots in complaint management and AI in FOI to conduct record searches, apply redactions uniformly, and identify efficiencies in systems, alongside the potential challenges.

Delivery, efficiency and innovation

The OAIC will continue to focus on delivery, efficiency and innovation in our practices, in line with the expectations set by the Attorney-General and the Government's productivity and efficiency agenda. In particular, the OAIC commits to the productivity measures delivered to the Minister for Finance in 2025 such as:

- A low-cost self-assessment tool for notifiable data breaches, beginning with a quick-response tool to assist entities with compliance, and potentially evolving to an automated process to assist the OAIC in triaging and closing matters based on risk;
- Promotion of first tier engagement between the community and regulated entities to resolve their disputes at first instance in a timely, cost-effective manner;
- Onboarding new external dispute resolution schemes to facilitate accessible and low-cost avenues for individual complaints;
- Encouraging adoption of the Information Publication Scheme to promote Open Government and aid innovation through greater availability of government held datasets.

Regulatory reform agenda and regulator best practice

The OAIC intends to support the Government's regulatory reform agenda through a contemporary regulatory approach. Key activities will include:

- Our Case Management Uplift Project which will enhance the effectiveness of our dispute resolution functions by modernising privacy and FOI complaint handling through organisational strategies, cross divisional opportunities, casework and process opportunities, and staff support and enablement;
- Enhanced industry engagement, public education and events, and clear guidance;
- Reducing duplication and streamlining compliance when developing or remaking Codes, legislative instruments, and voluntary guidelines by relying on the technology-neutral, flexible, and principles-based approaches rather than bespoke rules;
- Encouraging timeliness and improved agency performance in the exercise of FOI functions through continued publication of the agency FOI dashboard and launch of a new "FOI leaderboard" to rank agencies on agreed metrics.

Performance measurement and reporting

The OAIC's 2025-26 Corporate Plan sets out our key activities and performance measures for the 2025-26 to 2028-29 reporting years. These measures provide accountability on how our targets align with our purpose, how we assess our performance and how our performance is tracking against our targets. Reporting measures have been enhanced to ensure that the OAIC is reporting against its recent annual improvements in case management responsive to significant increases in demand. Financial reporting and management will continue to be enhanced to maintain a fiscally responsible approach that serves our jurisdictions and government priorities.

Our performance in 2025-26 will be included in the upcoming OAIC Annual Report which includes data-based evaluations of these activities. In addition, the OAIC will continue to report through to the Department of Finance on the progress of the OAIC's delivery of the efficiency-based commitments outlined in the Information Commissioner's letter to the Treasurer and Minister for Finance on 1 August 2025 and report results as required under the Commonwealth Integrity Strategy.

We are committed to continuous improvement including opportunities to review and further embed the regulator best practice principles in RMG 128 into our performance reporting.

Relationship with Minister and portfolio

As the Information Commissioner, I acknowledge the role the OAIC has in supporting you, as the responsible Minister, and the Government to respond promptly to issues that may arise in privacy and information access. I will provide accurate and timely advice on any significant issues that may arise.

The OAIC will also continue to work collaboratively with the Attorney-General's Department in developing any future work that may impact on the Government or the department's work. Under my direction, OAIC staff will continue to maintain an effective working relationship with relevant areas within the Attorney-General's Department, which is principally responsible for advising on the Government's policy around privacy and FOI.

The OAIC will continue to recognise and respect your role as the Minister responsible for operation of the Privacy Act, FOI Act and AIC Act and I appreciate your confidence in the OAIC and your support for our work, as expressed in your Statement of Expectations. I look forward to continuing working with your office and to support you as responsible Minister.