

Appendix 7: Freedom of information

Freedom of information statement

This statement is made in accordance with section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) and is correct as at 30 June 2004.

Subsections 8(1) and 8(3) of the FOI Act require Commonwealth agencies to publish the following information:

- the organisation and functions of the agency
- arrangements that exist for outside participation in agency decision making
- the categories of documents the agency possesses
- how people can gain access to information held by the agency.

Organisation and functions

This statement should be read in conjunction with the more detailed information contained in Chapter 2 of this report relating to the establishment, organisation, functions and powers of the Tribunal.

Arrangements for participation by persons outside the Commonwealth administration

The Tribunal holds regular liaison meetings with users of the Tribunal, including Commonwealth agencies whose decisions are commonly reviewed by the Tribunal, legal practitioners and other professionals who often appear before it, law societies, bar associations, legal aid offices, veterans' representative groups, welfare rights organisations and other representative bodies. In addition, relevant external bodies are consulted in the development of any significant changes in the Tribunal's case management processes.

Categories of documents

The Tribunal maintains the following categories of documents:

- case files on applications to the Tribunal or applications for examinations by designated persons, including all papers lodged or produced
- a computerised register of cases
- internal working documents and correspondence
- hearings lists and associated papers
- statistical information
- administrative and personnel files
- Tribunal decisions and reasons for decisions
- Personnel Directions to Staff
- Chief Executive Instructions under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*
- Registry Procedures Manual and other reference materials
- Practice Directions
- 'Getting Decisions Right' video (subtitled in eight languages, as well as in English)
- AATCAMS user manual
- 'AAT General Information' sound recording cassette for the visually impaired
- information pamphlets
- Client Service Charter.

The following categories of documents are available (otherwise than under the FOI Act) free of charge on request:

- Client Service Charter
- information pamphlets on the Tribunal's practice and procedures
- Practice Directions.

The following categories of documents are available (otherwise than under the FOI Act) for inspection upon request:

- public register of applications to the Tribunal
- list of enactments under which the Tribunal has jurisdiction
- Tribunal decisions and reasons for decisions
- Personnel Directions to Staff
- Chief Executive Instructions
- Registry Procedures Manual
- administrative arrangements between the President of the Tribunal and the Commonwealth Ombudsman to facilitate mutual referral of matters where each body may have jurisdiction
- AATCAMS user manual
- 'Getting Decisions Right' video.

The following documents are available for purchase by the public in accordance with arrangements with the Tribunal:

- copies of decisions and reasons for decisions
- Registry Procedures Manual.

In addition, AAT decisions can be accessed free of charge through the AustLII website (www.austlii.edu.au).

Facilities for access

Facilities for examining documents and obtaining copies are available at each District Registry. Documents available free of charge upon request otherwise than under the FOI Act are available from the Tribunal at each registry. The public registers are maintained in each registry.

Freedom of information procedures and initial contact points

Freedom of information contact officers will assist applicants to identify the documents they seek. The only officers authorised to deny access to documents are the Registrar and Assistant Registrar in the Tribunal's Principal Registry.

Inquiries concerning access to documents or other matters relating to freedom of information should be directed to the Registrar or the District Registrar in each Tribunal registry. Northern Territory residents should direct any inquiries to the Queensland Registry. Contact officers, addresses and telephone numbers are provided at the end of this annual report.