

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Finance and Administration

Budget Estimates Hearings, 25-26 May 2005

Question: F55

Outcome: 4, Output: 4.1.1

Topic: Access to Australian Government Information

Hansard Page: F&PA 129

Senator Lundy asked:

What are the policies and protocols for the timely and accurate publication of and access to government documents?

Answer:

Australian Government departments and agencies produce and disseminate publications and documents in a variety of media and distribution arrangements. Individual departments and agencies make decisions on the method or methods of dissemination of each publication or document that will best meet the target audience needs.

There are various policy requirements and guidance that apply to the production and dissemination of Australian Government publications and documents. These are set out in the following website resources:

- *Publications Guidelines* (<http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/guidelines>) – the guidelines are designed to assist Australian Government agencies meet their obligations for government publications - to produce high quality electronic and printed publications that meet the needs of the intended audience, are discoverable by interested parties, and meet legislative and policy requirements. A wide range of policies, principles, guidelines, tools, better practice advice and other reference material relating to the online and print environments exist. This guide focuses primarily on mandated government requirements specific to publications. The front page of this website is at Attachment A.
- *Australian Government Web Guide* (<http://www.agimo.gov.au/webguide>) – the Web Guide brings together Australian Government resources for website management (including the Minimum Guide to Website Standards and Online Service Obligations) and provides a rich source of information and links to other resources. It covers topics such as online publications and newsletters and preserving online publications and documents. The front page of this website is at Attachment B.

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- *The Online Information Service Obligations (OISOs)* (<http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/oiso>) - the OISOs ensure that information on Commonwealth agencies and agency services are available online. This is subject to considerations such as privacy, legal considerations, national security and the business interests of third parties. Compliance with OISOs guarantees the public access to a minimum level of information across all Commonwealth Government agencies. The OISOs are currently under review to ensure that they reflect current best practice. The front page and content from this website is at Attachment C.

There are also various legal requirements applying to the production and dissemination of Australian Government publications and document. Australian Government agencies must comply with relevant provisions of their enabling legislation and with relevant provisions of the various Acts relating to information management and dissemination. These include:

- *Archives Act 1983*
- *Audit Act 1901*
- *Copyright Act 1968*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Electronic Transactions Act 1999*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Public Service Act 1922* and Regulations
- *Parliamentary Papers Act 1908*
- *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* or *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies 1997*

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Attachment A

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the AGIMO (Australian Government Information Management Office) Publication Guidelines page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/guidelines>. The page header includes the Australian Government logo and the text "Australian Government Information Management Office" and "Publication Guidelines". Below the header, there are navigation links for "AGIMO Home | Site Home", "About", "Contact", and "Search". The main content area is titled "Introduction" and contains the following text: "This online guide provides information on Australian Government publication processes to assist Australian Government agencies meet their obligations in this area. It focuses primarily on **mandated** government requirements specific to publications. [more >]" and "The guidelines have been organised according to the publication lifecycle and can also be accessed via the left-hand navigation menu." Below this text is a table of contents with the following categories and links:

Specific Publication Types	Channel Selection	Content	Discoverability	Distribution	Archiving and Presentation
Annual Reports	Alternate formats	Branding	Accessibility	Deposit Schemes	Archiving
Documents Presented to Parliament	Online Obligations	Copyright Notice	Identification	Preserving Online Publications	
	National Symbols	Metadata			

At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Top of page", "© Commonwealth of Australia 2003", "Copyright", "Disclaimer", and "Privacy". The browser's status bar at the bottom indicates "Internet".

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Attachment B

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the 'Australian Government Web Guide' website. The address bar shows 'http://www.agmo.gov.au/webguide'. The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories: Planning, Structure and Design, Content, and Maintenance. The main content area is titled 'Tools and resources for website management' and contains sections for Planning, Structure and Design, Content, and Maintenance, each with a brief description. A right-hand sidebar includes a 'Tools' section with links like 'Show all topics' and 'Glossary of terms', a 'What's New' section with links to reports, and a 'Tell Us What You Think' section. The footer contains copyright information and a '© Commonwealth of Australia' notice.

Web Guide | Category List - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media
Address http://www.agmo.gov.au/webguide Go Links
Australian Government Australian Government Web Guide Home | About | Feedback
Search this guide Enter keywords go
Tools and resources for website management
Planning »
Structure and Design »
Content »
Maintenance »
Planning
Identify user and agency needs. Assess demand and value. Assess resources, capability and risk. Specify scope and develop business plans.
Structure and Design
Determine the look and feel of the product. Develop technical and functional specifications. Develop, test and implement the site.
Content
The information and services to be provided on the site.
Maintenance
Maintain, improve, redevelop and/or retire the site. Report on performance. Keep records.
Tools
Show all topics
Show all mandatory requirements
Glossary of terms
E-government policy documents
Australian National Audit Office reports
What's New
Measuring the Efficiency and Effectiveness of E-government (Australian National Audit Office)
Demand and Value Assessment (Australian Government Information Management Office)
Tell Us What You Think
This site has been developed for Australian Government agencies. We want your ideas for improving the site!
Top
Copyright | Privacy | Disclaimer | Accessibility | Site Map | © Commonwealth of Australia
Internet

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Attachment C

AGIMO | Online Information Service Obligations - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Mail Print

Address <http://www.agmo.gov.au/information/oiso> Go Links

Australian Government
Information Management Office

Home | About | Contact | My Account | Jobs | Search

Better Government | Better Information | Better Services | Better Business | Better Infrastructure | Better Practice | Resource Centre

Better Information > Online Information Service Obligations

Online Information Service Obligations (OISOs)

Project

Note: These are currently subject to review.

Introduction:

In April 2000 the Commonwealth Government released the [Government Online Strategy](#). The Online Information Service Obligations, (OISOs), form a part of this strategy.

OISOs ensure that information on Commonwealth agencies and agency services are available online. This is subject to considerations such as [privacy](#), legal considerations, national security and the business interests of third parties. Agencies should avoid posting information that is already available on the Internet and should link to existing information where available.

The Australian Government Information Management Office, has responsibility for OISOs and their ongoing development. As OISOs develop, this web page will continually be updated with useful examples of how agencies are complying with this component of the [Government Online Strategy](#).

Compliance with OISOs guarantees the public access to a minimum level of information across all Commonwealth Government agencies. For instance:

- All agency information included in OISOs should have quality [AGLS metadata](#) attached and be included in a compliant [Harvest Control List \(HCL\)](#). Compliance with these standards will enhance the access and discoverability for users of government information.
- Agencies need to be aware of the existing frameworks, advice and guidelines when preparing these documents to go online. Examples of these include:
 - [The Protective Security Manual \(PSM\)](#) issued by the Attorney General's Department;
 - [The Australian Communication-Electronic Security Instruction 33 \(ACSI 33\)](#);
 - [Better Practice Guide Internet Delivery Decisions-A Government Program Manager's Guide](#) (ANAO) (HTML) or download as [Adobe PDF](#);
 - [Guidelines for Commonwealth information published in electronic formats](#); and
 - [The Privacy Commissioner's Privacy Principles](#).
- Where Agencies have responsibility for multiple web sites it is not expected that all the web sites would provide access to the entire range of information falling under the OISOs. Agencies are to ensure OISO information is available at the most appropriate location after analysing their matrix_web' and stakeholders' information needs and the intent of the site, and are to provide links to subordinate or main sites as appropriate.

The OISOs are:

- 1 [Directory information covering contact details and services;](#)
- 2 [Annual reports, agency strategic plans and other public accountability-type publications;](#)
- 3 [Reports submitted to Parliament;](#)