

Northern Territory Treasury

# INFORMATION ACCESS POLICY

## POLICY

The Northern Territory *Information Act* gives the general public and interested parties the right to request access to government information (including personal information) held by Northern Territory Treasury, subject to applicable exemptions and fees. Treasury respects this right of access by operating in an atmosphere of honesty and openness and makes available to the public such government information as is reasonably possible.

The purpose of this document is to inform the general public, all stakeholders and staff of Treasury's procedures when dealing with access to information issues in a manner that does not interfere with the essential public interest, individual privacy or effective operation of Treasury. The document assists individuals who are considering whether to request information under the Act and outlines the conditions and fees that may apply when making a request for information.

Requests for information are initially reviewed by the Divisional Director, upon which the Deputy Under Treasurer or Assistant Under Treasurer makes the final decision. Under this policy, delegated decision-makers must comply with the Act in deciding whether to grant access to information and must provide the requested information unless it is exempt from release.

The *Information Act* and Information Privacy Principles are available at [www.nt.gov.au/lant/hansard/hansard.shtml](http://www.nt.gov.au/lant/hansard/hansard.shtml) under "Current Northern Territory Legislation".

This policy is subject to review by management from time to time.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Information Privacy Principles (IPPs)</b>	Principles for collecting and handling personal information by public sector organisations that are specified in the Schedule to the Act.
<b>Public Register</b>	A register kept by a public sector organisation under the Act that provides a description of the kinds of government information usually held. It specifies whether the information is available under another Act on payment of a fee, may be purchased by the public, or is distributed free of charge to the public.

---

## METHODS OF ACCESS

1. Treasury is required to publish information about its operations on an annual basis and makes this information available as follows:
  - Treasury website ([www.nt.gov.au/ntt/](http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/));
  - Annual Report (available on website or can be purchased from the Government Printing Office);
  - publications available for purchase (may be listed on the public register);
  - publications available free of charge (may be listed on the public register).

The Government information published as above is considered to be publicly available. Any documents already publicly available, including those that may be purchased at a fee, under other legislation or administrative processes are not relevant to the formal Access to Information request process, as it deals with requests for information that is not publicly available.

2. On its website, Treasury publishes a public register that provides a description of the kinds of government information usually held by Treasury. The register will help an applicant decide if Treasury is likely to have the information sought and specifies if it is available outside the formal Access to Information request process.
3. Government information that is not made publicly available may be requested through the formal Access to Information request process. All formal requests should be directed to the Information Officer.
4. Various types of access are available, depending on the form in which the information is stored, and may include:
  - inspection of documents;
  - copy of documents;
  - hearing and/or viewing audio and/or video tapes;
  - transcript of recorded document;
  - transcript of words recorded in shorthand or encoded form; and
  - document produced from computerised information.

Relevant information includes all forms of existing documents, including electronically-stored data and email.

Where Treasury is unable to grant access in the form requested, the applicant may (where appropriate) be given access in a different form.

- document listed as a primary source of identity which has expired within the last two years
- taxation assessment notice from the last year
- current Medicare card
- current entitlement card issued by the Commonwealth Government
- current telephone, electricity/water account or rates account with evidence of payment

If any *one* of the primary sources of identification listed is not available, *two or more* of the above secondary sources of identification is required as evidence.

2. If unsure about what proof of identity to provide, the applicant may contact the Information Officer for further advice.

## DECISIONS

1. Treasury will notify the applicant of the decision about the request as soon as practicable and within 30 days of Treasury receiving and validating the request.
2. Treasury will notify the applicant if a request is partially or fully refused, giving reasons for the decision and advising of the review rights.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For questions or concerns about the intent or scope of the policy, contact the Information Officer.

For phone and address details, refer to the Treasury website at [www.nt.gov.au/ntt/](http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/).

## LEGISLATION

A list of the legislation and policies relating to access to information is provided below. If further advice is required in relation to any specific legislation, inquiries should be directed to the Information Officer or the relevant agency responsible for enforcing compliance with the legislation.

Legislation and Related Policies	Agency Responsible
<i>Information Act</i>	Department of Justice
Northern Territory Government Records and Archives Management Standards	Northern Territory Archives Services
Public Sector Management Code of Conduct	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
Northern Territory Treasury Privacy Policy	Northern Territory Treasury
Northern Territory Records Management Policies	Northern Territory Treasury

---

## TIMEFRAMES

1. Upon receiving a written application, it is validated to ensure compliance with section 18 of the Act, which requires an application to:
  - be in writing;
  - specify the name of the applicant;
  - include sufficient details to identify the information;
  - specify an address to which correspondence regarding the application may be sent to the applicant; and
  - be accompanied by the application fee (if applicable).

Once the written application is validated and Treasury satisfies itself as to the identity of the applicant, it will respond to the applicant within 30 days.

2. Processing of the application cannot commence if any of the required information is not supplied or it does not comply with the Act. Work on a request begins only when it is sufficiently specific and clear; and where the application relates to government information, the application fee has been paid.
3. Where a request for information relates to a third party, Treasury will not provide access to information until consulting with the third party. In this instance the timeframe for completing a request is suspended whilst Treasury awaits a response from the third party. If the third party has not replied within 30 days of Treasury seeking the third party's views, Treasury may decide to provide access to the information.
4. If Treasury requests further details from the applicant to enable identification of the information sought, the response timeframe is suspended whilst Treasury awaits a response from the applicant. If the additional details are not received within 30 days of Treasury requesting them, the application is void.
5. If Treasury determines that it will require more than the 30 days prescribed to respond to a request or make a decision, it will contact the applicant to negotiate an extension of time.

## APPLICATION AND PROCESSING FEES

1. The *Information Act* Regulations provide for a standard scale of fees to be paid by an applicant, details of which are available under "Current Northern Territory Legislation" at [www.nt.gov.au/lant/hansard/hansard.shtml](http://www.nt.gov.au/lant/hansard/hansard.shtml).
2. There is no fee to applicants to apply only for access to personal information under the Act. However, charges may apply for the costs of services and materials applicable to viewing or reproducing the information sought.
3. Applicants who apply for access to non-personal information under the Act are charged a \$30 application fee. Additional processing fees may be applicable for the cost of the services and materials in response to the application.

- 
4. On receiving an application, Treasury will make an estimate of charges. Where charges apply, Treasury will notify the applicant of the estimate to find out whether to proceed with the application.
  5. Treasury may require an applicant to pay a deposit of \$25 where processing fees in relation to a request are estimated to be \$100 or less, or to pay 50% of the estimate if more than \$100. The balance has to be paid in full upon completion of the request and before the relevant information is made available.
  6. Treasury will refund that portion of a deposit that exceeds the actual charges levied.
  7. Treasury seeks to recover all fees and charges for services and materials relating to an application as per the standard debt recovery procedures.
  8. The applicant may apply to have the fee waived or reduced on the grounds of public interest or financial hardship, in which case Treasury will consider the applicant's circumstances in accordance with sections 156 (6) (a) and (b) of the Act.

## **PROOF OF IDENTITY**

1. Applicants need to provide proof of identity when making an application to access government information in accordance with the *Information Act*.

### **Primary sources of identification**

- birth certificate or extract
- current Australian passport
- current Northern Territory driver's licence
- learner's permit or provisional licence from the Northern Territory
- current document of identity issued by the Passport Office
- current defence force or police service ID card

Any *one* of the above forms of identification is acceptable.

### **Secondary sources of identification**

- Northern Territory proof of age card from the Motor Vehicle Registry (with photo and/or signature)
- current overseas passport with current entry permit
- naturalisation/citizenship/immigration papers issued by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
- current consular photo identity card issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs
- current student photo identity card (with signature)
- current driver's licence photo from another State or Territory
- learner's permit or provisional licence from another State or Territory

- document listed as a primary source of identity which has expired within the last two years
- taxation assessment notice from the last year
- current Medicare card
- current entitlement card issued by the Commonwealth Government
- current telephone, electricity/water account or rates account with evidence of payment

If any *one* of the primary sources of identification listed is not available, *two or more* of the above secondary sources of identification is required as evidence.

2. If unsure about what proof of identity to provide, the applicant may contact the Information Officer for further advice.

## DECISIONS

1. Treasury will notify the applicant of the decision about the request as soon as practicable and within 30 days of Treasury receiving and validating the request.
2. Treasury will notify the applicant if a request is partially or fully refused, giving reasons for the decision and advising of the review rights.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For questions or concerns about the intent or scope of the policy, contact the Information Officer.

For phone and address details, refer to the Treasury website at [www.nt.gov.au/ntt/](http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/).

## LEGISLATION

A list of the legislation and policies relating to access to information is provided below. If further advice is required in relation to any specific legislation, inquiries should be directed to the Information Officer or the relevant agency responsible for enforcing compliance with the legislation.

Legislation and Related Policies	Agency Responsible
<i>Information Act</i>	Department of Justice
Northern Territory Government Records and Archives Management Standards	Northern Territory Archives Services
Public Sector Management Code of Conduct	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
Northern Territory Treasury Privacy Policy	Northern Territory Treasury
Northern Territory Records Management Policies	Northern Territory Treasury