



Accountability



Freedom of information

The Registrar's website implements the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's model webpage, including a freedom of information (FOI) disclosure log and the Information Publication Scheme.

Since 2007–08 requests to the Registrar under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* have increased by 6,500 per cent. As a result the Registrar has had to divert an increasing amount of resources from other programs to meet the extra work.

In June 2016 the Australian Information Commissioner, on application by the Registrar, made a declaration that one particular person was a vexatious applicant. Following the declaration the number of FOI requests that can now be made by this person to the Registrar has been restricted for a period of 12 months.

Sixty-six FOI requests were made to the Registrar during 2015–16, compared to 49 FOI requests in 2014–15. Sixty-seven FOI requests and 68 requests for internal review were finalised in 2016–16.

Complaints about ORIC staff

ORIC responds to complaints about its staff and contractors in accordance with policy statement *PS-03: Complaints about the Registrar's staff and contractors*. During 2015–16, two complaints about staff and contractors were received, compared to seven complaints received the year before. All complaints have been resolved.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

In 2015–16 ORIC received three 'section 8' letters from the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Under the *Ombudsman Act 1976*, the Ombudsman requested information from ORIC to help investigate complaints made to the Ombudsman about ORIC. The Registrar responded to all issues raised in the Ombudsman's letters. The Ombudsman advised that no further investigations were warranted.

Legal services expenditure

The tables on the next page are a statement of legal services expenditure by ORIC for 2015–16. It complies with paragraph 11.1(ba) of the Commonwealth's *Legal Services Directions 2005*.

TABLE 18: Expenditure on legal services and legal service providers 2015–16

INTERNAL LEGAL SERVICES EXPENDITURE		\$ GST EXCLUSIVE
Total internal legal services expenditure		241,817.00
EXTERNAL LEGAL SERVICES EXPENDITURE		\$ GST EXCLUSIVE
Professional fees:		
Australian Government Solicitor		34,880.44
Minter Ellison		154,123.10
Total professional fees paid		189,003.54
Counsel briefs		12,060.14
Other disbursements on external legal services		13,239.78
Total external legal services expenditure		214,303.46

Note: Internal legal services expenditure was derived through estimates of the percentage of time spent by legally qualified staff on legal work. Expenditure was calculated using base salaries and overheads.

TABLE 19: Briefs to counsel 2015–16

NUMBER OF COUNSEL BRIEFED	
Number of male counsel briefed	2
Number of female counsel briefed	0
VALUE OF COUNSEL BRIEFS	
Value of briefs to male counsel (GST exclusive)	\$12,060.14
Value of briefs to female counsel (GST exclusive)	\$0