



Your review rights under the GIPA Act

Fact sheet

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The right to information system in NSW aims to foster responsible and representative government that is open, fair and effective.

You have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by government agencies about the release of information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act):

- a. a decision that an application is not a valid access application
- b. a decision to transfer an access application to another agency, as an agency-initiated transfer
- c. a decision to refuse to deal with an access application (including such a decision that is deemed to have been made)
- d. a decision to provide access or to refuse to provide access to information in response to an access application
- e. a decision that government information is not held by the agency
- f. a decision that information applied for is already available to the applicant
- g. a decision to refuse to confirm or deny that information is held by the agency
- h. a decision to defer the provision of access to information in response to an access application
- i. a decision to provide access to information in a particular way in response to an access application (or a decision not to provide access in the way requested by the applicant)
- j. a decision to impose a processing charge or to require an advance deposit,
- k. a decision to refuse a reduction in a processing charge
- l. a decision to refuse to deal further with an access application because an applicant has failed to pay an advance deposit within the time required for payment
- m. a decision to include information in a disclosure log despite an objection by the authorised objector (or a decision that the authorised objector was not entitled to object).

You generally have three review options.

Internal review

You have 20 working days after the notice of a decision has been posted to you to ask for an internal review by the agency that made the decision.

If a Minister or their personal staff, or the principal officer of an agency made the decision, you cannot ask for an internal review, but you can ask for an external review (see below).

The review must be carried out by an officer who is no less senior than the person who made the original decision. The review decision must be made as if it was a fresh application.

There is a \$40 fee for an internal review application. No fee applies for an internal review if the decision is a 'deemed refusal' because the agency did not process your application in time or the internal review is conducted because the Information Commissioner has recommended the agency reconsider its decision under section 93 of the GIPA Act. In this case, you cannot be charged any review fee.

The agency must acknowledge your application within five working days of receiving it. The agency must decide the internal review within 15 working days (this can be extended by 10 working days if the agency has to consult with a third party, or by agreement with you).

External review by the Information Commissioner

If you disagree with any of the decisions listed above, you can ask for a review by the Information Commissioner.

If you are the person applying for access to information, you do not have to have an internal review of the decision before asking the Information Commissioner to review it.

If you are not the access applicant, you must seek an internal review before applying for review by the Information Commissioner. However, if an internal review cannot be sought (if a Minister or their personal staff, or the principal officer of an agency made the decision), you can seek a review by the Information Commissioner.

You have 40 working days from being notified of the decision to ask for a review by the Information Commissioner.

On reviewing the decision, the Information Commissioner can make recommendations about the decision to the agency.

Note: You cannot ask the Information Commissioner to review a decision that has already been reviewed by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

External review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)

If you disagree with any of the decisions listed above, you can ask for a review by NCAT. You do not have to have the decision reviewed internally, or by the Information Commissioner before applying for review by NCAT.

You have 40 working days from being notified of the decision to apply to NCAT for review. However, if you have applied for review by the Information Commissioner, you have 20 working days from being notified of the Information Commissioner's review outcome to apply to NCAT.

For more information

Contact the Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC):

Freecall: 1800 472 679
Email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.ipc.nsw.gov.au