

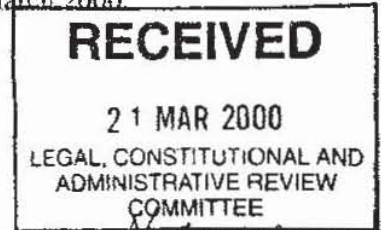
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The Research Director,
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee
Freedom of Information in Queensland

Discussion paper No. 1.



P5. "Have the basic purposes and principles of the FOIQ been satisfied?" NOT ENTIRELY

The basic principles of the FOIQ was to allow access to information and to allow amendments to be requested and made to incorrect, out of date or misleading information.

How well FOI works depends on the efficiency and impartiality of the FOI officer.
Left to do their job, I have found most FOI officers are helpful and courteous.

However.... The FOI officer has to go along with the policies of the body employing him.

If that body has something to hide then there is great potential to make the FOI request quite expensive. Or a long drawn out affair as in the case of requests for amendment of records.

Especially if the body has published and distributed derogatory but inaccurate statements about someone. Requests to amend such inaccurate, misleading statements on record are obviously not welcome when the public body of administration's own records prove their statements were NOT based on fact. (I have official records clearly showing an example of that.)

Such derogatory and misleading comments on official record have the potential to prove very harmful for the person being attacked (a report published and distributed as official facts).

There should be NO delay in requiring the body to either irrefutably prove their statements are correct...OR place the amendments as requested with the offending statements.
The document with the amendments then to be distributed as widely as the offending document.

YEARS SPENT AVOIDING MAKING JUSTIFIED AMENDMENTS is OUTRAGEOUS.

Any document that mentions a person or has some bearing on a person in any way, their job, their property, health or character should be readily accessible to that person. Not be misleading.

NB. The act is only as good as the person interpreting it.

The act can be interpreted in political terms rather than in real terms. The act can be abused.

It is too easy for an officer to play ducks and drakes with the Act to suit his purpose.
(Such as in a case where the body of public administration has something to hide.)

Page 6..."...that the FOIQ 'has been effective, but not as effective as it could be'
'FOI still has a great untapped potential to perform the role of catalyst in bringing public administration to a stage where it places a high value on the public availability of information'

IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION...
amendments MUST ACTUALLY be able to be made to inaccurate and misleading records.

Sandra Adams.