

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC  
Attorney General  
Minister for Citizenship  
Minister for Regulatory Reform**

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## **One stop shop for privacy and access to information**

The Offices of the NSW Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner will be brought together to form one agency, providing the public and the media with a one-stop shop on issues concerning access to Government information and documents.

The NSW Government has today introduced the Privacy and Government Information Legislation Amendment Bill, that will create a unified administrative hub for information management throughout the state, Attorney General, John Hatzistergos announced today.

Mr Hatzistergos said the laws follow a report by the NSW Law Reform Commission in 2009 recommending that functions relating to information and privacy be brought together into a single office.

"These reforms deliver on the NSW Government's commitment to drive cultural change throughout the Government towards greater openness and transparency with regard to the release of information while protecting the privacy of individuals," he said.

"When members of the public are seeking information relevant to their individual circumstances it is not always clear whether those applications should fit under privacy legislation or access to information laws."

"Bringing the two commissioners under the one roof will improve the efficiency and consistency of decision making on issues concerning access to information, which will benefit the media and the general public."

"Under these laws, a phone hotline will be established enabling people to find out the best way of accessing NSW Government documents or to discuss concerns about personal details being made public or incorrectly held," he said.

Mr Hatzistergos said that under the laws the Privacy Commissioner and the Information Commissioner will remain separate positions to ensure there are strong and unbiased advocates for both privacy and for access to information.

"The state's first Information Commissioner, Deirdre O'Donnell, was appointed on May 10, as part of the biggest overhaul of freedom of information in New South Wales in 20 years," he said.

"The Government Information (Public Access) Act will commence on July 1, heralding a new era of openness and accountability."

"Both the Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner will make sure government agencies are aware of their obligations under the laws, and will be able to review decisions agencies make about releasing information," he said.

Mr Hatzistergos said some further amendments to privacy legislation and the Government Information (Public Access) Act will be necessary to ensure the laws are complementary.

Any member of the public can contact the Information and Privacy Commissioners on 1800 INFOCOM (1800 463 626).