

Privacy Commissioner's 2016 annual report focusses on trust through accountability and transparency

28 November 2016

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards has released his third annual report since taking office in 2014.

The report highlights a variety of ways the office has helped to build trust between individuals and agencies that collect, hold and use their personal information, including:

- Working with agencies to develop breach notification processes and transparency reporting to enhance transparency and accountability;
- Advising public sector agencies on how to approach “big data” in a privacy-friendly way so those agencies can use the large data sets they hold without compromising individual privacy;
- Developing new tools and resources to make privacy more accessible for individuals.

Highlights

Information sharing

- Assisted with Approved Information Sharing Agreements (AISAs) for the Vulnerable Children's Hub and Gangs Intelligence Centre;
- Worked with a variety of agencies on informal information sharing – helping to find ways to share information within existing law.

Big data

- Advised on major “big data” projects: the Integrated Data Infrastructure, the Social Investment Unit and the Data Futures Partnership. We encouraged these projects to use privacy to increase the value of their data sets, particularly through the principles that deal with accuracy of information.
- Advised “big data” projects to avoid re-identification (which is when people in anonymous datasets can be identified by cross-referencing them against another dataset).

Transparency and accountability

- Collaborated with private sector organisations to publish a transparency report. This was a pilot project in which a number of companies reported how many requests for

customer information they had received from government organisations, as well as the outcomes of these requests. The agencies received a combined **11,799** requests, of which **11,349** were complied with.

Complaints and enquiries

- Responding to **7,783** public enquiries.
- Finished the year with **only 9% of complaints** files older than 6 months – and only **3% older than 9 months**.

Tools and resources

- Developing new tools and resources: AskUs, an online FAQ, and AboutMe, a tool to help facilitate peoples' requests for their own personal information;
- Developing two new online training modules: a guide to Approved Information Sharing Agreements and a guide to Privacy Impact Assessments;
- Saw **8,797** people register for existing online training modules, with **2,414** completing modules.

Outreach

- Released bi-yearly UMR survey results, indicating that **65%** of New Zealanders are concerned about privacy. This survey also found that people were more willing to have agencies share their personal information if there were opt-out mechanisms and strict controls on how the data was used.
- Held Privacy Week, with two Privacy Forums, both keynoted by UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Privacy Professor Joe Cannataci.
- Responded to **218** media enquiries.
- Delivered **98** speeches and presentations.

[Read the full report.](#)

ENDS

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