

ACARA AGENCY PLAN – INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

1. Introduction

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (**ACARA**) is a national agency set up to develop Australia's first national school curriculum from Foundation to Year 12, to administer the national assessment program and align this to the national curriculum, and to manage a national data collection and reporting program. ACARA was established under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008 (Cth)* (**ACARA Act**).

ACARA is an agency subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) (**FOI Act**) and is required to comply with the Information Publication Scheme (**IPS**) requirements. This agency plan describes how ACARA proposes to do this, as required by s8(1) of the FOI Act.

The rationale underpinning this federal government initiative is the recognition that public sector information is a national resource managed for public purposes. The IPS scheme encourages a proactive disclosure of ACARA's information. The aim is to reduce the need for the public to request information under the FOI Act.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this agency plan is to:

- assist ACARA in planning and developing its IPS entry; and
- show what information ACARA proposes to publish, how and to whom the information will be published and how ACARA will otherwise comply with the IPS requirements (s8(1)).

3. Objectives

This plan outlines ACARA's processes that will ensure that the information on ACARA's public website remains up to date and relevant.

4. Establishing and administering ACARA's IPS entry

The Chief Executive Officer is designated by ACARA as the senior officer responsible for leading ACARA's compliance with the IPS.

4.1 Establishing ACARA's IPS entry

The Chief Executive Officer, supported by the Board Secretary, the Senior Project Officer Legal and Compliance, a Project Officer and the IT team (together the **Project Team**), will establish ACARA's IPS entry.

The Project Team has developed an IPS information register, which records details of documents required to be published under s8(2) and 8(4). The IPS information register also facilitates conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2) (**WCAG 2.0**).

4.2 Administering ACARA's IPS entry

ACARA's ongoing compliance with the IPS will be coordinated by the Board Secretary, together with the Project Team.

The Project Team will engage with the Australian community about ACARA's IPS entry by:

- making IPS documents as easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable as possible;
- inviting members of the public to contact ACARA's Project Team to provide feedback on ACARA's IPS entry; and
- providing members of the public with contact details for the Project Team to obtain documents in another format or where they are not available for downloading from ACARA's website.

The Project Team will arrange for ACARA IPS documents, which are not available on the ACARA website, to be made available upon request.

ACARA may charge a person for accessing any IPS document which is impracticable to publish online. ACARA will generally not impose a charge where the reimbursement or incidental cost is lower than \$100.

5. IPS Information architecture

The IPS entry will be published on the ACARA website (<http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp>) under the following headings:

5.1 Required information

- Agency plan (ss8(2)(a));
- Who we are (ss8(2)(b) and 8(2)(d));
- What we do (ss8(2)(c) and 8(2)(j));
- Our reports and responses to Parliament (ss8(2)(e) and 8(2)(h));
- Routinely requested information and disclosure log (ss8(2)(g) and 11C);
- Consultation arrangements (s8(2)(f)); and
- Contact us (s8(2)(i)).

5.2 Other Information

- Our priorities s8(4);
- Our finances s8(4);
- Our lists s8(4);
- Our submissions s8(4); and
- Our policies s8(4).

5.3 Web architecture

To ensure that the ACARA IPS entry (and individual IPS documents) is easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable, ACARA has:

- published an IPS icon on the homepage of its website, which links to the IPS section of the website;
- designed and published an IPS entry point on its website;
- wherever possible, provided online content in a format that can be searched and copied;
- provided a search function for its website; and

- established a feedback channel for seeking and responding to community feedback about whether ACARA's IPS entry (and individual IPS documents) is easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable.

ACARA will, so far as possible, make its IPS information holdings available for reuse in unmodified format only.

To conform to WCAG 2.0, ACARA has:

5.3.1 Approach to accessibility by commencement of the IPS

- planned that, as soon as reasonably practical, all online information that is published under the IPS conforms with WCAG 2.0; and
- stated on the dedicated IPS section of its website that where a person requires an alternative accessible format of a document that it will be made available on request.

5.3.2 Approach to accessibility after commencement of the IPS

- planned that, as soon as reasonably practical, all information newly published under the IPS on ACARA's website conforms with WCAG 2.0.

6. Information required to be published under the IPS

ACARA will publish documents required to be published under the IPS (s8(2)) in the IPS section of the website at <http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp/ips>
ACARA will publish these documents under the following headings:

Major Heading - Required information

Agency plan

Who we are

- ACARA Act
- Board membership
- Executive

What we do

- Portfolio Budget Statement 2011 – 2012 – <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Pages/home.aspx>
- Australian Curriculum - <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Home>
- NAPLAN - <http://www.nap.edu.au/>
- My School - <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Our reports and responses to Parliament

This will include:

- ACARA's annual reports (2008-2009 and 2009 - 2010) tabled in Parliament.
- ACARA's "Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee – Inquiry into the administration and reporting of NAPLAN testing".
- Redacted ACARA Board minutes (beginning from Meeting Number 25).
- Routinely requested information and disclosure log.

Consultation arrangements

This will include information about ACARA's consultation process and how and to whom a comment may be submitted by members of the public, where ACARA undertakes public consultation on a specific policy proposal.

Contact us

This will include a telephone number and a general email address to access ACARA's information or documents under the FOI Act. ACARA has established a generic telephone number and email address that will not change with staff movements.

7. Other information to be published under the IPS

ACARA will publish on the IPS section of its website other information that it holds (in addition to the information published under s8(2)), taking into account the objects of the FOI Act (s8(4)).

Other information will be published under the following headings:

Heading - Other information

Our priorities – refer to ACARA Act.

Our finances - this will include financial information relating to procurement procedures and tendering.

Our lists – membership of advisory panels.

Our submissions - this will include ACARA's "Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee – Inquiry into the administration and reporting of NAPLAN testing".

Our policies - this will include relevant ACARA corporate policies.

In addition, in the IPS section ACARA will publish a link to other publications not covered by these headings, including fact sheets, speeches and guidelines. A list of documents that are not practical to publish online will also be provided.

8. IPS compliance review

ACARA will review and revise this agency plan at least annually, which will coincide with the ACARA's strategic planning process.

ACARA will review the operation of its IPS from time to time and at least every five years, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner about IPS compliance review (better practice guidance material to assist agencies to comply with the IPS – to be published in the Information Commissioner's regulatory capacity).

ACARA will adopt the following criteria for measuring its performance:

- *Agency plan* – has ACARA published a comprehensive plan for its IPS compliance?

- *Governance and administration* – does ACARA have appropriate governance mechanisms in place to meet its IPS obligations, including a sound information management framework?
- *IPS document holdings* – has ACARA reviewed its document holdings to decide what information must be published under s8(2) and information that can be published under s8(4)? Is the ACARA's IPS entry accurate, up-to-date and complete?
- *IPS information architecture* – does ACARA have a publication framework in place and has it taken the necessary steps to ensure that information in its IPS entry is easily discoverable and accessible?
- *Agency compliance review* – does ACARA have appropriate processes, systems and resources in place to monitor and review its IPS compliance and to make necessary improvements to its IPS implementation?