07 October 2002
Call for Territorians to mark historic FOI day

The Territory’s first comprehensive Freedom of Information and Privacy regime will be debated in the Territory Parliament on Tuesday.

Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne said the passage of the Information Bill will mark a historic moment for the Territory, and will be especially fitting following the support for the laws from the Territory community.

"The Labor Government opened up the debate on freedom of information laws and the response from the community through the public consultation phase was indicative of the their desire to see these laws implemented for Territorians.

"The Government took on comments from the public consultation and respectively made amendments to the bill, particularly in the areas of retrospectivity and exemption mechanisms.

"Retrospectivity has increased from 5 years to 10 years and the ability to issue exemptions has been tightened by removing that role from Government agency CEOs and placing it with the Chief Minister," Dr Toyne said.

Aside from freedom of information principles the Information Bill also contains:

- privacy principles to protect personal information
- the appointment of an independent Information Commissioner to oversee the use of the Act
- legislative guidelines for keeping and managing government records and information

"The Territory’s Information Bill is really state of the art for its combination of rights of access to government and personal information and privacy provisions, and also for the way it deals with the challenges of electronic information," Dr Toyne said.

"Territorians should mark Tuesday 8 October, as a historic day in their calendars for the fact from that day they will finally enjoy the same rights other Australians have taken for granted.

"FOI laws are a key plank in the Martin Government’s good governance policy and I will be immensely proud as Attorney General to lead the passage of the Information Bill.

"I would like to publicly thank the Department of Justice and officers in Government agencies who have worked tirelessly on the Information laws, Territorians who made submissions on the draft legislation, and those that voted for FOI."

This page is maintained by the Office of the Chief Minister