Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne today announced the appointment of Peter Shoyer as the first Information Commissioner for the Northern Territory.

The Information Act, to commence operation by July 1 this year, stipulated the appointment of an independent Information Commissioner to oversee the use of the act.

Dr Toyne said the appointment is a significant milestone for the Territory following on from the passage of the Territory’s state-of-the-art Information Bill late last year.

"Mr Shoyer comes from the position of Assistant Information Commissioner in Queensland and has considerable experience in the implementation of freedom of information legislation.

"Furthermore, he has played a key role in the development of informal resolution strategies for FOI disputes and the promotion of understanding of FOI and privacy principles in that State.

"I am confident Mr Shoyer’s background and skills will lend to the successful implementation of the new freedom of information and privacy legislation in the Territory," Dr Toyne said.

Mr Shoyer holds a Master of Laws, Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Economics, and has practised as a Solicitor for over 15 years.

Mr Shoyer has worked with the Office of the Queensland Information Commissioner for the past 8 years, including 6 years as Assistant Commissioner, and previously worked as a Solicitor to the University of Queensland and in private practice.

Dr Toyne said the implementation of the new Information Act is on track with a lot of preparatory work already underway.

"To date an Information Act Implementation Team has been working with Government agencies to train staff in the requirements under the new legislation, and to establish new information and record keeping procedures.

"In addition, Information Officers have been nominated from all agencies to assist in the implementation of the new Act," he said.

"The new Information Commissioner will now lead the implementation process and work closely with agency staff to build an understanding of the freedom of information and privacy principles," Dr Toyne said.

Other responsibilities of the Information Commissioner include:
conducting independent reviews of agency decisions about access to government information,
conducting independent reviews of agency decisions on amendments of personal information, and
responding to complaints about breaches of information privacy principles.

The position of Information Commissioner is independent and statutory to ensure the workability and integrity of the freedom of information and privacy laws.

The Information Commissioner was selected following national and local advertising and a recruitment process managed by the Department of Justice. The appointment is for 5 years with Mr Shoyer to commence duties on 3 March 203.

The Information Commissioner and office will be co-located with the Office of Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.

The Territory’s Information Act, incorporating Freedom of Information, privacy principles and record keeping provisions, was passed in the Territory Parliament in October last year, following extensive public consultation.

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