

Clear Privacy Communications

Guidance for Northern Territory public sector organisations

Individuals have a right to know why your public sector organisation (PSO) is collecting, using and disclosing their personal information.

Under the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs), organisations are required to tell individuals how they keep their personal information private and secure. In particular, IPPs 1, 2 and 4 require organisations to let people know how they manage the personal information they collect, handle and keep secure.

Clear communication about information privacy is vital for developing trust with citizens, and allows them to give meaningful consent. Making information readily available and easy to understand can benefit an organisation's reputation, and help mitigate potential privacy complaints in which a misunderstanding may arise about how personal information is managed.

Tips for clear privacy communications

Use plain, simple English

Try to make your privacy communications easier to understand:

- use short, clear sentences with an active voice and familiar words;
- avoid legal jargon or terminology that requires specialist knowledge – if that's unavoidable, provide links to meaningful explanations;
- use bullet points to highlight key points; and,
- break the flow of large slabs of text with an image that relates the concept of the message you are trying to convey.

Real time privacy communications

Privacy communications are more effective when provided at the time personal information is collected. Consider using design features such as hover boxes, or provide links to privacy statements at relevant points throughout an individual's interaction with your organisation, rather than in the fine print.

Use a layered approach

A layered approach can assist organisations to communicate clearly where there is a lot of information to convey. This means providing a clear summary of key points (the first layer), and linking to a more detailed explanation where relevant (the second layer). Some organisations use a third layer for FAQs or links to technical explanations.

Public sector organisations have a range of obligations regarding privacy communications. If you have any questions you can contact your Privacy Officer, IT specialist or get in touch with the Office of the Information Commissioner.



Disclaimer

The information in this document is general in nature and does not constitute legal advice

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