

## Freedom of Information Part II Statement

The Loddon Mallee WRRG is a Statutory Authority under the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, and so is a 'Government Agency' under the terms of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act).

The FOI Act allows the public a right of access to documents held by the Loddon Mallee WRRG. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

Accordingly, it is required to comply with the procedures that have been prescribed under which members of the public may gain access to information held by Government Agencies.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by the Loddon Mallee WRRG. This comprises documents both created by the Loddon Mallee WRRG or supplied to the Loddon Mallee WRRG by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes.

The FOI Act allows the Loddon Mallee WRRG to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include:

- cabinet documents
- some internal working documents
- law enforcement documents
- documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice
- personal information about other people
- information provided to the Loddon Mallee WRRG in-confidence.

From 1 September 2017, the Act has been amended to reduce the Freedom of Information (FOI) processing time for requests received from 45 to 30 days. However, when external consultation is required under ss29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, the processing time automatically reverts to 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by the Loddon Mallee WRRG, under section 49A of the Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

### **Making a request:**

FOI requests can be lodged online at [www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://www.foi.vic.gov.au). An application fee of \$30.10 applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material time consuming.

Access to documents can also be obtained through a written request to the Loddon Mallee WRRG's Executive Officer, as detailed in s17 of the FOI Act.

When making an FOI request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing, and clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought.

Requests for documents in the possession of the Loddon Mallee WRRG should be addressed to:  
Executive Officer  
Loddon Mallee WRRG  
PO Box 12  
BENDIGO CENTRAL VIC 3552

There were no requests received under the FOI Act 1982 during the reporting period 2020-2021.

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act; regulations made under the FOI Act; and [www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://www.foi.vic.gov.au).