



Australian Government

Repatriation Medical Authority

INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Agency plan

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INTRODUCTION

The Repatriation Medical Authority and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

1. The Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) is an agency subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) and is required to comply with the Information Publication Scheme (IPS) requirements.
2. This agency IPS plan is required by s 8(1) of the FOI Act and describes how the RMA proposes to do this.

Consultation on RMA IPS Plan

3. In order to seek comments on the plan it will be published on the RMA website. Consultation will also be promoted through communication with stakeholders.

WHAT IS THE RMA?

4. The RMA is an independent statutory agency established under Part XIA of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA).
5. It consists of a panel of five practitioners eminent in fields of medical science. One of their number must be a person having at least 5 years experience in the field of epidemiology¹.
6. Their role is to determine Statements of Principles (SOPs) for any disease, injury or death that could be related to military service, based on sound medical-scientific evidence. The SOPs state the factors which "must" or "must as a minimum" exist to cause a particular kind of disease, injury or death.
7. SOPs are legislative instruments for the purposes of the *Legislation Act 2003*.
8. The staff necessary to assist the RMA consists of persons engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999* and made available to the RMA by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs². The staff are managed by the RMA Registrar.
9. The RMA is part of the Veterans' Affairs portfolio.

Review of RMA Decisions

The RMA's decisions are generally reviewable by the Specialist Medical Review Council, a body set up for that purpose pursuant to Part XIB VEA.

¹ s196L VEA

² s196T VEA

RMA's decision making process

10. The RMA's decisions, including the determination of SOPs, are guided by its evaluation of the sound medical-scientific evidence³ available to it, primarily epidemiological studies, about a particular kind of disease, injury or death.

FOI Act - IPS

11. The RMA has responsibilities in relation to the IPS under the FOI Act.
12. The agency plan describes how the RMA proposes to implement and administer the IPS in respect of its own information holdings, by addressing:
 - the administration of the RMA's IPS contribution
 - information architecture
 - information required to be published
 - access to published information
 - compliance review
 - continuing the culture of community engagement established by the RMA.
13. The RMA will continue to build and foster a culture within the agency, in which appropriate proactive disclosure of its information holdings is embraced, leading to successful implementation and administration of the IPS. This is in recognition that public sector information is a national resource managed for public purposes.

PURPOSE OF AGENCY PLAN

14. The purpose of this agency plan is to:
 - assist the RMA in planning and developing its contribution to the IPS
 - facilitate public consultation about that contribution
 - show what information the agency proposes to publish (referred to as the IPS information holdings), how and to whom the information will be published and how the RMA will otherwise comply with the IPS requirements⁴.

OBJECTIVES OF AGENCY PLAN

³ s5AB VEA

⁴ See s 8(1) FOI Act

15. The RMA's objectives are to outline appropriate mechanisms and procedures to:
- manage the IPS information holdings
 - proactively identify and publish all information required to be published (s 8(2))
 - proactively identify and publish any optional information to be published (s 8(4))
 - review and ensure on a regular basis that information published under the IPS is accurate, up to date and complete (s 8B)
 - ensure that information published under the IPS is easily discoverable, understandable, machine-readable, re-useable and transformable
 - ensure satisfactory conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2) (WCAG 2.0)⁵
 - measure the success of the RMA's IPS contribution by reference to community feedback and compliance review processes
 - adopt best practice initiatives in implementing and administering the RMA's contribution to the IPS.

ESTABLISHING AND ADMINISTERING THE RMA'S IPS CONTRIBUTION

16. The Registrar of the RMA is designated by the RMA as the senior officer responsible for leading the RMA's compliance with the IPS.
17. The Registrar is responsible for establishing and administering the RMA's IPS. The Registrar will be assisted by other staff as required.
18. To prepare an IPS register, it will be necessary to:
- audit documents currently published on the RMA website (www.rma.gov.au) and identify the documents that will form part of the IPS from 1 May 2011
 - create a list of IPS documents (including those not already published on the RMA website)
 - publish the IPS documents on the RMA website
 - compile a set of hard copy IPS documents that are not published on the RMA website

⁵ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (W3C Recommendation 11 December 2008) ; <http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/>

- identify any IPS documents that are not accurate, up to date or complete and ensure any particular IPS document which is not accurate, up to date or complete, is revised by 1 May 2011.

IPS INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

19. The RMA will publish its IPS information holdings on its website on or before 1 May 2011 (except where this is impracticable).

Publication Headings

20. The IPS information holdings that are available on the RMA website, will be published under the following headings:
 - Agency plan (ss 8(2)(a))
 - Who we are (ss 8(2)(b) and 8(2)(d))
 - What we do (ss 8(2)(c) and 8(2)(j))
 - Our reports and responses to Parliament (ss 8(2)(e) and 8(2)(h))
 - Routinely requested information and disclosure log (ss 8(2)(g) and 11C)
 - Consultation arrangements (s 8(2)(f))
 - Our Contacts (s 8(2)(i)).

IPS Website

21. To ensure that the IPS information holdings (and individual IPS documents) are easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable, the RMA will:
 - publish an IPS icon on the homepage of its website, which will link to the IPS section of the website
 - wherever possible, provide online content in a format that can be searched, copied and transformed
 - publish a sitemap for its website once its size necessitates a sitemap to help individuals identify the location of information published under ss 8(2) and 8(4)
 - provide a search function for its website
 - provide an alert service to notify subscribers of new publications under the IPS or other developments in relation to the RMA's contribution to the IPS
 - seek and respond to community feedback about whether the RMA's website and information holdings are easily discoverable, understandable and machine-readable.

22. The RMA will, so far as possible, make its IPS information holdings available for reuse on open licensing terms.
23. Where the RMA has deposited or published IPS documents under a scheme such as the Commonwealth Library Deposit, the RMA will publish on its website information about the deposits (including links where available).

INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE PUBLISHED UNDER THE IPS

24. The RMA will list documents required to be published under the IPS (s 8(2)) in the IPS section of the website at www.rma.gov.au.
25. The RMA will publish these documents under the following headings:

Agency plan

Who we are

- This will include an organisation chart and information about statutory appointments.
- For statutory appointees, the RMA will publish the name of the person appointed, the length or term of appointment, the position to which the person is appointed (and particulars of the position) and the provision of the Act under which the person is appointed.

What we do

- This will outline the functions and decision making powers of the RMA including links to the Statements of Principles and Reasons for Decision otherwise published on the website. The section will also include a number of documents providing information about how the RMA undertakes its functions.

Our reports and responses to Parliament

- This will include the full text of the RMA's annual reports for the year ending 30 June 2017, and the 3 preceding years, as tabled in Parliament.

Routinely requested information and disclosure log

- This will include information in documents to which the RMA routinely gives access in response to FOI requests.
- These documents will be identified in the RMA's disclosure log published under s 11C FOI Act.
- This will also include advice that s 196I VEA applies to permit the release of information. Such releases occasion no charge.
- Any request for any document not on the website or any request for any altered format may incur a charge not exceeding the costs of supplying same.

Consultation

- This will include information about how and to whom a comment may be submitted by members of the public, where the RMA undertakes public consultation on a specific matter.

Contact us

- This will include the name, telephone number and an email address for a contact officer, who can be contacted about access to the RMA's information or documents under the FOI Act. The RMA has generic telephone numbers and email addresses for this purpose that will not change with staff movements.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED UNDER THE IPS

26. The RMA will publish on the IPS section of its website other information that it holds (in addition to the information published under s 8(2)), taking into account the objects of the FOI Act (s 8(4)).
27. The provision of that optional information will be assisted by a link to the Department of Veterans' Affairs website which set out the procurement, email and internet usage, harassment, maternity leave and workplace diversity policies applicable to the whole portfolio.
28. In addition, in the IPS section the RMA will publish a link to other publications not covered by these headings, including papers and speeches of RMA members.

ACCESSIBILITY UNDER THE IPS

29. The RMA will ensure that all online information it is required to publish under the IPS (s 8(2)) conforms with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2) (WCAG 2.0).
30. The RMA's dedicated IPS section of its website will provide documents in searchable pdf format unless they are scanned images or out of date. These documents will be made available in alternative accessible formats on request, on contact with the Registrar.

IPS COMPLIANCE REVIEW

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