



Australian Government

Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

INFORMATION HANDLING POLICY

Introduction

1. A key role of the Office of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (“the Office” or “we”) is to receive complaints from concerned residents regarding proposed or operating wind farm facilities, large scale solar farms (5 MW or more), energy storage facilities, such as pumped hydro, large-scale batteries (1MW or more) and new major transmission projects. The Commissioner also works collaboratively with all levels of government, scientists, industry and the community to facilitate the adoption of best practices related to the development and operation of these facilities. Complaints are received, accepted and handled in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy at www.aeic.gov.au.
2. All information received by the Office for the purposes of handling complaints will be managed by the Office in accordance with this policy, the Commonwealth *Privacy Act (1988)* and the Privacy Policy of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water available at: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/about/commitment/privacy> .

Information we collect and store

3. We may record relevant information provided by complainants, including:
 - their name, address and contact details (including telephone and email)
 - complaint information and evidence provided in support of the complaint
 - the history of the complaint, including relevant correspondence
 - the outcome being sought in relation to the complaint
 - other information provided by the parties in relation to the complaint.
4. For each enquiry or complaint that we deal with, we may keep a record of:
 - our contact with the resident and the other parties to the complaint
 - any verbal or written authority given for another person to act as a nominee on behalf of the resident
 - correspondence we have received and sent
 - information received from the resident and the other parties
 - issues raised and information discussed, both internally and externally.
5. We will make every effort to protect this information from unauthorised disclosure. We record information, in electronic form, in a secure Complaint Management System and may also keep hard copies of documents.

How we will disclose information

6. We may share information provided to us and other information relating to complaints with a range of third parties. Reasons and examples include:
 - a) Information may be shared with another party to a complaint in order to give them an opportunity to respond to the information where, in our view, the sharing of information will help in the resolution of the complaint. As part of lodging a complaint, complainants will need to give consent to our discussing the complaint and sharing the information they provide with other parties relevant to the complaint. We may also ask the other party to contact you directly to engage in a discussion or convene a meeting with you to allow the other party to better understand the issues and/or directly resolve the complaint.
 - b) We may also provide information to government agencies where the complaint is best handled by referral to a state or local government department or agency in accordance with our Complaints Handling Policy.
 - c) We may also provide some complaint and enquiry information to other organisations where we need to report issues to an external agency or regulator, the police or a law enforcement agency. We will not necessarily ask for permission to share information in these circumstances.
7. If we need to disclose personal information with a third party in a way that is not contemplated by the Commonwealth *Privacy Act (1988)*, our Complaints Handling Policy or by this policy, we will seek your consent prior to sharing the information.
8. Where a party has received information disclosed by the Office, the third party is required to handle and store the information consistent with any privacy laws that apply to them.

Confidentiality

9. In dealing with a complaint, we may facilitate information sharing between the parties to assist in seeking a resolution or outcome.
10. Information exchanged between parties during meetings arranged by the Office is not confidential, unless the parties agree otherwise. If a party asks to keep specific information confidential, the party will need to clearly identify such information and the conditions for disclosure of the information to any other party. Parties may agree to enter into confidentiality agreements during the Complaint Handling Process, however the Commissioner will not be bound by such agreements.
11. When a party requests that information is kept confidential, we will inform them of any impact this may have on the resolution of the matter. Such restrictions may impact on our ability to further assist with the resolution of the complaint.

Privacy

12. Some of the information that we collect and store may contain personal information. We will handle personal information consistent with this policy, with applicable Australian privacy laws and the Privacy Policy of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

13. If a complainant does not wish for the Office to use or disclose personal information, the complainant will need to make this clear to us when providing the information. We may advise the complainant if we think that this will limit the way in which we can assist them with their complaint.
14. Regardless of whether or not a complainant or person consents to any disclosure of personal information, we may disclose the information to relevant third parties where permitted under the *Privacy Act (1988)*. These third parties may include other parties to the complaint, law enforcement bodies, or a House or Committee of the Australian Parliament.

Requests for the release of information from our records

15. When a third party requests information from our records, and the circumstances are not covered by this policy, we will be guided as to whether the information should be released by applying the *Freedom of Information Act (1982)*.