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Scottish Information Commissioner Newsletter: Spring 2006

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Consultations, inquiries and reports



[The Commissioner's response to the Scottish Executive consultation – FOI one year on](#) (which closes on 31 March 2006) is available to download from our website as a pdf file (64KB).

[The Scottish Parliament Finance Committee](#) has issued a call for evidence for its Accountability and Governance Inquiry which is looking at the growth in the number of commissioners and regulators in Scotland, their accountability, cost and remits.

[The Scottish Parliament's Procedures Committee](#) has launched its report on the Procedures Relating to Crown Appointments

The UK Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee visited the Commissioner on 20 March as part of its Inquiry into the Operation of the [UK] Freedom of Information Act: one year on. The Committee was particularly interested in the Commissioner's experience of reviews, case management, staffing and his funding relationship with the Scottish Parliament.

The UK Parliament's Public Administration Committee has begun an Inquiry into "the role and independence of ethics and standards watchdogs". The Commissioner has been invited by the Committee to participate in an informal discussion on 25 April in Edinburgh.



Annual Report 2005



The Commissioner's second annual report was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 22 February 2006. It covers the first year of full operation of FOI legislation in Scotland and provides an overview of the Commissioner's experience of the first 12 months enforcing FOISA and the EIRs.

[The Annual Report can be downloaded from our website](#) in pdf format - please note, this is a large file and may take some time to download (2.24 MB)



Guidance on Councillors and FOI

The Commissioner decided last year in the case of Mr Shields and the Scottish Parliament (Decision 008/2005) that MSPs are not covered by the definition of The Scottish Parliament in Schedule 1 of the Act. Following discussion with local authorities to establish whether the same principle might be applied to councillors, a new FAQ has been published - "[Are information requests made to councillors valid under FOISA?](#)"



Campaign for FOI training event - Glasgow

The Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland is providing a half-day training course "Scottish Information Commissioner Decisions: what do they mean in practice?" in Glasgow on Wednesday 31 May 2006. The training will be lead by Maurice Frankel, Director of the Campaign.

Details of the training course and a booking form can be found in pdf format at this link:
<http://www.cfoi.org.uk/pdf/glasgowcourse.pdf>



Visit from the Chief Information Commissioner for India

The Commissioner welcomed a visit to his office last week by Mr Wajahat Habibullah, Chief Information Commissioner, who directs the Indian Central Information Commission.

Mr Habibullah provided great insight into his own work and the challenges that he faces. The Indian Right to Information Act 2005 came into force in October of the year it was enacted and Mr Habibullah himself came into post only at the end of that month. Indian public authorities are obliged by the legislation to appoint a Public Information Officer who is responsible for meeting the authority's obligations. PIOs are personally liable for compliance and can be fined 250 Rupees per breach of the legislation. Public authorities are required to publish their FOI request monitoring information in a similar way to the Canadian FOI legislation. There is an upfront fee of 10 Rupees for each information request.

The Central Information Commission's website is at <http://cic.gov.in/>



Recruitment



We're currently advertising 5 vacant posts:

- A new Head of Operational Management post responsible for strategic management of the office financial, staff and knowledge resources.
- Three Freedom of Information Officers to manage a varied caseload of investigations.
- A new Administrator post with special responsibility for case handling.

[Application packs are available online to download.](#)

The closing date for applications is 18 April 2006 at 12 noon.



Queensland Commissioner launches FOI site

The Queensland Information Commissioner has launched a website which covers the whole of the Queensland government for matters relating to FOI. This site provides guidance to applicants on how to make an FOI application and includes FAQs. The site also advises users of what other pieces of legislation they can use to access information.

The site can be accessed at www.foi.qld.gov.au.



Email problems at OSIC

The Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner has been experiencing problems with its e-mail system and was unable to send or receive e-mails between Monday 27 March and Friday 31 March. The problem has now been resolved, but we are still unable to access any e-mails sent to us between those dates. If you contacted us during that period, please re-send your e-mail.

We apologise for the inconvenience this has caused and thank you for your patience if you have been waiting to hear from us. Remember that if your enquiry is urgent, you can contact us by telephone: 01334 4646410.



More news...

- Previous editions of the Commissioner's newsletter can be found on the [newsletter archive page](#). The [diary of speaking engagements](#) for the Commissioner and his team is updated regularly.
- An archive of [Press releases, speeches and presentations](#) is also available.

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