

# Public submissions are invited on the Exposure Draft of the Freedom of Information Bill 2013

## Community Consultation – 28 November 2013 to 1 February 2014

Shane Rattenbury MLA, ACT Greens Member for Molonglo, has proposed legislation to substantially change the way that ACT Government information is made public, based on the premise that Government information is public information unless there is a really good reason for it to be kept confidential.

The legislation is called the Freedom of Information Bill 2013 (the Bill). It has been presented as an exposure draft so that the public can be involved in a discussion and make comments that will be considered on the legislation. It is important to consider the public's views on which information should be available to the public and which information should be confidential to Government.

The Bill repeals the existing *Freedom of Information Act 1989* and creates a new modern freedom of information (FOI) scheme. The Bill recognises that a public right to government information is essential for an effective democracy and it is designed to make information held by the government much more accessible to the community.

The Bill creates a statutory right of access to information held by the Government and sets up a clear framework for determining the public interest in the disclosure or non-disclosure of information. Information will only remain confidential where it is on balance contrary to the public interest to release the information; that is there must be a clearly identifiable harm to the public interest from the release of the information that outweighs the public interest in disclosure and necessitates non disclosure.

The Exposure Draft of the Freedom of Information Bill 2013 is open for comment for 9 weeks and submissions will be accepted until **1 February 2014**.

All comment received by that date will be considered in preparation of the final version of the Bill.

The Exposure Draft of the Freedom of Information Bill and a comprehensive Explanatory Statement are available at the 'exposure drafts' section of the legislation register at: [www.legislation.act.gov.au](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au)

For more information please call 6205 0005 or email [rattenbury@act.gov.au](mailto:rattenbury@act.gov.au). Submissions should also be sent to [rattenbury@act.gov.au](mailto:rattenbury@act.gov.au).

All submissions will receive an acknowledgement of receipt, and will be considered confidential unless otherwise indicated.

If you do not want your submission published or would like it published without your name please indicate this. If you do not clearly indicate otherwise, it will be assumed that your comments can be made public.