

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title:	Freedom of Information Officer
Business Unit/Department:	Freedom of Information (FOI) Unit
Division:	Health Information & Performance
Award/Agreement:	Health & Allied Services, Managers & Administrative Workers (Victorian Public Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement
Classification:	Grade 2 – Level 1 to Level 5 (HS2 to HS 21)
Reports To:	Release of Information (ROI) Lead
Direct Reports:	N/A
Date Prepared/Updated:	27 November 2025

Position Purpose

The FOI Officer is responsible for the efficient, accurate, and timely processing of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*, Office of the Victoria Information Commissioner (OVIC) guidelines, and organisational policies and procedures. This role supports the achievement of statutory timeframes through effective record management, internal consultation, and well-reasoned decision recommendations, including the application of relevant exemptions. This role also supports continuous improvement in FOI processes, assists with reviewing complaints and provides operational support to the FOI team, including staff training, system maintenance, and leave coverage for the Release of Information Lead.

Business Unit Overview

The Freedom of Information Unit (FOI Unit) sits within the Health Information and Performance division and plays a critical role in providing access to records held by Western Health (WH). The unit provides a customer-focused service and is responsible for administering requests under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*.

The Unit manages all stages of the FOI process, including request assessment, decision-making, invoicing, document release, records management, and maintenance of public FOI information on WH's website. Requests are processed in line with statutory requirements and timeframes, and any FOI-related complaints or inquiries from the OVIC or the Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC) are investigated and responded to in a timely manner.

The Health Information and Performance Division sits within the Strategy, Partnerships and Corporate Governance Directorate. The Division has close ties to the Digital Health and Digital Technology Services Divisions and is primarily responsible for the management, governance and utilisation of the organisations data and information assets. It ensures that information, analysis and insights required to support the organisation in its provision of best care to patients is delivered efficiently and effectively using contemporary tools and processes, and that the operational processes required for proficient corporate and medical records management, clinical coding, data governance and activity-based funding are optimised. In addition,

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the Division is responsible for ensuring that health service data reported to the Department of Health complies with all applicable requirements and business rules. The Division has 104 FTE and an operating budget of \$14M. It has staff located at Footscray, Sunshine, Williamstown and Bacchus Marsh Hospitals, Melton Health and Community Services and the Mid-West Area Mental Health Service. The departments within Division that are independently managed are: • Performance Reporting and Analytics • Business Intelligence • Clinical Coding Services • Record Services (incorporating the FOI unit) • Data Governance and Compliance • Mental Health - Health Information Services
Key Responsibilities • Process FOI requests accurately and within statutory timeframes, in accordance <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Vic) and internal processes, applying relevant exemptions and supporting well-reasoned decision making. • Manage FOI request records by maintaining accurate and timely updates in the FOI management system in line with documented policies and procedures, enabling efficient tracking and processing of requests. • Conduct FOI request processing in accordance with OVIC guidelines, practice notes and templates enabling consistency, compliance and best practice to be achieved in this area. • Identify and provide feedback to the ROI Lead on opportunities for process improvement efficiencies and risk mitigation within FOI operations. • Assist with investigating complaints and queries regarding FOI Requests and inquiries from OVIC, the HCC and internal channels (e.g Riskman) • Support the induction, training, and ongoing development of FOI Officers, including providing on-the-job guidance and assistance as required. • Collaborate with the ROI lead to coordinate internal consultations and liaise with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to Medical Records, and Legal Services, to support the effective resolution of FOI and non-FOI information requests. • Provide leave cover for the Release of Information Lead as required. • Assist the FOI Officer with preparation of documents for release and system updates during busy periods. • Provide support to staff within all Record Services departments as appropriate. • Travel to any of the Western Health sites as required In addition to the key responsibilities specific to your role, you are required to deliver on the Key Organisational Accountabilities which are aligned with the Western Health strategic aims.
Key Working Relationships Internal: • Release of Information Lead • Other FOI Unit staff • Medical Records • Clinicians and Clinical Unit Managers • Patient Liaison Officers • Legal Services staff • Radiology Department • Pathology Department External: • Office of the Victorian information Commissioner • Health Complaints Commissioner • Victoria Police

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- Law Firms
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Public
- Insurers

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- Experience in a public health records related role (such as FOI, health information, patient complaints)
- Detailed understanding of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic) including practical working knowledge of the FOI Requests statutory processes and the role of OVIC
- Familiarity with the health information privacy protections under the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic) and the Health Privacy Principles (Schedule 1 of the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic) and the general protections in relation to personal information under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Demonstrated ability, or ability to rapidly learn hospital computer systems and have a good working knowledge of the Microsoft Office package.
- Document management and records management experience
- Collaborative and proactive working style

Desirable:

- Resource and process workflow planning experience
- Completion of OVIC training modules in relation to privacy and FOI legislation
- Complaints resolution experience
- Medico Legal Experience
- Commitment to continuous improvement in the management of FOI Requests

Additional Requirements

All employees are required to:

- Obtain a police/criminal history check prior to employment
- Obtain a working with children check prior to employment (if requested)
- Obtain an Immunisation Health Clearance prior to employment
- Report to management any criminal charges or convictions you receive during the course of your employment
- Comply with relevant Western Health clinical and administrative policies and guidelines.
- Comply with and accept responsibility for ensuring the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures
- Fully co-operate with Western Health in any action it considers necessary to maintain a working environment, which is safe, and without risk to health
- Protect confidential information from unauthorised disclosure and not use, disclose or copy confidential information except for the purpose of and to the extent necessary to perform your employment duties at Western Health
- Safeguard children and young people in our care, by ensuring that your interactions are positive and safe, and report any suspicions or concerns of abuse by any person internal or external to Western Health
- Be aware of and comply with relevant legislation: Public Administration Act 2004, Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations 2017), Fair Work Act 2009 (as amended), Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025, the Privacy Act 1988 and responsibilities under s141 Health Services Act with regard to the sharing of health information, the Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes, Part 5A and 6A Family Violence Protection Act 2008, Safe Patient Care Act 2015, Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022
- Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and other Western Health employment guidelines

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General Information

- This role is not based at any particular site and travel to all Record Services sites will be required.
- Redeployment to other services or sites within Western Health may be required
- Employment terms and conditions are provided according to relevant award/agreement
- Western Health is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing for its employees a work environment which is free of harassment or discrimination. The organisation promotes diversity and awareness in the workplace
- Western Health is committed to Gender Equity
- Western Health provides support to all personnel experiencing family and domestic violence
- This position description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work that is to be performed by the person appointed to the role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. Western Health reserves the right to modify position descriptions as required. Employees will be consulted when this occurs
- Western Health is a smoke free environment

I confirm I have read the Position Description, understand its content and agree to work in accordance with the requirements of the position.

Employee's Name: _____

Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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