

Re: Independent Review of FOI

Dear Dr Solomon,

We realise the terms of reference may preclude official inclusion of this email in your review however we feel it is still important to make our views known.

Our opinion is that FOI has, in the last 10 years, been sabotaged overtly by bureaucrats who believe they are the overlords of public information. Their greatest accomplices are politicians who have systematically neutered FOI laws and general access to government information. Bureaucrats actually use the FOI laws to hide information on behalf of their political masters and therefore curry favour with them. It is a nasty and undemocratic scenario.

We have reverted to the old newspaper tactic of developing contacts and sourcing leaks of important information hidden by self-interested bureaucrats and politicians – always mindful not to be manipulated by the source of those leaks. It has come to the point where leaks are actually easier to get than official information which is barricaded by FOI and other anti-disclosure laws.

Another point that needs to be made is that, frankly the draconian and contradictory legislation covering Queensland Government departments such as Aboriginal Affairs and Communities and Disabilities are a greater threat to newspapers and newspapermen than most restrictions on FOI. Were these laws implemented on a day-to-day basis, most editors and court reporters would be doing time!

We would be happy to expand on these points should you feel inclined to seek further clarification.

Yours faithfully,

Bob Gordon
Editor-in-Chief

and

Dean Gould
Editor

Gold Coast Bulletin