Steering Committee Terms of Reference

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Since March 2014, the Tasmanian Government has committed to improving the openness and accountability of government decision-making through what has become known as the Government's Transparency Agenda.

One of the most significant initiatives of the Transparency Agenda is the Government's commitment to improving the consistency of how information can be accessed under Right to Information (RTI).

Through the Commission of Inquiry, victim-survivors have highlighted the complexities around seeking their own information from Government institutions, particularly with respect to a lack of consistency in process and decision-making.

In response, the Tasmanian Government committed $500 000 over two years to support the significant uplift of RTI capability and practice in the TSS delivering further on the Government's Transparency agenda. It will facilitate the provision of centralised training, building skilled RTI practitioners and will reduce key person dependencies in agencies. This will promote supported and consistent practice and deliver enhanced processes and systems for right to information.

2 FUNCTION

The Steering Committee exists to provide advice and facilitate delivery of the project outputs and achievement of project outcomes.

The objective of the RTI Uplift Project is to implement and deliver an improved right to information process across the whole of the Tasmanian State Service. This will contribute to improved government accountability and transparency by improving community access to government information.

The six key objectives of the RTI Uplift Project are to:

1. Create an applicant-centric experience by providing a consistent and fair RTI process that keeps the objects of the *Right to Information Act 2009* at the forefront.
2. Create a clear standard of practice for all officers involved with actioning an RTI request to ensure every decision under the RTI Act is informed by the same guiding policy and information and made within the same timeframes as much as possible.
3. Deliver dedicated training to RTI delegates to reduce single point dependencies.
4. Develop an end-to-end application management approach, which enables consistency in the applicant experience regardless of which public authority they are applying for information from.

5. Reduce inconsistency by ensuring every RTI delegate handling an application for assessed disclosure for a public authority or Minister engages with the applicant in the same manner and at the same critical points in the RTI application process.
6. Challenge the status quo and culture of relying on assessed disclosure to handle requests for information and identify opportunities for the proactive disclosure of information.
7. Champion for future change to ensure the long-term success of RTI

3   ROLES

Reporting to the Project Sponsor, the Steering Committee will:

- Actively support the project, promote its outputs and be an advocate for its outcomes;
- Be responsible for the Project Plan, expenditure and delivery of outputs;
- Ensure the scope of the project aligns with the agreed requirements of the Business Owner and key stakeholder groups;
- Provide the Project Team with support, guidance and feedback on project progress;
- Ensure that strategies to address potential risks have been identified, costed and approved, and that the risks are regularly re-assessed;
- Address issues which have major implications for the project, or which are out of the control or authority of the Project Manager;
- Control the project scope as emergent issues force changes to be considered;
- Reconcile differences in opinion and approach and resolve disputes arising from them;
- Be responsible for progressing any whole-of-government issues associated with the project;
- Support the decision making of the Chair.

4   RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual Steering Committee members must:

- Understand the strategic implications and outcomes of initiatives being pursued through project outputs;
- Appreciate the significance of the project for some or all major stakeholders and represent their interests;
- Be genuinely interested in the project and the outcomes being pursued in the project;
- Be an advocate for the project by being committed to and actively involved in pursuing the project's outcomes;
- Make every effort to attend scheduled meetings and, if not able to attend, inform the Chair before the meeting is conducted;
- Ensure that all project documentation has been read prior to attending a meeting;
- Have authority or delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of their Division/Department and in accordance with their role.

In practice, this means Steering Committee members:

- Hold the appropriate delegation or authorisation to make decisions and act;
- Ensure the needs of stakeholders are accounted for in the project's execution;

- Help balance priorities and resources;
- Provide guidance to the Project Team and users of the project's outputs;
- Consider ideas and issues raised;
- Monitor the progress of the project;
- Check adherence of project activities to the Agency's Project Management Framework.

5 EXPECTATIONS

Members of the Steering Committee can expect:

- That each member will be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner;
- To be given reasonable time to make key decisions;
- To be alerted to potential risks and issues that could impact the Plan as they arise;
- Open and honest discussions.

6 MEMBERSHIP

The Steering Committee will consist of:

Member and BaU position	Agency/Organisation	Knowledge, influence, and skill contributed to the committee
Director, Office of the Secretary	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Lead Sponsor/Chair
Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Business Owner/Co-Sponsor/Deputy Chair
Director, Office of the Secretary	Department of Justice	Member/Interagency subject matter expert
Principal Officer Right to Information	Ombudsman's Office	Member/Subject matter expert
Director, Policy and Delivery Division	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Member/Policy adviser
General Manager, Legal Services	Department of Health	Member/Interagency subject matter expert
Manager, Legal Services	Department for Education, Children and Young People	Member/Interagency subject matter expert
Service Delivery Manager	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Member/Change management adviser

The membership term is for the duration of the project, which ends on 30 June 2024.

7 CHAIRPERSON

The Chair shall convene the project Steering Committee meetings.

If the designated Chair is not available, then the Chair will delegate an alternative Steering Committee member (referred to as the Deputy Chair) to be responsible for convening and conducting that meeting. The Deputy Chair is responsible for informing the Chair as to the salient points/decisions raised or agreed to at that meeting.

The Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services is the Deputy Chair.

8 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Steering Committee shall meet every three weeks initially with the possibility of extraordinary meetings when necessary to deal with emerging issues or priorities. Should it be required, the Steering Committee Chair may agree to consider out-of-session action.

The Steering Committee will transition to meeting monthly after initial project milestones are met. The Chair of the Committee will determine when this transition should occur based on advice received from both the Steering Committee and the Project Team.

9 AGENDA ITEMS

All Steering Committee meeting agenda items and any associated papers will be provided by the Project Manager by one week prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The Chair has the right to refuse to list an item on the formal agenda, but members may raise an item under 'Other Business' if necessary and as time permits.

10 MINUTES AND MEETING PAPERS

The format of the project Steering Committee meetings shall be as minutes.

The minutes of each Steering Committee meeting will be prepared by a Project Team member.

Full copies of the minutes, including attachments, shall be provided to all Steering Committee members no later than two weeks following each meeting.

By agreement of the Committee, out-of-session decisions will be deemed acceptable. Where agreed, all out-of-session decisions shall be recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled Steering Committee meeting.

The minutes of each Steering Committee meeting will be monitored and maintained by the Project Manager as a complete record as required under provisions of the *Archives Act 1983*.

Steering Committee members will be kept updated of the progress of the project with a project status report at each meeting which provides an overview of how the project is tracking against each key criteria for project success.

11   PROXIES TO MEETINGS

Members of the Steering Committee shall nominate a suitable proxy to attend a meeting if the member has been seconded and another staff member is acting in their role. Proxies are not encouraged in the case of short-term absences. In this case, an attempt will be made to reschedule the meeting so that all members can attend.

12   QUORUM REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of three Steering Committee members is required for a meeting to be recognised as an authorised meeting for the recommendations or resolutions to be valid, with the condition that at least one of these members is the Project Sponsor or Business Owner, and there is representation from, at minimum, two agencies/organisations.