

**FREEDOM OF  
INFORMATION  
STATEMENT**

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Drafted</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Changes</b>
	1	M Hayward	P Hyde	Initial
2008 April 02	2	M Hayward	P Hyde	Minor changes suggested after review by Information Comm.
2010 May 10	3	M. Hayward	P. Millington	Contact Details changed to new location
2010 June 3	4	M. Hayward	P. Millington	Minor changes as indicated by CEO
2014 February 18	5		P. Millington	Contact details updated to new HRIS Manager; operational and strategic information updated

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

ChemCentre is a statutory authority formed under the Chemistry Centre (WA) Act 2007. ChemCentre is the leading analytical and chemistry facility in Western Australia. Through excellence in chemistry, the organisation plays a key role in matters of public and environmental health, justice, safety and security.

ChemCentre exists to provide essential chemical and forensic services to ensure a safe and prosperous Western Australian community. It applies technical knowledge to practical problems in order to achieve effective outcomes for communities, governments and industry. Within its areas of expertise, ChemCentre contributes to education and knowledge in WA; and operates a successful consulting business.

In recent years the organisation has become increasingly involved with issues concerning sustainable development, occupational health and environment protection – as well as a lead responsibility for the provision of emergency response capacity to deal with major chemical incidents and the threat of terrorist CBR (chemical, biological and radiological) activities.

While continuing to be a provider of high quality scientific services to research groups, ChemCentre also provides a key role in the well-being of our community by providing forensic services to the Western Australian Police and the State Coroner and scientific expertise and advice to other agencies tasked with protecting public health and managing environmental issues.

The structure of ChemCentre and the wide range of skills in forensic, organic, inorganic, residue, environmental, agricultural, soil, mineral, synthetic and regulatory chemistries make the organisation uniquely equipped to deal with the multi-faceted nature of the problems which these new and evolving tasks involve. For instance these skills are necessary to address the rapid identification of and characterisation of emergency response unknown chemicals and the issues associated with contaminated sites.

## 2. ENABLING LEGISLATION

ChemCentre is a statutory authority established by the *Chemistry Centre (WA) Act 2007 (the Act)*. This Act was proclaimed with affect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

Prior to this legislation, ChemCentre was a division within the then Department of Industry and Resources.

The *Chemistry Centre (WA) Regulations 2007*, which were subject to gazettal on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2007, came into affect on commencement of the Act, that is, on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

### **3. VISION AND MISSION**

#### ***Our Vision***

*ChemCentre: is recognised as Australia's leading provider of premium chemical and forensic services.*

#### ***Our Mission***

*ChemCentre: is the trusted provider of essential chemical and forensic services to ensure a safe and prosperous Western Australian community.*

### **4. ORGANISATION FUNCTION AND DECISION-MAKING FUNCTIONS**

A Board of Management is responsible for the overall performance of the functions of ChemCentre. Board members are appointed by the Minister for Science.

Members are appointed for terms determined by the Minister and may be reappointed for consecutive terms. The establishment of the Board is set out in Section 6 of the Act which provides for the appointment of seven members, one of whom is appointed as the chairperson and one as the deputy chairperson.

The Board normally meets monthly on the third Tuesday of the month. In addition, special meetings may be called from time to time to deal with particular issues.

In accordance with the provisions of the legislation, the Board has delegated day to day management responsibilities to the Chief Executive Officer. Some of these functions have been sub-delegated to others in the organisation as appropriate.

The Corporate Executive group meets fortnightly and includes the following ChemCentre staff members:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director Business and Corporate Services
- Director Forensic Science Laboratory
- Director Scientific Services Division
- Director Project Development
- Business Development Manager
- Media and Communications Manager
- Quality Manager
- Executive Assistant

Its role is to manage the delivery of quality services to clients of ChemCentre and drive the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Government and the Board.

While decisions regarding key business directions and management are made by the Board or Corporate Executive, Section Managers and Team Leaders are empowered to make day to day decisions regarding the ongoing delivery of their respective service responsibilities.

## **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICY**

ChemCentre conducts regular customer service surveys as a source of input to its ongoing review of performance of key business outcomes.

No formal public participative system exists to hear customer complaints or deal with policy issues.

## **6. DOCUMENTS HELD BY CHEMCENTRE**

ChemCentre has a number of publications freely available to the community. These include:

- Annual Report
- Statement of Corporate Intent; and
- Brochures, publications and web pages relating to the scientific services and research undertaken by ChemCentre.

ChemCentre also maintains standard statutory information and records required for the operation of the business and personnel functions. These fall into the following categories and while not published for general distribution, where appropriate, relevant summary information is published as part of ChemCentre's annual reporting compliance obligations:

- Policy, legislation and legal advice;
- Policy manuals and guidelines;
- Operational procedures;
- Personnel and human resource records;
- Finance and administration;
- Contracts;
- Collaborative research agreements;
- Agendas, papers tabled and minutes of meetings;
- Information, communication and technology;
- Office/business equipment and supplies;
- Advertising, promotion and media;
- Statutory compliance and risk management;
- Tenders and purchasing.

## **7. OPERATION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCESS**

It is the aim of the agency to make information available promptly and at the least possible cost, and whenever possible documents will be provided outside the freedom of information (FOI) process.

If information is not routinely available, the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* ('FOI Act') provides the right to apply for documents held by the agency and to enable the public to ensure that personal information in documents is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.

## **7.1 Legislative Requirements**

ChemCentre is required to comply with the provisions of the FOI Act of which the central features are:

- It confers upon persons a right to apply for access to information held by ChemCentre;
- It confers upon individuals a right to apply to ChemCentre for amendment to personal information; and
- It places obligations on ChemCentre to make publicly available certain information about its operations.

Consideration of all FOI applications at ChemCentre is dealt with in accordance with the FOI Act, FOI Policy and Practice Guide and FOI Implementation Guidelines prepared by the Office of the Information Commissioner.

## **7.2 ChemCentre FOI Coordinator**

ChemCentre has appointed a Freedom of Information Coordinator with responsibility for:

- Administering all aspects of the FOI Act;
- Ensuring statutory compliance; and
- Making all initial decisions concerning FOI applications.

## **7.3 How to Apply for Access to Information**

Before submitting an application, ChemCentre encourages applicants to discuss their request prior to submission. The discussion will also clarify the Freedom of Information process and determine what information and documents are freely available (at no charge).

Access applications have to:

- Be in writing;
- Give enough information so that the documents requested can be identified;
- Give an Australian address to which notices can be sent; and
- Be lodged at the agency with any application fee payable.

Applications and enquiries should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Coordinator

ChemCentre

PO Box 1250

Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Applications may be in the form of a letter or by using the application form – a copy of which is included at Attachment A.

Applications will be acknowledged in writing and the applicant will be notified of the decision within 45 (calendar) days.

## 7.4 Freedom of Information Charges

A scale of fees and charges is set under the FOI Act Regulations. The charges are as follows:

### 1. Type of Fee

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • <i>Personal information about the applicant</i>       | <i>No fee</i>  |
| • <i>Application fee (for non-personal information)</i> | <i>\$30.00</i> |

### 2. Type of Charge

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| • <i>Charge for time dealing with the application (per hour, or pro rata)</i> | <i>\$30.00</i>     |
| • <i>Access time supervised by staff (per hour, or pro rata)</i>              | <i>\$30.00</i>     |
| • <i>Photocopying staff time (per hour, or pro rata)</i>                      | <i>\$30.00</i>     |
| • <i>Per photocopy</i>  | <i>\$0.20</i>      |
| • <i>Transcribing from tape, film or computer (per hour, or pro rata)</i>     | <i>\$30.00</i>     |
| • <i>Duplicating a tape, film or computer information</i>                     | <i>Actual Cost</i> |
| • <i>Deliver, packaging and postage</i>                                       | <i>Actual Cost</i> |

### **Deposits**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| <i>Advance deposit may be required of the estimated charges</i>                                     | <i>25%</i> |
| <i>Further advance deposit may be required to meet the charges for dealing with the application</i> | <i>75%</i> |

For financially disadvantaged applicants or the issued with prescribed pensioner concession cards, the charge payable is reduced by 25%.

## 7.5 Access Arrangements

Access to documents can be granted by way of inspection, a copy of a document, a copy of an audio or video tape, a computer disk, a transcript of a recorded, shorthand or encoded document from which words can be reproduced.

### **Notice of Decision**

As soon as possible but in any case within 45 days the applicant will be provided with a notice of decision which includes details such as:

- the date which the decision was made;
- the name and the designation of the officer who made the decision;
- if the document is an exempt document the reasons for classifying the matter exempt, or the fact that access is given to an edited document; and
- information on the right to review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

### **Refusal of Access**

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision of the agency are entitled to ask for an **internal review** by the agency. Application should be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of decision.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the review within 15 days.

If the applicant disagrees with the result the applicant can apply to the Information Commissioner for an **external review**, and details would be advised to applicants when the internal review decision is issued.

## **7.6 Amendment of Personal Information**

While the nature of ChemCentre's business means relatively little personal information is required or recorded, an applicant has the right to apply for the amendment of his or her personal information if it is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

Such applications must state whether the person wishes the amendment to be made by altering information, striking out or deleting information, inserting information or inserting a note in relation to the information.

There are no fees or charges for amending personal information.

Further information can be obtained from the Co-ordinator, Freedom of Information.

## **8. OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER**

The role of the Information Commissioner is to independently review access decisions where there is a conflict in relation to the release of documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

The Information Commissioner also provides independent advice and assistance to both applicants and agencies on matters relevant to the Act.

Should you require further information please visit the Information Commissioner's website: <http://www.foi.wa.gov.au/>.

## **9. CONTACTS**

### **9.1 Freedom of Information Co-ordinator**

ChemCentre  
PO Box 1250  
BENTLEY DELIVERY CENTRE WA 6983  
Tel: 08 9422 9805  
Fax: 08 9422 9801  
Email: imiller@chemcentre.wa.gov.au

### **9.2 Office of the Information Commissioner, Western Australia**

12th Floor, St Martin's Tower  
44 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000  
Tel: 08 9220 7888  
Fax: 08 9325 2152  
Email: info@foi.wa.gov.au

**APPLICATION FOR ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS**

(Under Freedom of Information Act 1992, S.12)

**SEE NOTES OVERLEAF FOR INFORMATION**

**DETAILS OF APPLICANT**

Surname: ..... Given Names: .....

Australian Postal Address: .....

.....

Postcode: ..... Telephone Number(s).....

.....

If application is on behalf of an organisation (*name of organisation/business*):

.....

**DETAILS OF REQUEST**

Personal:  Non-personal:  (*please tick appropriate box*)

I am applying for access to document(s) concerning.....

.....

.....

.....

**FORM OF ACCESS**

I wish to inspect document(s)    yes  no  (*please tick appropriate box*)

I require a copy of the document(s)    yes  no

I require access in another form    yes  no  (specify).....

.....

**FEES AND CHARGES (No fee is payable for personal information relating to applicant)**

Attached is a cheque/cash to the amount of \$30.00 to cover the application fee. I understand that before I obtain access to documents I may be required to pay processing charges (See Page 2) in respect of this application and that I will be supplied with a statement of charges if appropriate.

(In certain cases a reduction in fees and charges may apply – see page 2. If you consider you are entitled to a reduction, please submit a request with copies of supporting documentation.)

Applicant's signature: ..... Date: ..... /...../.....



(Office use only)

FOI Reference Number: ..... Received on: .....

Deadline for response: ..... Acknowledgment sent on: .....

Proof of identity attached (if applicable): YES / NO

Type: ..... Sighted: .....

## NOTES

### FOI APPLICATIONS

Please provide sufficient information to enable the correct document(s) to be identified. Details can be provided on a separate sheet if necessary.

ChemCentre may request proof of your identity.

If you are seeking access to a document(s) on behalf of another person, ChemCentre will require written authorisation.

Your application will be dealt with as soon as practicable (and, in any case, within 45 days) after it is received.

Further information can be obtained from ChemCentre's FOI Officer on 9422 9805. The *Freedom of Information Act 1992* is available from the State Law Publisher, 10 William Street, Perth 9321 7688. The FOI Act and other information on Freedom of Information, can be viewed online at the Office of the Information Commissioner's website, [www.foi.wa.gov.au](http://www.foi.wa.gov.au)

### FORMS OF ACCESS

You can request access to documents by way of inspection, a copy of a document, a copy of an audio or video tape, a computer disc, a transcript of a recorded document or of words recorded in shorthand or encoded form, or a written document in the case of a document from which words can be reproduced in written form.

Where ChemCentre is unable to grant access in the form requested, access might be given in a different form. Where possible, information will be provided in a form suitable to accommodate people with disabilities or special needs.

### FEES AND CHARGES

#### Application Fee

The application fee for non-personal information is \$30.00, as prescribed by the regulations. A cheque/money order/cash for the appropriate amount must accompany the application.

No application fee is payable for personal information relating to the applicant – S15 (1)(d) refers.

#### Other charges for non-personal information

##### 1. Type of Fee

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| • Personal information about the applicant       | No fee  |
| • Application fee (for non-personal information) | \$30.00 |

##### 2. Type of Charge

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| • Charge for time dealing with the application (per hour, or pro rata) | \$30.00     |
| • Access time supervised by staff (per hour, or pro rata)              | \$30.00     |
| • Photocopying staff time (per hour, or pro rata)                      | \$30.00     |
| • Per photocopy  | \$0.20      |
| • Transcribing from tape, film or computer (per hour, or pro rata)     | \$30.00     |
| • Duplicating a tape, film or computer information                     | Actual Cost |
| • Deliver, packaging and postage                                       | Actual Cost |

#### Deposits

Advance deposit may be required of the estimated charges 25%

Further advance deposit may be required to meet the charges for dealing with the application 75%

For financially disadvantaged applicants or the issued with prescribed pensioner concession cards, the charge payable is reduced by 25%.

### LODGEMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications may be lodged in person or by post at-  
ChemCentre FOI Officer  
PO Box 1250  
BENTLEY DELIVERY CENTRE WA 6983