

New South Wales Government

Bob Carr, Premier and Minister for the Arts

The New South Wales Government supports Information Rights Day and its aim to increase public awareness of information policy issues such as equitable access, access to government information, intellectual property and information literacy.

Information is the world's most rapidly appreciating resource. During the last ten years new means of disseminating information have emerged, such as publishing on disk and online, including the internet. Processes such as these continue to grow in importance and may indeed come to dominate the way we send and receive information.

Since 1995 the Government has worked to ensure greater access and equity in the delivery of cultural resources for New South Wales communities, responding to the needs of small rural communities as well as those in Sydney and larger regional centres.

The Government is committed to promoting, providing and maintaining library services and information services for the people of New South Wales through the State Library and through co-operation with local libraries and other library and information agencies.

The State Library of New South Wales has established NSW.net in partnership with local government to provide the NSW public library network with high-quality, high-speed access to the internet and online services, to facilitate the provision of free community access to the internet and online services, and to provide the capacity for local content to be created and managed.

The Government has reformed the State's records legislation to deal with record keeping in the electronic age. A statutory right of access to public records has been entrenched for the first time and a new authority, State Records NSW, established to take public record and archival management into the 21st century.

The Government has created the NSW Department of Information Technology and Management (DITM) to deliver whole-of-government strategies for information management, information technology and telecommunications, with an

emphasis on economic development, better government, access, equity and fairness, and sustainable environment.

DITM is managing and co-ordinating a range of initiatives on behalf of the Government including:

- connect.nsw — a whole-of-government strategy developed in 1997, using the internet to position New South Wales for the information society as a global leader in the use of online technologies and services in order to reform government, foster electronic commerce and improve community well-being. A capital funding program was established from 1999/2000 to accelerate the strategy. The new Women's Gateway home page, a single access point for information on IT training and other initiatives for women, has been partially funded by this program;
- a draft access and pricing policy to be considered by the Government to make government-held information easily available in useful and appropriate formats;
- information management guidelines, which have been issued to all Government agencies on government-held information and its management;
- an Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) program which aims to have all appropriate government services online by the end of 2001;
- funding for the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW to promote, co-ordinate and manage the association's online service delivery;
- a Community Technology Centre (CTC) program, jointly funded with the Commonwealth, to deliver computers, training and internet access to create a network of CTCs in 62 small country towns across New South Wales;
- an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Skills Action Plan to build the State's ICT industry base to create new economic and job opportunities and develop ICT skills in New South Wales, especially those of digitally disadvantaged people. ■

Australian Capital Territory Government

Brendan Smyth, Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Urban Services

The ACT Government is committed to making access to information as easy as possible for its citizens and the wider community. A highlight of the past year was the launch of the Virtual Library of the ACT Library Service [<http://www.act.gov.au/library/>], which acts as an electronic gateway to numerous library and information sources.

The ACT Archives Project [<http://www.act.gov.au/actinfo/archives/>] is developing standards for records management across government so that citizens can be assured that government information is created and managed to agreed standards and then available for public access.

The Information Planning and Services area of my Department has been the incubator of numerous initiatives to enhance the access to government information. The eServices Unit has developed the infra-

structure to enable citizens to interact with the Department via various electronic channels. These include the development of the Urban Services internet payment website [<https://www.trading.act.gov.au/>] with a facility to pay a variety of ACT government accounts by credit card, the implementation of a Government Functions and Services Directory [<http://www.directory.act.gov.au/>] and innovative website development for the government.

Another initiative is the Geographic Information Service [<http://www.act.gov.au/actinfo/gim/>], which has been established to provide online access to land and asset management information across government.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the latest initiative of the ACT Government in our commitment in providing access and equity to ACT government information and services. Canberra Connect is an ACT Government initiative to enable

the community and businesses to deal with government through a single point of access. Canberra Connect's information and services can be accessed through kiosks, shopfronts, the internet or the telephone providing a single path to obtain information and services, without the need to understand the structure and workings of the ACT Government. This website [<http://www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au/>] is structured so that it is easier to find the ACT government information and services that you need. Material can be accessed by browsing through topics of interest or by using the search facility.

It is exciting to be able to see so many possibilities and such potential in the provision of access to the information of government. If you require further information please contact John Thwaite, Director, Information Planning and Services, Department of Urban Services on telephone 6207 6168 or john.thwaite@act.gov.au. ■