

MEDIA RELEASE

3 SEPTEMBER 2025

PLAN TO FIX FOI SYSTEM STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION THOUGH RISKS GREATER SECRECY

Transparency International Australia (TI Australia) welcomes the Government’s proposed *Freedom of Information Amendment Bill 2025* but notes the Bill risks creating barriers to accessing information and scrutiny, rather than fixing the system.

The Commonwealth freedom of information (FOI) system is clearly broken and not serving the public interest, with the [rate of FOI requests being granted in full](#) reducing from 59% in 2011-12 to just 25% in 2023-2024 and [average processing times for OAIC reviews](#) increasing from 6 months in 2016–17 to more than 15 months in 2023-24.

This decline has been recognised by multiple reviews including the 2023 [Senate inquiry](#) into Australia’s FOI system and the Robodebt Royal Commission which both exposed serious flaws and called for stronger transparency in the FOI regime.

“FOI is an important tool for transparency and can help call out corruption and hold government to account” said Clancy Moore, CEO of Transparency International Australia.

“We support the government’s attempts to reform Australia’s outdated and broken FOI laws. But this Bill risks placing new barriers to transparency by charging journalists and civil society to make FOI requests.”

“Other changes including prohibiting anonymous FOI requests, which risk causing harm to vulnerable people and whistleblowers, and changes to how cabinet documents are dealt with. These must go under the microscope of the Senate inquiry.”

TI Australia recommends constructive ways to modernise and strengthen FOI without eroding access, including greater investment and use of technology in the public service to meet FOI obligations, safeguards for marginalised and vulnerable people, alongside legal reforms to close loopholes, enforce mandatory timeframes, and streamline review processes.

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The lack of transparency of Commonwealth political donations has long been criticised. We welcome the Government’s proposal to reduce the donation disclosure threshold to \$1,000 and finally implement real-time disclosure. However, we are united in our view that the Government’s proposed Bill should otherwise not proceed in its current form.

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