



MINUTES

Time and Date	2pm – 3pm, Friday, 28 April 2023
Location	Level 6 - Large Meeting Room, Executive Building

Members	Courtney Ingham – Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services
	Michelle Lowe, Director, Office of the Secretary – Department of Justice
	Leah Dorgelo, Principal Officer Right to Information – Ombudsman’s Office
	Charlie Hamilton, Service Delivery Manager – Change Management Expert (DPAC)
	Martin Gibson, Senior Policy Analyst – Policy Specialist (DPAC)
Observers	Carmen Kelly – Manager, Policy and Projects, Executive Services
	Gemma Smith – Project Manager
Apologies	Noelene Kelly, A/Deputy Secretary, People, Performance and Governance
	Megan Hutton, General Manager, Legal Services – Department of Health
	Paula Becker, Manager, Legal Services – Department for Education Children and Young People
	Corinne Hegarty (Secretariat) – Executive Officer

1. Welcome, agenda and apologies

Courtney welcomed members to the meeting and introduced herself and the project. She noted Noelene as an apology.

Courtney provided the Acknowledgement of Country

Members introduced themselves and their backgrounds in the RTI space.

Courtney ran through the agenda for the meeting and what the aims for the committee and their project are, noting that this is a two-year project.

2. Review Terms of Reference

RTI Uplift Project Terms of Reference were circulated out of session.



The Acting Chair noted that the Terms of Reference are relatively straightforward and turned to members for any comments or notes they may have.

Leah notes that her role may be slightly different to other committee members due to the independent role of the Ombudsman, meaning she may not be quite as involved in the development of policy because they may be asked to review that in the Ombudsman's capacity.

Charlie sees an advantage in expanding on the skills and knowledge each member is bringing to the committee, to be able to break down the roles more clearly.

Michelle notes that she is not in a legislative space so it may be worth bringing in someone else for any of these matters.

The Acting Chair notes that the RTI practitioners' group will also be involved in an advisory capacity to support some of the consultation and some of the fact finding. The practitioner's group will also be involved prior to matters coming to the steering committee for them to test possible solutions for matters.

In this forum it was raised that with any matters they may be considering as part of a legislative review, the committee will work with the Department of Justice to ensure that anything the project captures is provided and can form part of their future discussions.

Charlie asked how members can access the Minutes and meeting papers and if there is going to be a shared Team space for easy access. It was initially planned that these papers would be circulated via email, however, if the committee would prefer, this it can be done. Charlie offered to help in the set up if needed.

Martin notes that there are not representatives from every Agency on the committee, but this will be a change project across whole of government. He questioned how this engagement with other agencies will occur? The Acting Chair notes that this matter was discussed, and they have considered how the committee will continually engage across whole of government, as well as with external stakeholders that will be impacted by the project. A communications strategy has been created and is set for discussion as agenda item 4.

Gemma noted that it may be worth adding a condition into to quorum that establishes there should be a representative from other agencies to ensure that not all members are DPAC representatives. Other members agreed with this.

The Acting Chair assured members that their feedback will be taken into consideration and the updated Terms of Reference will be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Review Project Strategy

The RTI Uplift Project Strategy was circulated out of session.



Gemma introduced the strategy and noted that this document is a collaborative effort and contribution from other agencies is imperative.

The objective of the RTI Uplift Project is to deliver an improved information access process across the whole of the Tasmanian State Service and contribute to government accountability and transparency by improving community access to government information. The project aims to identify and assist in improving process deficiencies.

The project strategy is a very a high-level plan and objectives with a clear standard of practice.

Charlie would like to add in success statements. What does success look like throughout this project?

Gemma also introduced the project Outputs which are a summary of what the committee will be trying to achieve in the project.

Gemma opened up to comments from the committee.

It was noted that beyond a commitment to training, there were no specifics provided as to how the \$500,000 budget allocation should be spent.

The committee discussed if it may be worthwhile having something in terms of how things will be embedded going forward e.g., training over time when delegates change, and refreshers are needed. The intention is to create a training resource that can be rolled out when new delegates start. Who would be responsible for this?

The Acting Chair noted that discussions have been held about the committee currently have a DPAC-centric view and are very interested in talking with each Agency about their areas of need and what might be the best training option for each of them. A brief survey has been circulated to all agencies which will start this discussion process.

The Acting Chair noted that an issues register should be brought to each meeting to start to capture issues and the decisions the committee makes in addressing them.

ACTION: Create an issues register prior to next meeting.

Charlie noted that an additional output is needed - change management plan.

Martin asked what engagement has there been with secretaries to date? Project Strategy at a more granular level is currently being discussed with DPAC secretary, but this is subject to change. The Premier is the authorising person for the project and his views are something the committee are still working through. The steering committee was established at this point so that they have the opportunity to influence the project plan based on the feedback from today. Once the Project Strategy has been finalised it will be taken to the Secretaries Board for their endorsement.

Members agreed that high level engagement is necessary for the success of the project.



The Acting Chair noted that this is a living document and will be updated as the committee moves forward.

ACTION: Amendments will be made based on feedback provided and the document will be recirculated.

4. Review Communications Strategy

RTI Uplift Project Communications Strategy was circulated out of session.

The Acting Chair noted that the feedback from today indicates that any communications need to be overlaid with a change plan and this will be taken into consideration. It was also noted that this is living document and will be adapted throughout the life of the project.

Gemma talked the committee through the document, noting that this has been kept very high level at this point in the project lifecycle. She then opened to feedback from members.

Objectives: No comments

Principles: No comments

Key Messages: Tried to capture all of the stakeholder groups the committee is speaking directly to while keeping the document concise.

Charlie discussed the idea of having a public consultation group as parts of this work directly affect them. Andrew Gillies in Service Tasmania has done a similar process of engaging with the public on the launch of their new website. A survey about the experiences of previous applicants has been considered but this feedback will be considered.

Members discussed that because this will be an applicant-centric process it is important to engage with applicants throughout the project, particularly repeat applicants. A two-stream approach was suggested as there are two main request categories for personal and general information. The Acting Chair notes that this is being touched on in the survey sent to other agencies.

ACTION: Amendments will be made based on feedback provided and the document will be recirculated.

Members discussed the key messages and whether, in addition to victim-survivors, there needs to be broader statement on listening and responding to other groups involved in the Commission of Inquiry.

5. Other business

The Acting Chair asked for any other business or reflections the members would like to make today.



Leah asked what the next step looks like for the committee.

The Acting Chair notes that surveys are out to agencies for data collection, and they have a draft discussion paper to feed the information into which will be brought to the steering committee to endorse. The next step will be to seek final endorsement from the secretaries board and Minister.

The committee discussed having a budget document to break down how the finding will be spent. Gemma noted that a budget will be part of the regular reporting of meetings going forward and Gemma is hoping to have this ready for the next meeting.

The Acting Chair thanked members for their attendance and engagement and closed the meeting at 2:46pm.



MINUTES

Time and Date	10am – 11am, Thursday, 25 May 2023
Location	Level 6 - Large Meeting Room, Executive Building

Members	Noelene Kelly, A/Deputy Secretary, People, Performance and Governance
	Courtney Ingham – Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services
	Michelle Lowe, Director, Office of the Secretary – Department of Justice
	Leah Dorgelo, Principal Officer Right to Information – Ombudsman's Office
	Martin Gibson, Senior Policy Analyst – Policy Specialist (DPAC)
	Megan Hutton, General Manager, Legal Services – Department of Health
	Paula Becker, Manager, Legal Services – Department for Education Children and Young People
Observers	Alison Scandrett, Principal Legal Officer, Legal Services - Department for Education Children and Young People
	Carmen Kelly – Manager, Policy and Projects, Executive Services
	Gemma Smith – Project Manager
	Corinne Hegarty (Secretariat) – Executive Officer
Apologies	Charlie Hamilton, Service Delivery Manager – Change Management Expert (DPAC)

I. Welcome, agenda and apologies, previous minutes, and action register

Noelene Kelly A/Deputy Secretary, People, Performance and Governance (The Chair) provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

The Chair introduced herself and welcomed members and observers to the second meeting of the RTI Uplift Project Steering Committee and advised she is acting for Rod Nockles, Deputy Secretary People, Performance and Governance whilst he is on a short-term secondment.

The Chair noted that Charlie Hamilton is an apology.

The Steering Committee endorsed the previous minutes.



Gemma (Project Manager) provided an update on the actions register. Action number one will remain amber as the project plan is still awaiting executive feedback and the project team will provide the plan to the Steering Committee once endorsed.

Action number two has been completed and added to the issues register and for action number three, the project team has included the committee's feedback and incorporated into the Change Management plan for discussion today.

2. Project Update

The Steering Committee:

- Noted that the project is tracking well, and within scope, but this is subject to change dependant on the feedback provided from the executive on the project plan. Accordingly, the current status of the *Project Overall* is amber.
- Noted that the Change Management and Communication Plan has been developed which incorporates feedback provided by the Steering Committee on the previously provided Communication Strategy.
- Noted that responses were provided to the surveys and have been included in a Discussion Paper which will be circulated for agency feedback.
- Noted that the project team will continue working on the discovery phase of the project and will continue with further stakeholder engagement.
- Noted the status of the Risk Register.
- Noted the status of the Issues Register.
- Noted the status of the Decisions Register.
- Noted the status of the Budget with the proviso that final figures are still waiting to be received from the DPAC finance team.

Megan, Department of Health (Health) noted that the surveys have confirmed that delegates within all agencies are very under resourced and highlighted the risk this poses to the project.

Megan (Health) raised that Health receives up to approximately 320 applications per financial year and the volume of information delegates assess per application are between 7000-10000 pages of information. Improvements on that process would sit outside of this project.

Paula, Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) also noted that resourcing is a significant issue for DECYP and that some applications are 7000 pages long. She reaffirmed that delegate resourcing issues are a major risk to their business as usual functions and the project.

ACTION: Add insufficient delegate resourcing to the risk register

The Chair noted the risk and stated if agencies are not sufficiently resourced there will be increasing delays.



Gemma (Project Manager) acknowledged that resourcing is an issue and that while making structural change is beyond the scope the project, the project will seek to highlight the resourcing issue and make recommendations for increasing resourcing.

Gemma (Project Manager) provided an update on the Discussion Paper, which highlights resourcing as an issue and advised that the project team are investigating options for recommending how many delegates are needed to meet the demand of each agency that the government may take into consideration.

Courtney, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) suggested legislative reform could improve and support RTI processes and the team could track the issues and provide the recommendations to the Department of Justice to enact.

Paula (DECYP) raised that RTI applications for information in the public interest are distinct from applications made by victim-survivors for personal information of themselves and their family and that these processes need to be treated separately.

Megan (Health) also raised a query regarding standardising the RTI processes across government and a centralised RTI team for the whole of government.

Gemma (Project Manager) advised this project provides an opportunity to capture current issues and incorporate feedback into future recommendations and progress those recommendations to the government for its consideration and that a centralised team is beyond the scope of the current project.

Paula (DECYP) also receives applications requesting family information, to include in their family tree, that cannot be released to them due to legislative rules and regulations and applicants believe they are entitled to, and it becomes difficult for delegates to explain this to them.

Courtney (DPaC) raised that applicants may feel dissatisfied because their understanding of what can and cannot be provided under legislation is confusing and how does the project team elicit this from applicants if there are elements within the process that can be improved.

Paula (DECYP) stated that there is no current process that is going to give victim survivors what they want. DECYP have recently noticed an increase in the number of applications from law firms on behalf of victims rather than the victim themselves. DECYP also have a number of support services that DECYP work with frequently and will provide names of these services to the project team to include as applicants for feedback.

Gemma (Project Manager) agreed that consideration needs to be given to the process of individuals' requests for personal information particularly victim-survivor applications.

ACTION: Add the distinction between personal information requests and public interest requests to the issues register

Michelle, Department of Justice (DoJ) noted that most RTI applications to DoJ are received from prisoners and that there is a different way of processing applications to other agencies. In



particular, she noted that there are statutory confidentiality provisions which prevent active disclosure.

Michelle (DoJ) also requested that the insufficiency of resources be acted upon sooner than the conclusion of the project.

Gemma (Project Manager) advised that the project team will consider the best approach to raise resourcing as an issue to relevant people now.

3. Review and approve amended Terms of Reference

The Chair sought the Committee's approval of the amended Terms of Reference (ToR)

Gemma (Project Manager) noted there is a reference to Rod Nockles as the Chair of Committee meetings, and the ToR will be updated to reflect that the Chair is aligned to the role of the Deputy Secretary, People, Performance and Governance rather than the occupant.

Megan (Health) requested that the functions be updated to reflect that the RTI Uplift Project's objectives are also to champion for future change.

ACTION – Amend Terms of Reference and recirculate to committee

Terms of Reference endorsed by the committee based on the above proposed changes.

4. Review Change Management and Communication Plan

Gemma (Project Manager) noted and appreciated the committee's time and flexibility with reviewing the full set of meeting papers that were circulated for this meeting.

Michelle (DoJ) raised that there is reference on page 11 to the Senior Executive Service (SES) to *approve/note RTI decisions* noting that DoJ does not progress RTIs to the SES for approval.

The project team will amend the reference in the Change Management and Communication plan.

Michelle (DoJ) also proposed that the Change Management and Communication Plan take into account how RTI delegate's mental health will be considered.

Courtney (DPaC) agreed that negative comments in the media that refer to delegates as being incompetent and highlights delays in responses to applicants negatively impacts on delegates. This project will provide a positive opportunity to inform external stakeholders of the complexities of the RTI process.

Gemma (Project Manager) suggested that the Communication Principles be updated to include a reference to be considerate of the mental health of delegates.

Michelle (DoJ) also suggested that Child Safe principles should be included in the Change Management and Communication Plan.



Paula (DECYP) raised that personal applications and their associated files are not progressed to SES due to privacy laws and raised concerns over the mandating of certain RTI processes.

Gemma noted the reference of 'mandating' an RTI process and confirmed RTI processes will not be mandated as part of this project. She explained that agencies will work together to find processes that work for everyone where possible and necessary flexibility and discretion will be provided for.

Megan (Health) noted that the RTI team in Health meet with staff from the Office of the Secretary and the Communications team that provide input and a sounding board for the delegates. There is no noting process for personal information applications only RTIs applications will need to factor this process in for all agencies.

Michelle (DoJ) raised that 90% of DoJ's requests for information are progressed by law firms and suggest adding legal professionals to the external stakeholder's matrix in the Communications Strategy.

Courtney (DPAC) also suggests adding peak bodies into the Change Management and Communication Plan for example Lifeline and Relationships Australia.

Gemma (Project Manager) thanked members for their suggestions.

5. Review results from survey

Gemma (Project Manager) discussed the results of the survey.

The Steering Committee noted the results of the survey.

The Chair asked the committee if anyone is surprised by the feedback received from the surveys.

The Committee agreed that there were no great surprises.

The Chair thanked the project team for the work on the surveys and collating the results and the Committee members for taking the time to respond to them as well.

Other Business

Leah, Ombudsman (Ombo) queried if there will be further surveys targeted specifically to RTI applicants?

Gemma (Project Manager) advised that the Customer Satisfaction Surveys will be provided to applicants, particularly regular applicants for their feedback to inform the project.

Leah (Ombo) will provide applicant names, including victim survivors that would like to share their views, to the project team to ensure they are included in this process. Gemma (Project Manager) added that the contribution of feedback from victim survivors will provide the project with invaluable data and information and assist to inform the discussion paper.



Paula (DECYP) noted that regular communications are occurring with external stakeholders and raised concerns over giving the expectation to stakeholders that immediate improvements will be made to the length of time information is released to them.

Megan (Health) noted at Health the current waiting time for assessing new RTI and personal applications is experiencing significant delays.

Courtney (DPAC) raised that realistic expectations will be made clear when engaging with external stakeholders.

The Chair requested any further feedback to be provided to the project team outside of session and closed the meeting at 11:03am. The next meeting is scheduled on 15 June at 3pm.



MINUTES

Time and Date	3pm – 4pm, Thursday, June 15 2023
Location	Level 4 - Large Meeting Room, Executive Building

Members	Noelene Kelly, A/Deputy Secretary, People, Performance and Governance
	Courtney Ingham – Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services
	Leah Dorgelo, Principal Officer Right to Information – Ombudsman’s Office
	Martin Gibson, Senior Policy Analyst – Policy Specialist (DPAC)
	Charlie Hamilton, Service Delivery Manager – Change Management Expert (DPAC)
	Paula Becker, Manager, Legal Services – Department for Education Children and Young People
Observers	Carmen Kelly – Manager, Policy and Projects, Executive Services
	Gemma Smith – Project Manager
	Corinne Hegarty – Executive Officer (minutes)
Apologies	Michelle Lowe, Director, Office of the Secretary – Department of Justice
	Megan Hutton, General Manager, Legal Services – Department of Health

1. Welcome, agenda and apologies, previous minutes and action register

Noelene (the Chair) provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

The Chair noted that Megan Hutton and Michelle Lowe are apologies for this meeting.

The Steering Committee endorsed the previous minutes.

Gemma (Project Manager) advised the committee that all actions on the register have been completed.

2. Project Update

The Steering Committee:



- Noted that the Discussion Paper will be distributed to all agencies within the next week.
- Noted that the Project Plan has been approved by the Secretary and can now be used to ensure the delivery of the project's outputs and achievement of the project's outcomes.
- Noted that the project is currently Amber status due to the feedback received at the last Steering Committee meeting, highlighting the difficulty in handling confidential personal information balanced against the RTI and Privacy Acts.
- Noted that the project team will continue with stakeholder engagement in the discovery phase.
- Noted the status of the Risk register.
- Noted the status of the Issues Register.
- Noted the status of the Decisions Register.

Gemma (Project Manager) advised that the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute (TLRI) recently released an issues paper on privacy laws in Tasmania. The review will be focusing on the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*, and Gemma advised that agencies should consider making a submission to the TLRI if considered appropriate.

The Chair raised the possibility of engaging with the media in some of form of media campaign to inform the public that they have a right to request information under the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

Leah (Ombudsman) advised that an interjurisdictional survey will be completed by approximately 300 members of the public and offered to share the results with the Committee in the near future.

The Chair noted that further discussion is to be had around potential for the government to provide benchmark funding to look at framework/mechanics to track the public's understanding of RTI on a continuum.

Charlie (DPAC) queried; will the funding for this project will be rolled over into the next financial year?

Gemma (Project Manager) confirmed that the remaining funds allocated in the 22/23 budget will be rolled over into 23/24 financial year.

3. Project Plan

Gemma (Project Manager) discussed the Project Plan.

Paula and Alison (DECYP) raised some potential future recommendations for victim-survivors that include providing counselling services to them when accessing personal files and a better customer experience for victim-survivors.



Gemma (Project Manager) talked about the importance of using qualitative data about applicant's experience as a key success factor for the project.

Paula (DECYP) raised that this may present issues in evaluating the project as people accessing personal information may not have a change in experience due to those processes now being out of scope to the project.

Gemma (Project Manager) acknowledged that this does present an issue for the success of the project in terms of addressing the experiences it was originally established to address but noted that any data captured about the effect or absence of effect on applicants accessing personal information would be highly useful in informing future work in this space.

Gemma (Project Manager) advised that an applicant survey will soon be distributed to those applicants who have made a recent application, repeat applicants and applicants who have recently received a decision.

Leah (Ombudsman) queried how the project team will ensure that all applicant groups are represented in the survey.

Gemma (Project Manager) advised that respondents will be required to identify which category of applicant they are and indicated that further direct engagement will be undertaken if one or more category groups are underrepresented in the data.

Other Business

No other business.

Meeting closed at 3.30pm and next meeting is scheduled for 6 July at 10am.



MINUTES

Time and Date	10 – 11am, Thursday, 6 July 2023
Location	Level 7 - Large Meeting Room, Executive Building

Members	Noelene Kelly – A/Deputy Secretary, People Performance and Governance (Chair)
	Courtney Ingham – Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services (MES)
	Michelle Lowe, Director, Office of the Secretary – Department of Justice (DoJ)
	Leah Dorgelo, Principal Officer Right to Information – Ombudsman's Office
	Martin Gibson, Senior Policy Analyst – Policy Specialist (DPAC)
	Mick Casey – Department of Health (DoH)
	Paula Becker, Manager, Legal Services – Department for Education Children and Young People (DECYP)
Observers	Alison Scandrett – Department for Education Children and Young People (DECYP)
	Carmen Kelly – Manager, Policy and Projects, Executive Services (PPE)
	Gemma Smith – Project Manager (DPAC)
	Corinne Hegarty – Executive Officer (DPAC)
Apologies	Charlie Hamilton, Service Delivery Manager – Change Management Expert (DPAC)

I. Welcome, agenda and apologies

The Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

The Chair noted that Charlie Hamilton (DPAC) is an apology for today's meeting and Mick Casey (DoH) is proxy for Megan Hutton (DoH).

The Steering Committee endorsed the previous minutes.



2. Project Update

Gemma (Project Manager) provided an update to the committee members

The Steering Committee noted:

- the Discussion paper has been distributed for feedback.
- the status of the Project Plan.
- that the Project team will continue with the stakeholder engagement work in distributing the external stakeholder survey to key stakeholder groups and are on track to distribute the findings to the committee in September.
- a new risk has been added to the Risk Register regarding current delegates resisting external stakeholder engagement as they feel it will create an opportunity for blame with no project outcome benefits.
- the status of the Issues Register.
- the status of the Decisions Register.

The Project Manager discussed recent feedback received from delegates about stakeholder engagement, including recent media criticism about delegates. The Project Manager reiterated that this project is not the result of deficits with current RTI delegates, rather its aim is to improve RTI practices wherever possible which will assist delegates to work more efficiently.

It was suggested that RTI delegate wellbeing should be added as a project deliverable. The Steering Committee were supportive of this but note that caution needs to be exercised to ensure the project isn't committing to a deliverable that cannot be measured or achieved with the project's control.

ACTION Add RTI delegate wellbeing as a project deliverable.

The Chair suggested delegates check-in with each other when the media criticises delegates and recommends Head of Agencies provide an email/reassurance to delegates addressing concerns.

The Committee discussed the difficulties in monitoring and measuring delegates wellbeing in this project and measuring its success.

The Project Manager advised that initial discussions with University of Tasmania has commenced regarding the development of RTI training. The training will include technical RTI processes. The Chair suggested a self-care component could be included to acknowledge the pressures on delegates and provide strategies on how to manage stressors.

Leah (Ombudsman), Alison (DECYP) and Paula (DECYP) advised they can provide contact details of their current external stakeholder groups to the project team to include in the distribution of the applicant surveys.



3. External Stakeholder Survey

The Project Manager advised that the Applicant's Experience surveys were provided to agencies but were later recalled for Steering Committee consideration.

The surveys will be revised and reissued after feedback from today's meeting and other internal stakeholder input has been considered.

The Committee discussed and noted the following changes to the survey:

- The introduction page is less wordy as possible to improve accessibility.
- Agreed to remove the first paragraph in the introduction page.
- Agreed to change the wording from 'accessing government information' to 'accessing information that government holds about them' related to personal information applications.
- Discussed including an acknowledgement of the RTI process to make it clear to applicants that not all information can be released.
- Discussed amending language to make it clear that the survey is focused on process and not the decision outcome.
- Agreed to remove all reference to delegates.
- Agreed to change Media outlet to Journalist in Question 1 and add Law firms as a category.
- Discussed the use of personal information and how this term is ambiguous and can be misunderstood.

ACTION The Project Manager to provide an updated survey with the above changes, and members are to provide feedback within the timeframe indicated. If required, an additional meeting can be scheduled with committee members.

The Chair noted that DPAC RTI decisions include contact details and an invitation to contact the delegate if the applicant would like any further information and queried whether this invitation was ever taken up.

The Project Manager advised that they have never been contacted to clarify a decision but have been contacted to provide information in a different format or to assist the applicant in a different way. The Project Manager stated that applicant will generally seek a review of a decision if they are dissatisfied with it.

Carmen (DPAC) advised that she has provided clarification on a decision to an applicant before which prevented a review request.



4. Other Business

Steering Committee discussed adding feedback received from external applicants to the Discussion Paper, particularly victim-survivors. The Project Manager queried whether external engagement should be included in the Discussion Paper or in a different or new project artifact to ensure that the Discussion Paper is finalised closer to the initial project schedule. Michelle (DoJ) queried if applicant feedback should be included in the Discussion Paper and when and how the paper will be released? This matter was not resolved due to time restraints.

Meeting closed at 11.02am and the next meeting is scheduled for 3 August at 3pm.



MINUTES

Time and Date	3 – 4pm, Thursday, 3 August 2023
Location	Level 6 - Large Meeting Room, Executive Building

Members	Noelene Kelly – A/Deputy Secretary, People Performance and Governance (Chair)
	Courtney Ingham – Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services (MES)
	Michelle Lowe, Director, Office of the Secretary – Department of Justice (DoJ)
	Leah Dorgelo, Principal Officer Right to Information – Ombudsman’s Office (Ombo)
	Martin Gibson, Senior Policy Analyst – Policy Specialist (DPAC)
	Megan Hutton – Department of Health (DoH)
	Charlie Hamilton, Service Delivery Manager – Change Management Expert (DPAC)
Observers	Alison Scandrett – Department for Education Children and Young People (DECYP)
	Corinne Hegarty – Executive Officer (DPAC)
Apologies	Paula Becker, Manager, Legal Services – Department for Education Children and Young People (DECYP)
	Gemma Smith – Project Manager (DPAC)
	Carmen Kelly – Manager, Policy and Projects, Executive Services (PPE)

I. Welcome, agenda and apologies

The Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

The Chair noted Paula Becker (Manager, DECYP), Gemma Smith (Project Manager) and Carmen Kelly (Manager, DPAC) are apologies for this meeting.

The Steering Committee (the Committee) endorsed the previous minutes and actions.

Courtney (Project Owner) advised the Committee that Gemma has secured an alternate role and is leaving DPAC in early September. Also, it is important to take this opportunity in commending Gemma on her outstanding work with this project and would like to wish her the



best of luck. The Project Manager role is currently advertised and if there are any delays the project team we will raise this with the committee.

Project Update

The Steering Committee noted:

- the status of the Project Plan.
- the status of the Risk register.
- the status of the Issues Register.
- the status of the Decisions Register.

Courtney (Business Owner) advised the committee that delegates have recently provided their feedback and discussed the possibility of releasing some of the information at the recent RTI WG meeting.

The Committee advised that they have not received the updated discussion paper, with agency feedback.

Action Project team to distribute the updated discussion paper to the Committee for review and discussion at the next meeting.

Courtney (Project Manager) advised that the delegate feedback received in the delegate survey has been honest and frank and to ensure confidentiality findings from the surveys will be summarised and presented in a high-level info graphic.

The Chair agreed a holistic summary of key themes and broader recommendations from the discussion paper be released publicly.

Michelle (DoJ) raised issues of delegate buy-in and suggests including senior executive representatives that aren't already included on the Committee to assist with promoting the project with their delegates and increase their support and implementation of any outcomes.

The Chair agreed inviting senior executive representatives to participate in the Committee and notes the importance of their positive project engagement and participation with delegates in early conversations prior to project implementation

The Committee discussed including senior representatives from agencies that are not included in this committee to provide their feedback on RTI policies and procedures.

The Chair suggested forming a policy and intergovernmental sub-committee for senior level executives to receive consistent advice regarding the RTI project and address any concerns.

The Committee agreed to look at forming the sub-committee after the decisions and recommendations stage of the project.

The Committee discussed possible consultation groups to road test RTI policy and procedures out of session rather than participating in future meetings.



Courtney (Business Owner) advised that recently the project team has consulted with the RTI Working Group and will continue to use this mechanism for future project testing of RTI policy and procedures.

Leah (Ombo) noted that Tony Kay from Police has a lot of great ideas in improving current RTI processes and procedures and suggests the project team include him in investigating ideas.

The Chair suggests the project team initiate discussions with senior representatives through the RTI Working Group seeking their interest in providing feedback to the Committee.

The Committee agrees with this approach.

Action The Project team to initiate discussions with senior representatives regarding their interest in attending future Committee meetings.

Courtney (Business Owner) notes that the project manager has continued working on sourcing training providers to implement the RTI training. Courtney suggests the project team draft a work plan detailing the focus areas for the next 6 months and align with Committee decision points.

The Committee agrees with this approach.

Courtney (Business Owner) advised the project status report remains overall in green and is currently on track. Noting that recruiting a new Project Manager could cause delays to project timelines.

Action Add the recruitment of a new Project Manager could delay project milestones/outcomes to the risk register.

2. Project Plan amendment

The Chair discussed the recent media criticism of delegates and acknowledges the importance of delegate wellbeing across the agencies that are working in this space.

Courtney (Business Owner) advised that the project manager recently received contact from RTI delegates regarding the negative impacts of external commentary and acknowledges and highlights the current challenges of other agencies and staff members during this time of unrest.

Megan (Health) raised the negative media coverage and delegate pressure points relate to lack of resourcing and therefore agencies cannot process RTIs in a timely manner because of the significant number of applications received vs the number of delegates. Currently Health only has 2 FTEs to process 700 applications this financial year and any work we can do to provide extra resources across government will be beneficial as there are significant pressure points throughout the work.



Alison (DECYP) advised that our RTI applications are also increasing, and staff are repeatedly fielding calls following up the status' of RTI decisions and notes the current waiting time for RTI decisions is approximately 10 months.

Alison (DECYP) raised that it is important to acknowledge that currently our agency is working outside the legal parameters of the RTI Act for example we do not consult every third party for very large files as it will add significantly many more months in releasing information to the applicant.

Michelle (DoJ) and Megan (Health) agreed and also noted that they do not consult every third party mentioned in very large files and may redact personal information about others to be able to release information to the applicant in a timely manner.

The Chair notes that the value of this project is that it can highlight causes and effects. And one key finding is that the lack of delegate resourcing creates a backlog because of the increasing number of applications, including the number of voluminous applications received, that causes late decisions and reviews of decisions to applicants.

Courtney (Business Owner) asked the Committee could we add this as a component into the training to ensure consistency across all agencies?

Michelle (DoJ) notes that all agencies take different approaches to issues and are impacted by other legislation containing confidentiality provisions. Providing a one size fits all will be challenging developing one training component for all agencies.

The Chair raised does the Committee agree with adding the delegates wellbeing element into project outcomes.

The Committee had no objections adding this as a project outcome and acknowledges the difficulties in monitoring and measuring the success of delegates wellbeing in this project however noting that the project scope is focussed on the applicant experience and to be mindful of scope creep.

Alison (DECYP) suggests including Ministerial staff and senior executives in the roll out of RTI training implementation to understand the provisions of the RTI Act particularly focussing on exemption information.

The Committee discussed implementing policy for routine disclosures proactively and including in the scope of the project which could possibly reducing the workload of delegates, however some agencies experience that more work for delegates is generated from routine disclosures and other agencies only receive personal information applications.

3. Discussion Paper



The Discussion Paper including agency feedback will be circulated to the Committee and discussed at the next meeting focussing on the next steps in publicly releasing information from the paper.

4. Other Business

No other business. The Chair closed the meeting at 3.51pm. The next meeting is scheduled on 31 August at 3pm.

DRAFT