

MEDIA RELEASE

Privacy Commissioner's 2015 annual report marks a year of big changes

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards released his Office's annual report covering his first full year in office. The report highlights a year of positive change for the office:

- resolving complaints faster through innovative dispute resolution techniques
- deeper engagement with the private sector
- creating and distributing online privacy training and new tools and resources.

2014/2015 highlights:

- **Public enquiries** - Our enquiries team handled 8,372 enquiries from the public through our 0800 phone line and email
- **Dispute resolution** - Our investigators closed 827 complaint files (an increase from 702 last year). Our dispute resolution teams made concerted efforts to ensure that matters were resolved swiftly and effectively. Since the Harmful Digital Communications Act became law we can receive and resolve a wider range of complaints.
- **Media** - We received 273 media enquiries covering a range of topics including data breaches, the Harmful Digital Communications Act, drones, CCTV cameras and property ownership information on public registers
- **Research Fund** - We kick-started the \$75,000 Privacy Good Research Fund and received 14 applications
- **Policy advice** – we made efforts to deliver policy advice earlier in a more proactive way, especially in the social sector.
- **New Guidance** - We launched our guide: *Sharing Personal Information about Families and Vulnerable Children* to assist multi-agency teams that work with vulnerable children. We published a *Privacy Impact Assessment Toolkit*.
- **New resources** - We expanded our range of services by developing online resources, such as privacy training modules and an online complaint form. We also built an online privacy statement generator, and created a directory of privacy professionals.
- **Voluntary data breach notifications** - We continued to receive a significant number of data breach notifications (121 in total, with 71 from the public sector and 50 from the privacy sector)
- **Big Data** - We provided policy advice on two key government 'big data' projects: the Data Futures Partnership and the Integrated Data Infrastructure
- **International networks** - The Privacy Commissioner was appointed Chair of the Conference Committee for organising the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners in Amsterdam.

- **Law reform** - We undertook significant policy work in preparation for the upcoming Privacy Act reform
- **Information sharing and matching** – We assisted agencies to develop Authorised Information Sharing Agreements (AISAs), for instance for children’s action teams, and oversaw 57 government information matching programmes. We released new guidance on AISAs.
- **Intelligence and surveillance - oversight group** - Continued interest and awareness of the activities of intelligence and surveillance agencies led the Privacy Commissioner to initiate a regular oversight group made up of the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, the Chief Ombudsman, the Auditor General and the Privacy Commissioner.

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For more information contact Communications Adviser Sam Grover 04 494 7081. A PDF of the annual report is available on our website: www.privacy.org.nz