



**ACT**  
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and  
Economic Development

NAME  
ADDRESS  
ADDRESS

Dear TITLE

### **Unauthorised release of personal information**

I regret to inform you that on 20 June 2015, the ACT Public Service was informed of the possible unauthorised release of a current list of properties affected by loose fill asbestos insulation which also included information about the owners of those properties.

Having been confirmed on 22 June 2015, this unauthorised release of information was immediately reported to me as Commissioner for Public Administration by the Head of the Asbestos Response Taskforce (Taskforce) for investigation. The matter was at the same time reported to the Chief Police Officer for parallel investigation of possible offences against the *Crimes Act 1900* in relation to unauthorised release of official information.

The clear advice from ACT Policing at the time was that given the particular circumstances, it was preferable that the unauthorised release was not publicised so the investigations were not jeopardised. That approach was discussed with me and the investigations were initiated on that basis.

Progress in the investigation of this matter has now reached the stage where it is appropriate and necessary for it to be made public. The investigation by my Office is continuing as is the parallel investigation by ACT Policing, who have been updated regularly by my Office in the intervening period.

It would appear that a hard copy of the list was left in an unmarked envelope at the local office of an information and communication technology contractor in late May/early June 2015. We understand the list was subsequently circulated to the employees/contractors of that company with a message reminding them to be cautious when undertaking works which may have involved accessing contaminated areas of affected houses. To our knowledge, the list has only been provided to that one company. The company has been asked to ensure the retraction and destruction of all copies of the list.

The list comprised primarily owners' initials and surnames (and where applicable company names), division, block, section, address and suburb of affected properties.

This matter is being treated with the utmost seriousness by the ACT Public Service, which requires its staff to handle personal information carefully and appropriately. I am sorry this did not occur in this circumstance.

All members of the Taskforce, and other ACT Public Servants closely involved in the work of the Taskforce, have signed declarations explicitly acknowledging their obligation to maintain proper security of confidential information. This is in addition to the general obligations that exist under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and the *Crimes Act 1900*.

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) has been briefed on this matter and the ACT Public Service's response to date. The notification reference number is DBN15/00075.

### **Complaints**

If you wish to make a complaint in relation to the collection, use, security of, or access to your personal information please contact the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's Privacy Contact Officer at:

Privacy Contact Officer  
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

[CMTEDDCorporate@act.gov.au](mailto:CMTEDDCorporate@act.gov.au) or by phone: (02) 6207 5883 or (02) 6207 8175

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, you may also choose to contact the OAIC by calling 1300 363 992 or writing to [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au).

If you have any questions about the investigation please contact my office on 6205 0358. I will update you further as additional information is received.

In addition I have enclosed a letter from the Head of the Taskforce about this matter.

Yours sincerely

Bronwen Overton-Clarke  
Commissioner for Public Administration  
16 September 2015