

---

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

2013CITZ0005-000403  
March 4, 2013

Ministry of Citizens' Services and Open Government

### **Government responds to privacy commissioner's report**

VICTORIA – Government has released its response to the British Columbia's information and privacy commissioner's investigation into "no responsive records" responses today.

A copy of the letter sent to the commissioner, including government's commitments, has been posted to the Ministry of Citizens' Services and Open Government's website and can be viewed here: [http://www.gov.bc.ca/citz/reports\\_publications.html](http://www.gov.bc.ca/citz/reports_publications.html)

The commissioner's report, entitled "Increase in No Responsive Records to General Access to Information Requests: Government of British Columbia," was released today following an investigation into an increase in "no responsive records" responses to applicants requesting government records under the act.

The commissioner's review found there was no single explanation for the increase in "no responsive records" responses; however she has made six recommendations to government. Government has committed to take immediate action on five of those recommendations and has committed to further study and discuss the final recommendation to determine how best to address it.

The five recommendations government will implement amount to incremental operational changes, and will help government track its performance more accurately, as well as provide improved service to applicants. The sixth recommendation, involving amendments to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act (FIPPA) include a "duty to document". This is a complex matter and is worth noting is not a requirement contained in any other Freedom of Information (FOI) act in Canada.

The commissioner also stated that her review found "for the most part, government's search efforts are thorough and comprehensive and that all reasonable avenues to locate records were explored". Government also notes that there has been an 86 per cent increase in the number of general requests in the past three years producing responsive records to applicants.

Other findings in the commissioner's report include:

- Government's 2009 centralization of FOI processing has made it easier for applicants to make the same request for information to multiple ministries.
- The investigation did not observe any distinction in government's handling of media requests as compared to requests by other types of applicants.

The privacy commissioner's report is available online at: [www.oipc.bc.ca](http://www.oipc.bc.ca)

Media Contact:       Lara Perzoff  
                              Communications Manager  
                              Ministry of Citizens' Services & Open Government  
                              250 387-0172

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)