

Transparency within large publicly funded New Zealand infrastructure projects

Final Report

Prepared for
Te Waihanga - New Zealand Infrastructure Commission

15th May, 2023



MASSEY
UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUORA

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15th May, 2023

Dear Ross,

Transparency within large publicly funded New Zealand Infrastructure Projects: Final Report

I am pleased to present to you the final report for our research on transparency within large publicly funded New Zealand infrastructure projects, conducted by Massey University and funded by Te Waihanga. The research collected data from 27 large publicly funded infrastructure projects in New Zealand and Antarctica. These 27 projects had a total value of \$70.5 billion. Our analysis assessed core document accessibility, official information request effectiveness, and core document usability.

The report contains a detailed analysis of these three areas which we believe offers substantive insight into the state of transparency of New Zealand infrastructure projects. Our report includes a set of recommendations that are based on the findings of the research.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Cordier', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Executive Summary

This report sets out the context, method, findings and recommendations of our research investigating transparency within large publicly funded infrastructure projects. We examined the level of transparency of 27 publicly funded infrastructure projects in New Zealand and Antarctica, defined as those with a total project value of \$50 million or more. The projects analysed, had a value of \$70.5 billion and represent a cross-section of current and historical large infrastructure projects. To put this into perspective, the total value of the current budgeted infrastructure pipeline is \$76.9 billion.

Transparency and accountability are critical for establishing trust between citizens and the state, and openness and transparency are requirements for effective public debate and scrutiny. Given the enormous dollar values of public funds set aside for infrastructure projects, Te Waihanga, the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission funded this research to assess core elements of transparency within infrastructure projects where public funding occurs. We were therefore guided by the research question:

How transparent are public sector entities in the disclosure of information and practices of public infrastructure projects?

Focus and context of the study

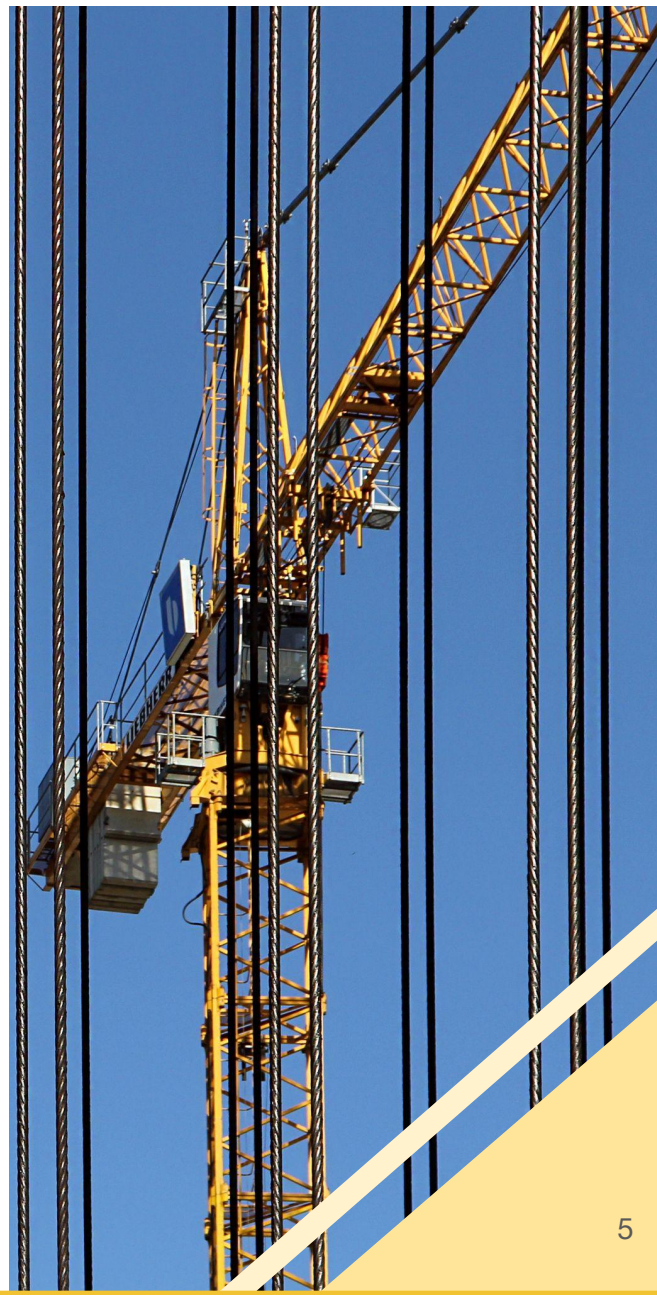
Following a review of the academic literature and other relevant material found in New Zealand legislation, government guidance documents and reports, we determined the three key areas of transparency for infrastructure projects to be:

1. core document accessibility.
 2. official information request effectiveness.
 3. core document usability.
-

- The literature covers the principles of good governance, the roles of transparency in facilitating good governance, and the relationships between transparency and accountability. The academic literature suggests there are five key principles of good governance. They are effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, openness and transparency, participation, and the rule of law. Transparency is therefore necessary for good governance as it facilitates public participation and accountability, leading to greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Transparency is closely linked to accountability, which involves taking ownership and responsibility for actions and being able to explain them to others.
- To change institutional behaviour, transparency policies must explicitly release information about who does what and who receives what. It is this release of information that makes accountability possible. Ultimately, public institutions must be answerable to the public for transparency to lead to accountability.
- Accessibility first entails proactive release. This involves publishing official information without a public request, promoting government accountability, informed decision-making, and trust. New Zealand legislation does not require proactive release, but it is consistent with the spirit of official information legislation, and the Public Service Commission provides guidelines for government departments. Web standards ensure accessibility for all users. Proactive releases should be easy to navigate and have a permanent home on agency websites. A sound proactive release strategy complements the official information request process and can reduce an agency's workload. Failure to ensure accessibility represents a barrier to transparency and accountability.

-
- Official information legislation (the Official Information Act (OIA) 1982 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) 1987) allow access to information that supports transparency, accountability, and public participation in governance. The effectiveness of official information legislation depends on factors such as timeliness, training, culture, expertise, information management, public-facing, and performance monitoring. Government agencies must respond to official information requests within 20 working days, but communication and updated schedules are required if the response time is longer. While timeliness is important, it should not be the sole metric for measuring agency performance. Compliance with official information legislation, good practice, a culture of openness, continuous improvement, and public access to information are other important measures.
 - Usability in public documentation refers to its value and utility to the average citizen. Three key components of usability include: the value citizens place on public documents, administrative guidance documents, and the role of disclosure and redaction in influencing usability. Citizens value public documents that are written in plain and simple language, contextualised in their historical and competitive context, and are clear about their fit within the government's broader infrastructure objectives. Administrative guidance documents, such as Cabinet circulars, provide guidance for government agencies to be transparent, but they do not supersede or replace official information legislation.
 - The decision to redact official information must be based on a concern that releasing the information is not in the public interest. Redaction policies and traceable redaction can help combat "malicious redaction" that seeks to avoid transparency and scrutiny.

- Official information legislation requires official information to be made available on request unless there is a good reason to withhold it.
- The grounds for withholding official information are subject to a public interest test, which means that agencies must balance the public interest in disclosing information against the need to withhold it. If the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold the information, then it must be released.
- Various detailed guidelines exist for the creation of core documents such as business cases.



Our approach

We analysed 22 document types per project, across 27 projects. Target documents were classified into tier-one (four documents) and tier-two documents (18 documents) as a means to distinguish essential and highly important documents for infrastructure project transparency. The two tiers were created as a means to prioritise the collection and analysis of documents. Tier-one documents included the business case, assurance plans, investment decisions, and for historical projects only, ex-post reports. Examples of tier-two documents include project management plans and a project terms of reference documents.

- Core document accessibility
 - We assessed if both tier-one and tier-two documents were proactively released, and if so, how accessible they were in terms of the level of research effort.
- Official information request effectiveness
 - We sought to understand how entities in control of large infrastructure projects responded to official information requests in a manner consistent with the legal requirements specified in official information legislation. Through official information requests, we sought tier-one documents that were inaccessible in stage one as well as all investment decisions for all projects as a means to compare responses.
- Core document usability
 - We assessed the level of redaction, the breadth of information and the quality of information of tier-one documents.

Key Findings

- We found that accessing information about these infrastructure projects was time-consuming and that the accessibility of target documents was poor overall. In particular:
 - a substantial number of business case documents (55.5%) were inaccessible.
 - a substantive number of assurance plan documents (51.8%) were inaccessible.
 - all historical projects' ex-post reports were inaccessible.
 - a concerning high number of projects valued between \$50M and \$500M had inaccessible assurance plan documents (93.3%).
 - a concerning high number of entities subject to direct political instruction also had inaccessible assurance plan documents (91.7%).
- The Public Service Commission provides guidelines for proactive disclosure, but there appears to be no specific guidance for infrastructure documents, leading to possible ambiguity around what documents are expected to be proactively released.
- Projects greater than \$500M in value outperformed projects between \$50M and \$500M in value across all areas assessed for accessibility.
- Projects greater than \$500M in value had a statistically significant higher score than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value for:
 - tier-one combined accessibility
 - business case document accessibility
 - assurance plan document accessibility
 - investment decision document accessibility
 - tier-two combined document accessibility
 - tier-one and tier-two combined accessibility
 - assurance plan document breadth
 - assurance plan document quality

-
- Projects that had a board as the controlling entity had a statistically significant higher scores than entities subject to direct political instruction for:
 - business case document accessibility.
 - assurance plan document accessibility.
 - tier-two combined document accessibility.
 - tier-one and tier-two combined accessibility.
 - All projects had 100% compliance when responding to official information request lodgements.
 - The website pages were easy to navigate and had information on making official information requests.
 - All project entities promptly confirmed receipt of our request within three days and provided details on the next steps.
 - Official information requests were processed well, but there were nine potential breaches. The reasons for these potential breaches are unclear.
 - Some core documents had only minor redactions to protect personal information while others were heavily redacted. It is difficult to explain this variation.
 - We found that some business case documents did not fully utilise the Treasury New Zealand's better business case guidance. The reasons for this are not known.

Recommendations

- 1.** Coordinate with infrastructure stakeholders to create a consistent approach for proactive release, including best practices for document accessibility in large publicly funded projects. Provide remedies for accessibility issues and distribute a single document for easy reference by relevant entities. Embrace SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) principles and successful practices to remove ambiguity and establish a clear standard for measurement in the future.
- 2.** Consider creating a mechanism to scrutinise core documents for large infrastructure projects. Publicly available technical scrutiny of these documents would benefit the general public. While there are many oversight processes, one that examines the usability of core infrastructure documents and allows for commenting on the quality of analysis and decisions would address accessibility and usability issues identified in the report.
- 3.** Review what content is redacted within core infrastructure documents. Focus should include what information is being redacted and the justifications provided by the entity on why the information was redacted.
- 4.** More research is needed to understand performance variations within sub-groups based on project size and entity type. If these factors have a causal effect on transparency performance, further investigation would be valuable. Confirming and expanding these findings in a larger study that includes causal effect is necessary. A subsequent qualitative study could explore the mechanics of these variations.
- 5.** Regular measurement of infrastructure transparency should be conducted approximately every two years, to track the impact of interventions and adjust resources and priorities accordingly.

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Jason teaches, researches, and consults in the areas of strategic management and knowledge management. His research focuses on strategic integration and the way organisational stakeholders understand and coordinate strategically significant activities.



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Steven has an MBA with distinction from Massey University, with a specialisation in business sustainability. He has over 10 years of experience in project management and operational management. He is experienced in leading project teams and facilitating stakeholder requirements between mechanical engineering and operation management teams.



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Andrew has public sector publications including his PhD, which encompasses historical critiques of local and central government management. He is a member of the School of Management at Massey University Albany. He has held senior management positions within both the public and private sectors.

Project Team



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Introduction

Overview

The research presented in this report assesses the level of transparency of 27 large publicly funded infrastructure projects in New Zealand. One of the central themes of good governance is openness and transparency (Van Doeveren, 2011). Appropriate transparency illuminates the behaviours of entities entrusted with public funds. Timely access to reliable information about the use of public funds and the performance of public programmes allows for the pursuit of alternative strategies and constructive change (Fox, 2007).

In the domain of public infrastructure the value of New Zealand's infrastructure pipeline in Q3 2022 was estimated to be \$76.9 billion (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2022), transparency is essential to ensure entities running large infrastructure projects remain accountable, and evidence-based infrastructure investments decisions are made to ensure projects are efficiently and effectively managed.

Transparency and accountability

Prior research has found a strong relationship between transparency and accountability (Fox, 2007). Disclosure and timely access to dependable and appropriate information through both the proactive release of information and official information requests are key to enhancing public accountability (Alom, 2018).

In turn, transparency and accountability are necessary to ensure good governance (Nistor, Stefanescu, Oprisor, & Crisan, 2019).

Accountability is critical for establishing trust between citizens and the state. Accountability requires public agencies to enact transparency-based measures by openly and honestly reporting on what they do. This is achieved by providing specific information both proactively and when requested (Alom, 2018), welcoming scrutiny from the public (or other relevant bodies) and being constructively responsive when challenged (Controller and Auditor-General, 2022).

Transparency-driven policies are designed to inform citizens and improve their decision-making capabilities and influence the nature of the services they receive. Crucially, "a transparent policy is deemed effective when the public acts on the information the policy provides" (Ball, 2009, p. 300).

Openness and transparency are requirements for effective public debate and scrutiny. This involves sharing data, information, knowledge, and insights about performance, simultaneously proactively releasing information and responding promptly to requests for information. This relationship between transparency and accountability can be viewed as a form of two-way dialogue between public entities and stakeholders. Adherence to such dialogue strengthens public sector accountability and trust and helps to promote fairer, and more effective and efficient forms of governance.



The public also has a right to transparency, as detailed in the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). The Official Information Act aims to promote the availability of official information, thereby enabling more effective public participation, and promoting the accountability of government officials (New Zealand Parliamentary Counsel Office, 2022). The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act carries out a similar purpose but applies to local government bodies. Despite this ‘there is often a lack of transparency about how the costs from infrastructure are apportioned to beneficiaries and users’ (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2020).

As such, we were guided by the following research question:

"How transparent are public sector entities in the disclosure of information and practices of public infrastructure projects?"

Study aims

- Assess if the core documents used in large infrastructure projects are proactively released and accessible to the public.
- Assess if large infrastructure projects respond to official information requests in a manner consistent with the legal requirements specified in the official information legislation (OIA and LGOIMA).
- Report the levels of redaction in core documents used in large infrastructure projects.
- Evaluate the breadth of the material provided in core documents used in large infrastructure projects against applicable and appropriate government circulars and advice on required frameworks and standards.
- Evaluate the overall quality of core documents used in large infrastructure projects.

A person in a light blue shirt and dark shorts is running on a paved road that curves through a hilly landscape. The sun is setting on the right side of the frame, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The sky is filled with wispy clouds, and a few birds are visible in the distance. The road has a white dashed line on the left side.

Literature Review

1.



Literature Review

Our review covers the principles of good governance, the roles of transparency in facilitating good governance, and the relationships between transparency and accountability. We then apply these areas to the New Zealand context.

Principles of good governance

Governance reflects a system or established framework that supports the agreements, procedures, policies, or conventions that define how decisions are made and how accountability is attributed. In New Zealand, good governance is explained as:

“...about creating safe and just societies. When this is achieved citizens grow up embracing the values which underpin a democratic society. They become the best defenders of those values and advocates for good governance” (Openness and transparency in Government, 2007).”

Good governance is a mechanism for creating positive societal outcomes, such as poverty eradication, promotion of democratic principles, or in support of justice. Five key principles underpin the mechanism of good governance (illustrated in Table 1).

The principles of good governance reflect interrelationships and interdependencies. The following sub-section discusses the roles of transparency in good governance and how transparency is connected to other good governance principles.

Roles of transparency in good governance

We begin this section by touching on definitions of transparency. We then discuss how transparency factors into good governance.

Transparency

Much like definitions of governance, transparency has evolved in recent years and has become a multi-faceted term. Ball (2009) provides some guidance on how transparency can be defined:

- A value that is embraced by the public to subvert corrupt practices.
- A synonym for open decision-making by governments, non-government organisations, and non-profits.
- A complex tool of good governance in public sector programmes, policy development, organisations, and nations.

Table 1: Principles of good governance (Van Doeveren, 2011)

Principle	Description
Effectiveness and efficiency	Often used interchangeably, these concepts are frequently considered core to good governance. They refer to the delivery of needs proportionately based on clearly identifiable objectives. In other words, institutions produce results that simultaneously meet societal needs while making the most economical use of available resources, intending to protect natural resources and the environment.
Accountability	The European Union (EU) stresses that efforts should be made to clarify the rules of certain state institutions. Whereas the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) consider accountability as somewhat synonymous with responsibility, suggesting that public sector managers are held accountable for carrying out a specific task. The United Nations (UN), on the other hand, takes a broader view of accountability, arguing that public and private sector institutions should be accountable and answerable to the public.
Openness and transparency	The OECD, UN, and EU identify openness and transparency as essential to good governance. Broadly, openness and transparency refer to the ease of access to information and communication with the public in a way that is easy to understand.
Participation	Participation is also identified by the OECD, UN, and the EU as central to good governance. This refers to the extent of public inclusivity through the lifecycle of policy development (conception to implementation) to help promote confidence in final results.
The rule of law	The rule of law is identified by the OECD, the World Bank, and the UN in their descriptions of good governance. The EU, however, does not. Simply put, the rule of law refers to the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by societal rules, and the quality of enforcement (i.e., policing and legal systems). An independent judiciary is viewed as a fundamental component of the rule of law.

Impacts of transparency on good governance

Transparency facilitates public participation through the provision of data and information (accountability). Via accountability, the public may assess and critique regimes, which may then lead to greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Transparency may, therefore, be considered as an encouragement for good governance principles.

Fung et al. (2007) suggest that a successful transparency-driven policy will consist of four primary elements:

- Information provided to the public is concise and accessible to users of public services to which the information relates.
- The information influences decision-making and associated actions. For example, citizens may use released information to modify their behaviour, apply pressure for systemic change, or lobby for the reallocation of resources.
- The actions and behaviours of citizens may (but not necessarily) affect the behaviours of public service providers – they are sensitive to the actions and behaviours of citizens.
- Public service providers respond constructively to the renewed behaviours and actions of citizens – this involves the modification of public policies and the reallocation of resources to correspond with citizen expectations.

According to Fung et al. (2007), these four elements come together to form a transparency action cycle (see figure 2).

The first step in the action cycle reveals the importance of the demand for information. Specifically, if a transparency-driven policy leads to the release of information few or no citizens are interested in, then it is highly unlikely that any change to service provision will occur as a result. The provision of information alone does not necessarily lead to better, or good governance (Fung et al., 2007). This demonstrates that transparency is essential for good governance, but independently insufficient for good governance.

Transparency and efficiency

Examinations of increased transparency suggest that it does not prohibit nor obstruct the development of legislation. In some cases (Rocha Valencia, Queiruga, & González-Benito, 2015) increased transparency can streamline the development of legislation. Such findings support models that show a connection between transparency and efficiency (Fung et al., 2007; Weiss & Steiner, 2006). Figure 1 illustrates the impacts of transparency on governance while Figure 2 shows the transparency action cycle.

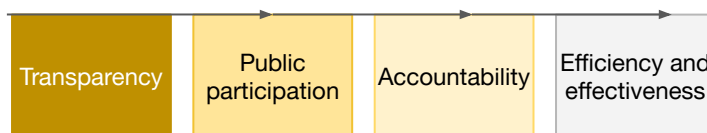


Figure 1: Impacts of transparency on governance based on Weiss and Steiner (2006)

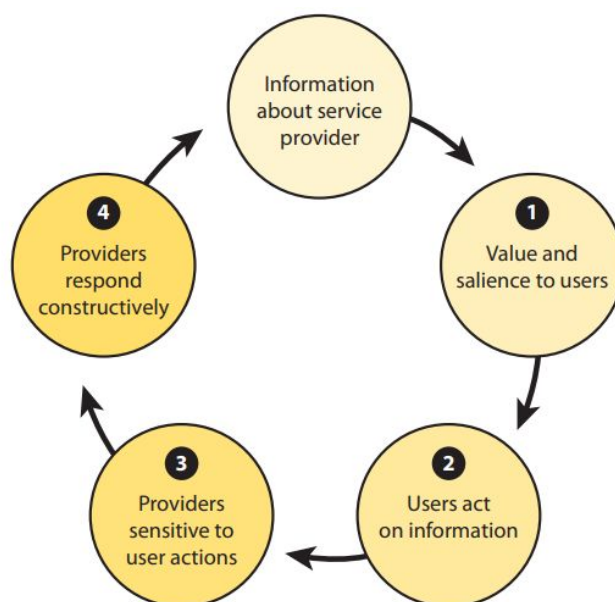


Figure 2: The transparency action cycle (Fung et al., 2007)

Transparency and accountability

Accountability can be considered as taking ownership and responsibility for actions and being able to provide a sound rationale for such actions. Below, we discuss how accountability is defined in contrast with transparency. We then discuss the different types of accountability concerning transparency.

Accountability

According to Hood (2010), accountability denotes the duty of organisations or individuals to respond to how they have conducted themselves or their affairs. This definition of accountability is premised on the notion of delegation of power. According to Bovens (2007), accountability is comprised of three key parts:

- An actor is required to inform the public about their conduct
- The public has the opportunity to question the reliability and accuracy of the information or the appropriateness of the conduct
- The public may then pass judgement on the appropriateness of the actor's conduct.

The concepts of accountability and transparency are frequently linked as they are positive components of good governance (Bovens, 2007). Transparency plays a central role in enabling accountability and facilitating improved services (Mabillard & Zumofen, 2017).

The relationship between transparency and accountability

Fox (2007) argues the purpose of transparency is to generate forms of accountability, but notes that this is not always the case. As Fox (2007, p. 663) explains, this is because in its fundamental form, transparency “mobilises the power of shame”, which means only people who can be ‘shamed’ by transparency are made vulnerable to public exposure. Fox (2007) also contends that there are two main types of transparency (opaque and clear) that foster two distinct types of accountability (soft and hard). Table 2 illustrates explains opaque and clear transparency.

It is necessary to distinguish between the two types because organisations and institutions opposed to transparency will tend to express indirect forms of opposition but avoid the provision of clear transparency.

If policies regarding transparency are going to meet their goals of changing institutional behaviour, they must ensure the explicit release of who does what, and who receives what.

Soft and hard face transparency

A soft face is similar to answerability – being answerable to the public, while a hard face can be considered in terms of answerability with the prospect of sanctions. Only when public institutions are answerable to the public does transparency engender a stage of accountability (Fox, 2007).

Table 2: Transparency types

Opaque transparency	Clear transparency
<p>“Involves the dissemination of information that does not reveal how institutions actually behave in practice, whether in terms of how they make decisions or the results of their actions. The term also refers to information that is divulged only nominally, or which is revealed but turns out to be unreliable” (Fox, 2007, p. 667).</p>	<p>“Refers both to information-access policies and to programmes that reveal reliable information about institutional performance, specifying officials' responsibilities as well as where public funds go. Clear transparency sheds light on institutional behaviour, which permits interested parties to pursue strategies of constructive change” (Fox, 2007, p. 667).</p>

Transparency in New Zealand

Accessibility and usability

In this section, we discuss proactive release, web standards, and official information (see Table 3). We then discuss issues of usability, which include what citizens value in an official document, legislative and administrative guidance, as well as disclosure and redaction. When discussing access and usability we refer to the user experience when accessing and utilising public documents within the above domains.

With regards to usability, we consider what citizens value in publicly released documents, legal and administrative guidance, as well as an understanding of matters such as disclosure and redaction. We begin with a discussion of the features of accessibility.

Proactive release

A proactive release (also known as proactive disclosure) is where official information is published without an official request from the public. The purpose of proactive release includes strengthening the accountability of government decision-makers; informing the public of the rationales for decisions; facilitating informed participation in government decision-making; and improving levels of confidence and trust in the government (Ombudsman, 2020). A secondary benefit of a proactive release is the reduction in an agency's official information release workload by pre-empting requests or helping requests become more targeted and specific (Boshier, 2022).

New Zealand legislation does not directly require proactive release, but it is consistent with the intent of the OIA – “to progressively increase the availability of official information to the people of New Zealand” (Ombudsman, 2020). This is also the case for the LGOIMA. The Public Service Commission also provides guidelines and best practices for government departments to follow in terms of the proactive release of information, and many departments have developed their own policies and procedures. The academic literature notes that passive disclosure practices (such as responding to official information requests) are giving way to proactive release practices (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2015), thereby supporting outward accountability (Alom, 2018).

Domain of accessibility	Description
Proactive release	Where official information is published without an official public request.
Web standards	Involves considering the information access limitations of marginalised members of the public.
Official information legislation	Where official information is published following an official public request.

Table 3: Domains of accessibility

A sound proactive release strategy complements the process of responding to official information requests (Boshier, 2022). The New Zealand Government Web Standards framework is intended to address accessibility issues members of the public may experience.

Web standards

Public sector agencies must ensure publicly released information is consistent with the New Zealand Government Web Standards to enable accessibility for all users (Boshier, 2022). Failure to ensure accessibility for all users represents a barrier to transparency and accountability (Fox, 2007). This means considering different accessibility challenges that may be experienced by some audiences, such as those with disabilities. Proactive releases, and published official information request responses, should have a permanent home on the agency's website that is easy to navigate. It is expected that all government agencies adhere to the Accessibility Charter. The charter is guided by the following commitment:

“...working progressively over the next five years towards ensuring that all information intended for the public is accessible to everyone.” (Accessibility Guide: Leading the way in accessible information, 2021)

Official information legislation

The OIA and the LGOIMA enable access to information that aids participation in governance. Official information legislation facilitates transparency, through accountability and public participation. The ability of the Official information legislation to fulfil this purpose rests upon timeliness, training, culture, expertise, leadership, information management, public-facing, and performance monitoring.

Timeliness

Government agencies are given 20 working days to respond to an official information requests. In cases of an urgent request, the response time may be shorter. Where responses will take more than 20 working days, agencies should communicate with the requester explaining the reasons for the delay and provide an updated schedule.

The fast-paced nature of government decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the requirement for timely responses to official information requests. Such requests were key for the maintenance of trust in the government: However, the use of timeliness as a sole metric would likely lead to the release of inaccurate, unreliable, and incomplete information – which is prejudicial to the ultimate goal of public participation. Alternatively, Boshier (2022) suggests, in addition to timeliness, government agency performance should also be measured against compliance, good practice, a proactivity culture of openness and continuous improvement, participation and access to information by the public.

Training and Culture

A culture of transparency should be led by senior management. Boshier (2022) and Wakem (2015) both touch upon the importance of having fully trained staff responsible for responding to official information requests. They note that insufficient training can lead to “bad habits” as outlined above. The Office of the Ombudsman is firm that effective management and delivery of the OIA requires effective leadership from within public sector agencies. The same logic would apply to the LGOIMA. The roles of public sector leaders in this regard are broad and may include: modelling expectations concerning adherence to the OIA, provision of regular training surrounding disclosure and approaches to requests and developing internal strategies for ensuring objectives relating to OIA compliance are achieved.

Expertise

In certain instances, a subject matter expert must respond to official information requests. There are two considerations for the responding agencies in this regard:

- Requests that require a subject matter expert are quickly identified and progressed to the appropriate party
- Subject matter experts are suitably qualified to respond to the information within the request

The provision of ‘expert’ information without suitable qualification may amount to inaccuracies and inadvertent representations, which again may undermine the purpose of official information legislation – transparency.

Information management

A factor conducive to the timely responsiveness to official information requests is the presence of efficient and effective information management systems. Information management systems should make information easily identifiable and retrievable by staff members (Wakem, 2015), to ensure that request responses are timely and accurate.

Public facing

Public sector agency official information strategies, released information, and cultures should be public facing. This speaks to transparency but also serves a more practical purpose of streamlining the process of an official information request.

Performance management

Measurement of performance is key to maintaining an effective official information system (Boshier, 2022). Timeliness serves as an important indicator.

Official information requests

Usability refers to the value and utility of documents to the general public, or the ‘average citizen’. We discuss the three central components of usability below

- **What citizens value in public documentation:** the types of documents, and the characteristics of documents, that are valued by the citizen.
- **Administrative guidance documents:** the legislative and administrative documents, namely Cabinet circulars that mandate government behaviours.
- **Understanding:** the roles of disclosure and redaction in influencing the usability of a released document.

What do citizens value in a public document?

The value of a public document may be considered in terms of its ability to engender transparency. According to Valverde and Moore (2019), the value of public documents in the infrastructure sector stems from a series of factors:

Public documents should be written in plain and simple language. Jargon should be avoided, and technical/reserved language should be used only when absolutely necessary. The project should be positioned in its historical and competitive context. This is required to help the citizen understand where the project emerged from and how it developed into its eventual form. It should be clear to a citizen where the project fits within the government's broader infrastructure objectives, and how the project brings the government closer those objectives. Internationally (Valverde & Moore, 2019) governments frequently fail to contextualise documents in this way. Without these components, citizens are unable to properly scrutinise their governments decisions (Valverde & Moore, 2019).

Administrative guidance documents

The OIA provides the legislative framework government agencies are required to follow when handling public information. In conjunction with the legislative framework, administrative guidance, such as Cabinet circulars, provide guidance for government agencies to be transparent. Although they provide guidance, these documents do not supersede or replace OIA legislation. However, as guidance documents, administrative circulars can be creatively interpreted and followed without the strictest of adherence.

Redaction

There are instances where disclosure of information is not in the public interest. Patel and Dallas (2002) suggest that this is when information pertains to matters of security, both nationally and for specific individuals, commercial sensitivity, including the risk of divulging trade secrets and market sensitivity, including the risk of releasing information that threatens the integrity of markets.

The OIA and LGOIMA are based on the principle of availability, meaning official information must be made available on request unless there is a 'good reason' to withhold it. A decision to prohibit disclosure must be based on a tangible concern that doing so would be detrimental to the public's interests.

'Public interest' does not mean the entire population has to be affected, or even a significant section of it. The private interests of individuals can also reflect wider public interests. Examples of public interest considerations include transparency, participation, accountability, administration of justice, health, safety and the environment.

The grounds for withholding official information in section 9 of the OIA and section 7 of the LGOIMA are subject to a 'public interest test'. This means agencies must balance the public interest in disclosing information against the need to withhold it. If the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold the information, then it must be released. For transparency, if an agency decides to not disclose official information, the requester should be provided with an explanation of the rationales supporting the decision.

The decision to redact official information must be based on a concern that releasing the information is not in the public interest (Ma et al., 2020). However, redaction is open to abuse and the opportunity for 'malicious redaction' is high. 'Malicious redaction' refers to the excessive and targeted use of redaction to avoid being transparent and avoiding scrutiny. Ma et al. (2020) suggest two mechanisms for combating 'malicious redaction'. These are a redaction policy and traceable redaction. Both these mechanisms are explained in Table 4.

Table 4: Mechanisms for combating malicious redaction (Ma et al., 2020)

A redaction policy	Traceable redaction
<p>The government agency or organisation has an established set of guidelines for redaction that must be followed by staff responding to official information requests. Deviations from said guidelines can be investigated for instances of malicious redaction.</p>	<p>Redactors are required to ‘sign off’ their redactions, essentially making them accountable for the information they redact. Teurlings and Stauff (2014) suggest that although redaction is sometimes required it can obscure public perception of reality. This is because, in cases of redaction, citizens begin to construct realities based on their imagination of the redacted information.</p>

Consistency and measurement

Noted earlier were two types of accountabilities: ‘soft face’ and ‘hard face’. A soft face is similar to answerability – being answerable to the public, while a hard face can be considered in terms of answerability with the prospect of sanctions. It was noted that only when public institutions are answerable to the public does transparency engender a state of accountability (Fox, 2007). With varied project entities being responsible for large infrastructure projects, consistency across core infrastructure document accessibility and usability is likely to be wide-ranging. Consistency in guidance, operationalisation, measurement and tracking however are conceivable pathways towards enhanced transparency.

First, while there are a host of guidance documents and policies related to transparency standards and operationalising sound transparency practices across New Zealand government departments, within the infrastructure context, there are no summary or guideline documents that consolidate existing administrative guidance around transparency. Examples would include contextually specific guidance documents utilising already developed standards while supplementing contextually specific assistance around operationalisation. Doing so is arguably conducive to increasing transparency within large infrastructure projects.

Second, mechanisms for measuring and evaluating key transparency metrics currently appear limited. In the United Kingdom, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is a select committee of the House of Commons that scrutinises public spending by government departments and agencies. Its role includes examining the value for money of government programmes and projects and ensuring transparency and accountability in government spending.

One area of focus for the PAC is the management and delivery of large infrastructure projects, such as the construction of new highways, railways, and other major public works. The PAC monitors the progress of these projects, investigates any issues or delays, and holds government officials and contractors accountable for their performance. The PAC also reviews the cost estimates, funding arrangements, and procurement processes for large infrastructure projects, and makes recommendations to improve their delivery and value for money. Here, a mechanism exists for evaluating not only the usability of core infrastructure documents but also a mechanism to independently evaluate performance.

In Australia, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) plays a similar role in providing independent analysis and advice on government spending and economic policies. The PBO is an independent office of the Australian Parliament that supports the work of parliamentarians by providing impartial analysis and advice on fiscal matters. While the PAC in the United Kingdom has a specific focus on scrutinizing the delivery of large infrastructure projects, the PBO in Australia provides a wider range of services, including analysis of government budgets and costings of policy proposals. It is unclear if the PBO's wider focus enables or disables positive outcomes evaluating the performance of infrastructure projects. Both the PAC in the United Kingdom and the PBO in Australia play important roles in promoting transparency and accountability in government spending, by providing independent oversight and analysis of public finances and policies. Accordingly, in New Zealand, scope may exist within the broader domain of infrastructure accountability for a suitable entity to monitor or measure accessibility and usability.

Summary

Increased transparency should lead to accountability, improved public participation, and eventual enhancements to the effectiveness and efficiency of public service provision (Fung et al., 2007). In New Zealand, a system consisting of the official information legislation, proactive release strategies, web standards, redaction and disclosure guidance, and administrative guidance documents, exist to enable transparency. It is unclear, from the literature alone, if these measures are sufficiently followed to facilitate transparency within large New Zealand public infrastructure projects.



Method

2.



Method

Sample

Between August and December 2022, we collected data related to 27 large publicly funded infrastructure projects in New Zealand (n=26) and Antarctica (n=1), defined as those with a total project value of \$50 million or more. These projects had a total value of \$70.5 billion, with \$66.6 billion being allocated to current projects and \$3.9 billion to historic ones. To put this into perspective, the total value of the current budgeted infrastructure pipeline is \$76.9 billion (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2022).

The projects being assessed in our study, along with project summaries, budgets and locations can be found in Appendix 1.

Sample cross-section

The 27 projects analysed, represent a cross-section of infrastructure projects within New Zealand. Project characteristics include:

- Current and recent historical projects.
- Central and local government entities that undertake projects both regularly and irregularly.
- Representation of government ministries and agencies.
- Variation between one-off projects and projects included within a broader programme.
- Projects ranging between \$50 million and \$500 million in value.
- Projects greater than \$500 million in value.

Elements of transparency being assessed

1 Core document accessibility

- The objective of stage one was to gain insights into how well projects managed proactively releasing core documents and the accessibility of proactively released documents.
- We assessed if the target documents were proactively released, and if so, how accessible they were in terms of the level of research effort.

2 Official information request effectiveness

- The objective of stage two was to understand if entities in control of large infrastructure projects responded to official information requests in a manner consistent with the legal requirements specified in official information legislation.

3 Core document usability

- The objective of stage three was to understand how easily and intuitively users can access, read and comprehend core documents.
- We assessed the level of redaction, the breadth of information and the quality of information of core documents.

Appendix 2 shows the criteria used in stages one and three.

Target documents being assessed

We analysed a total of 22 documents during the three stages of the research project. Target documents were classified into tier-one (four documents) and tier-two documents (18 documents) as a means to distinguish essential and highly important documents for infrastructure project transparency. The two tiers were created as a means to prioritise the collection and analysis of documents. Appendix 3 lists all tier-one and tier-two target documents.

Tier-one target documents

Tier-one documents were selected as their purpose is either to demonstrate justification for a project or subsequently provide accountability around the running of a project. There were four documents classified as tier-one documents (business case, assurance plan, investment decision, and for historical projects only, ex-post reports).

Tier-two target documents

Tier-two documents provide supplementary project information to those contained in tier-one documents by offering support, detailed descriptions, and additional clarification. They are designed to complement the information presented in tier-one documents, with the reasonable expectation that they are accessible to readers in conjunction with those documents.

Data collection and analysis

Collection and assessment lens

We have chosen to analyse transparency from the viewpoint of the reasonable expectations of 'the person in the street'. This position has long been held as being similar to the 'man on the Clapham bus' or locally, as the 'man in the street'. We have chosen this threshold of analysis as we reasoned that the bar for transparency should not be set at a level that required 'industry' knowledge of the types of documents to be found. Rather, we suggest the bar be set at the expectations of a person with little or no knowledge of the industry in question. We also acknowledge that in terms of a person seeking the types of information the first port of call is the internet. We have therefore arrived at a threshold that encompasses anyone who has basic knowledge of how to use a search engine.

Stage one

The process for data collection in stage one was simple by design and reflected the most likely pathway for the 'person in the street' searching for information - a Google keyword search. Using appropriate keywords that entailed the target document's name and the project itself in various combinations, up to three pages of search results were reviewed. Where there was difficulty finding documents, a snowball approach was used moving from information that could be readily found to more obscure data that could likely lead to the document. In this stage, we collected all 22 tier-one and tier-two documents.

Collection and assessment lens

Our philosophy was to provide every opportunity for the target document to be discovered. The online search undertaken by our research team evaluated each target document as 'inaccessible' (scored 1), 'accessible' (scored 2) and 'easily accessible' (scored 3) based on rubric assessment criteria.

When an assessment of 'inaccessible' was given, we note that we cannot with absolute certainty say that the document was not proactively released. What we can infer is the amount of effort and time searching for the document was such that it did not reach the threshold of 'accessible', even if the document was proactively released. From the perspective of the person in the street, our effort to locate the documents could be classified as extensive and in-depth.

We did not investigate if document accessibility addressed different accessibility challenges that may have been experienced by some audiences, such as those with disabilities. However, we would argue that if accessibility challenges exist for able-bodied people, then they would likely be more significant for those with disabilities.

Stage two

In stage two we sought to understand accessibility through the lens of an official information request. We sent out official information requests to all 27 project entities.

This entailed 27 official information requests for 68 tier-one documents. Official information requests in this stage were made for the business case, assurance plan and ex-post (where applicable) documents when either:

- The document was not able to be accessed in stage one (n=40)¹
- The document was accessed in stage one but was labelled as 'indicative' or 'initial' (n=2)²

Additionally, we requested investment decision documents for all 27 projects regardless of whether we had already accessed the investment decision³ document in stage one. This was done for two reasons.

1. The complex nature of investment decisions often means that multiple levels of approval and documents can be required. Requesting the investment decision (worded as "the most recent document that captures the governance decision to proceed with this project. Typically, Cabinet papers, board papers or governance papers") offered a means to ensure that we had the most up-to-date document.
2. We required a way to compare all 27 projects' responses to official information requests for at least one document. We used the investment decision as the comparative document for this.

¹ n=40 constitutes 15 business cases, 19 assurance plans and 6 ex-post documents that were originally recorded as inaccessible in stage one. We later discovered in stage two that a historical project was cancelled. Therefore, other than in stage two, analysis of only 5 ex-post projects has occurred.

² n=2 were two business case documents that were accessible but were listed as 'indicative' despite project commencement.

³ If a different investment decision was provided in stage two than an investment decision we accessed in stage one, then the document provided in stage two was used.

Stage three

Stage three assessed the usability of tier-one documents (target documents 1-4). Usability refers to the extent to which a document is user-friendly and facilitates efficient and effective use by its intended audience. Usability is concerned with how easily and intuitively users can access, read, comprehend, and use the information presented in a document. Business case, assurance plan, investment decision and ex-post documents for each of the 27 projects were scored on three central areas related to usability:

1. Level of redaction
2. Breadth of information
3. Quality of information

Redaction scores assessed the impact of redaction within documents on readability and on understanding the full context in which critical decisions were made. Excessive obfuscation of critical data inhibits accountability. Breadth scores evaluated how well documents covered central points of appropriate guidance documents such as the better business case framework. Quality scores reviewed the depth of the information provided in documents, assessing clarity and appropriateness. Based on the rubric, tier-one documents were scored as 'below the expected standard' (scored 1), 'meets the expected standard' (scored 2) and 'exceeds the expected standard' (scored 3).





Results

3.



Results

The following section outlines the results of the study. Appendix 4 provides the statistical tests utilised for all study variables and additional statistical values not shown in the main body of the report. Where we report statistical significance, due to the low sample size, a significance threshold of p less than 0.1 is used.

Stage 1: Accessibility results

Figure 3 shows the accessibility scores for tier-one target documents (business case, assurance plans and investment decision documents) for each of the 27 projects.

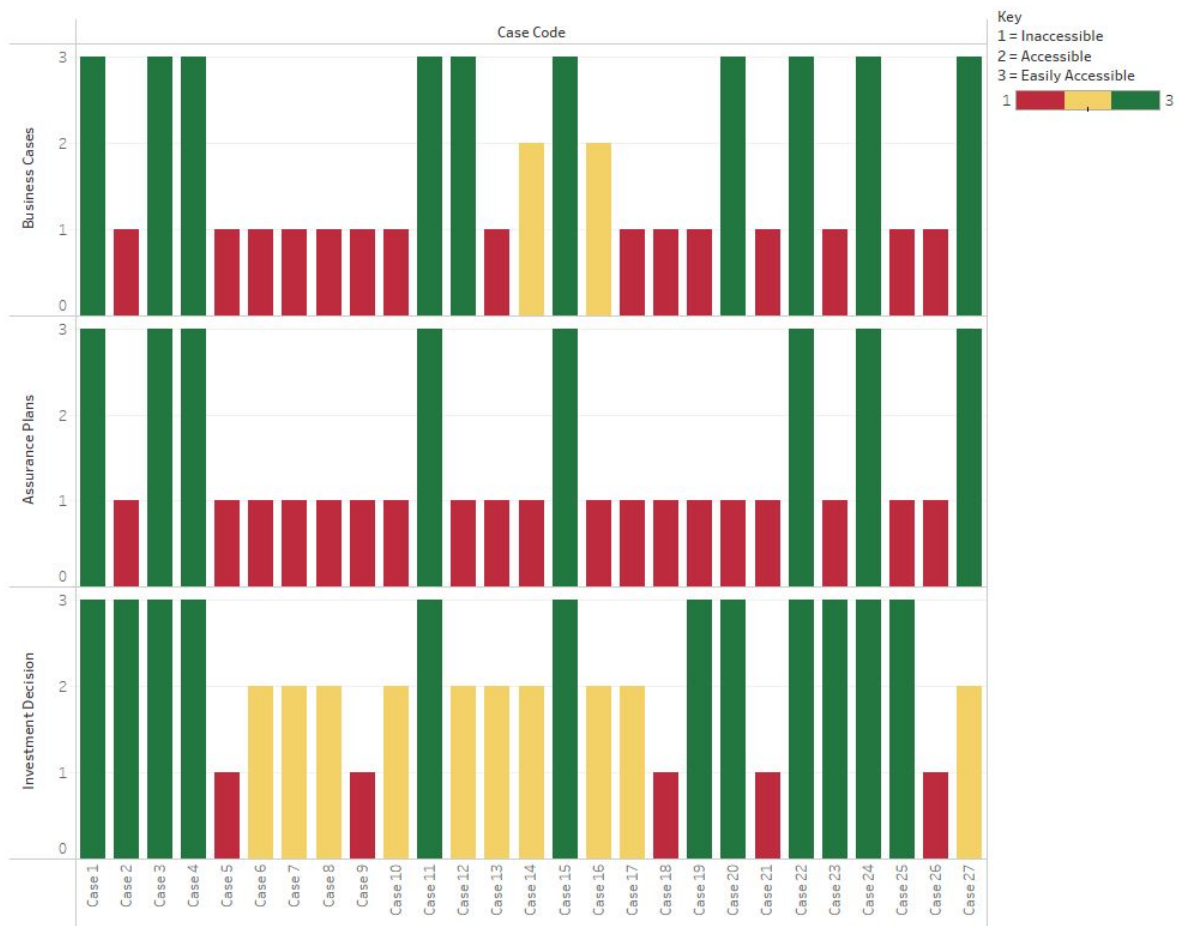


Figure 3: Accessibility scores for tier-one documents (target documents 1, 2 and 3)

Figure 4 and Table 5 below illustrate the frequency and results of tier-one document combined accessibility scores for all projects. They also report the frequencies and results of scores for two sub-groupings.

1. Project size: comparing projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15) and projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12).
2. Entity type: comparing projects where the controlling entity is subject to direct political instruction (n=12) and projects where the controlling entity has a board (n=15)⁴.

Overall, five projects (18.5%) had a combined total score of 3 which represents all three tier-one documents as being inaccessible. In contrast, seven projects (25.9%) achieved scores of 9. This denotes all three tier-one documents were easily accessible. We also found:

- Projects greater than \$500M in value had statistically significantly higher accessibility scores than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value. This significance was found in all analyses in stage one as evidenced by the results tables.

Figure 4 (RIGHT): Frequency of tier-one document accessibility scores (combined target documents 1, 2 and 3) for all projects and subgroups

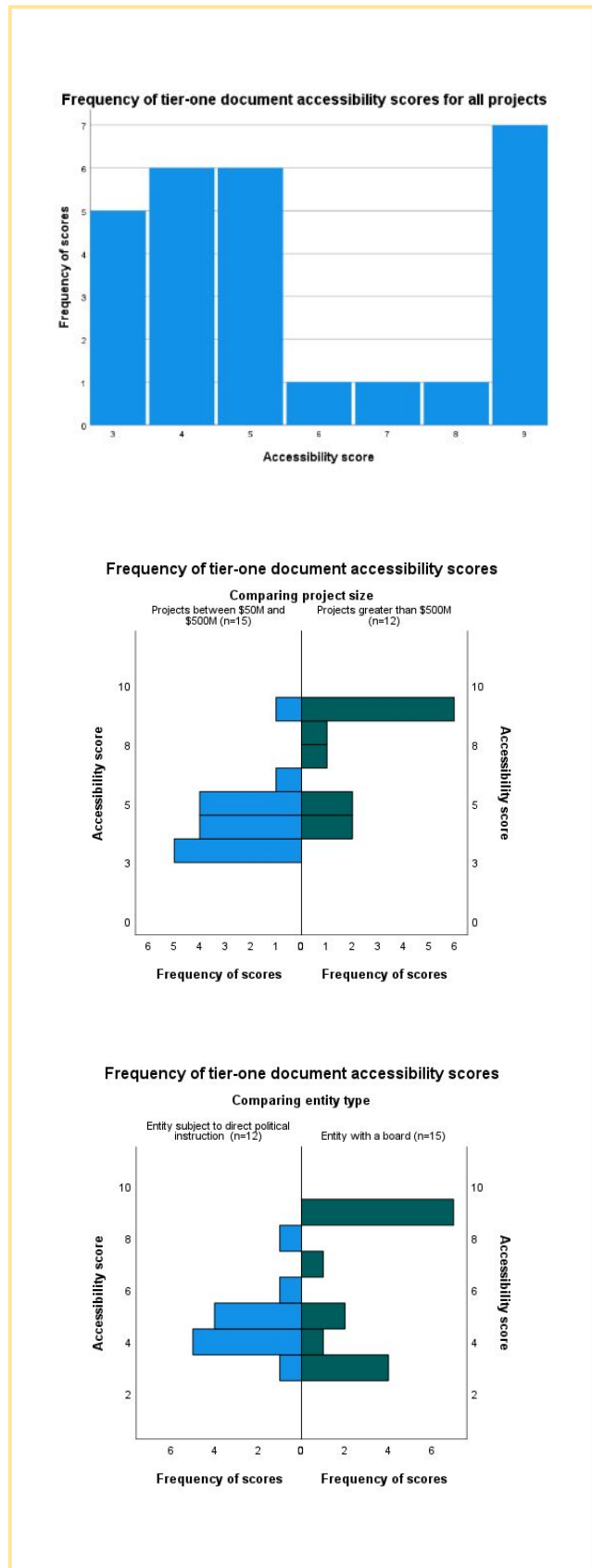


Table 5 (BELOW): Results for tier-one document accessibility scores (combined target documents 1, 2 and 3) for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (3-9 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
3	18.5% (5)	33.3% (5)	0	8.3% (1)	26.7% (4)
4	22.2% (6)	26.7% (4)	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)	6.7% (1)
5	22.2% (6)	26.7% (4)	16.7% (2)	33.3% (4)	13.3% (2)
6	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	8.3% (1)	0
7	3.7% (1)	0	8.3% (1)	0	6.7% (1)
8	3.7% (1)	0	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	0
9	25.9% (7)	6.7% (1)	50.0% (6)	0	46.7% (7)
Mean	5.67	4.40	7.25	4.75	6.40
Mean rank ⁵		9.93	19.08	11.79	15.77
Std. Dev	2.32	1.59	2.14	1.29	2.72
Exact Sig		0.002***		0.200	
Statistical test results	<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of tier-one document accessibility scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects less than \$500M.</p>		<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of tier-one document accessibility scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</p>		

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

⁴ n represents the sample size.

⁵ Mean rank is a non-parametric measure used to summarise the central tendency of a ranked dataset. It is calculated by adding up the ranks of all the observations and dividing by the sample size.

Business case accessibility scores

Figure 5 and Table 6 present the frequency and results of business case document scores. The frequency and results are also presented for two sub-groups.

Overall, a substantial number of business case documents (55.5%) were categorised as inaccessible. This percentage comprised of 15 projects whose documents were categorised as inaccessible. In contrast, 10 projects (37.0%) achieved a score of 3 where the business case document was considered to be easily accessible. We also found that:

- Projects greater than \$500M in value had statistically significantly higher accessibility scores than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value.
- Projects in which the controlling entity has a board had statistically significant higher accessibility scores than projects where the controlling entity is subject to direct political instruction.
- Specifically, there were exceedingly high frequencies of inaccessible business case documents for projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (73.3%) and entities subject to a political direction (75.0%).

Figure 5: Frequency of business case document accessibility scores (target documents 1) for all projects and subgroups

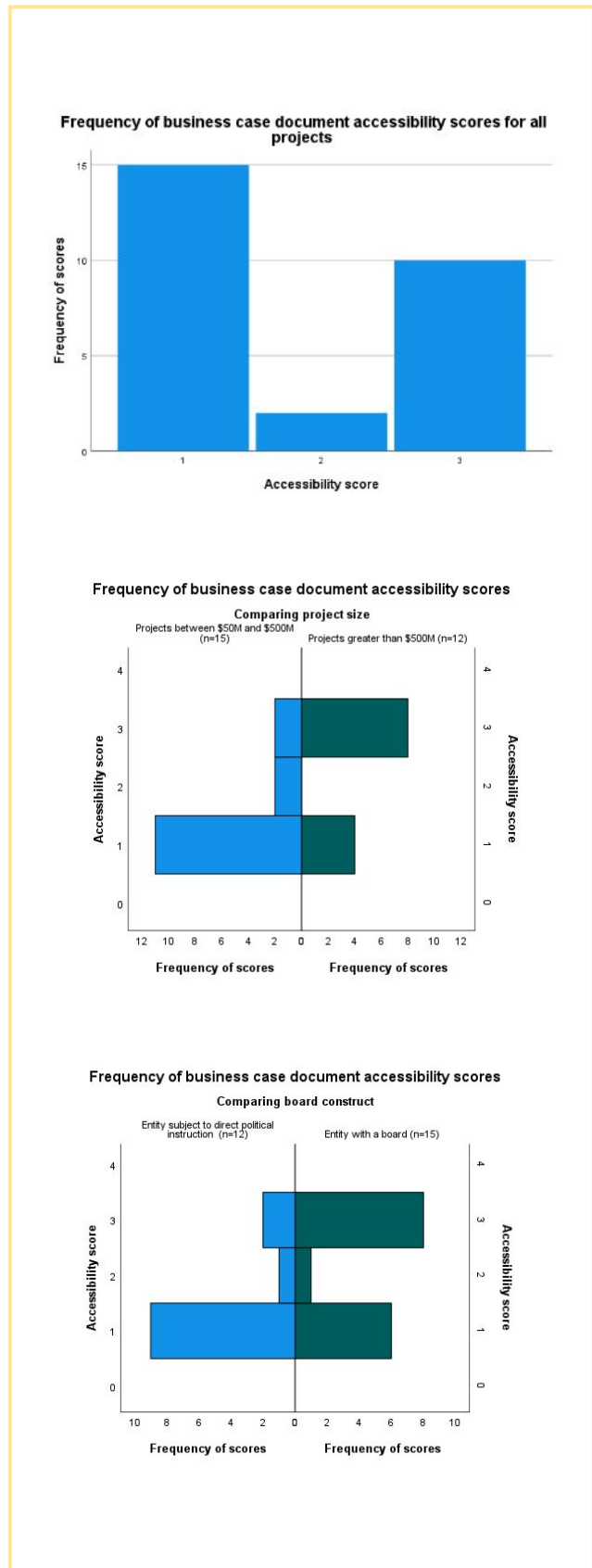


Table 6 (BELOW): Results for business case document accessibility scores (target document 1) for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (1-3 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
1	55.6% (15)	73.3% (11)	33.3% (4)	75.0% (9)	40.0% (6)
2	7.4% (2)	13.3% (2)	0	8.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
3	37.0% (10)	13.3% (2)	66.7% (8)	16.7% (2)	53.3% (8)
Mean	1.8	1.40	2.3	1.42	2.13
Mean rank		11.07	17.67	11.13	16.30
Std. Dev	0.96	0.74	0.98	0.79	0.99
Exact Sig		0.032**		0.093*	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case document accessibility scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case document accessibility scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects run by entities that have a board were statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that are subject to direct political instruction.</i>	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Assurance plan document accessibility scores

The results for the frequency of assurance plan document scores were similar to those of business case documents. There were a substantive number of inaccessible documents (14 projects representing 51.8% of the sample). In contrast, 10 projects achieved a score of 3 where the business case document was easily accessible. We also found that:

- Projects greater than \$500M in value and projects had a statistically significant higher score than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value.
- Projects in which the controlling entity has a board had a statistically significant higher score than projects where the controlling entity is subject to direct political instruction
- Despite there being statistically significant higher scores in the two subgroups, across all groups the performance was poor.
- A concerning high number of projects between \$50M and \$500M in value had inaccessible assurance plan documents (93.3%).
- A concerning high number of entities subject to direct political instruction also had inaccessible assurance plan documents (91.7%).

Figure 6 and Table 7 present the frequency and results of assurance plan document scores. The frequency and results are also presented for two sub-groups.

Figure 6 (RIGHT): Frequency of assurance plan (target document 2) accessibility scores for all projects and subgroups

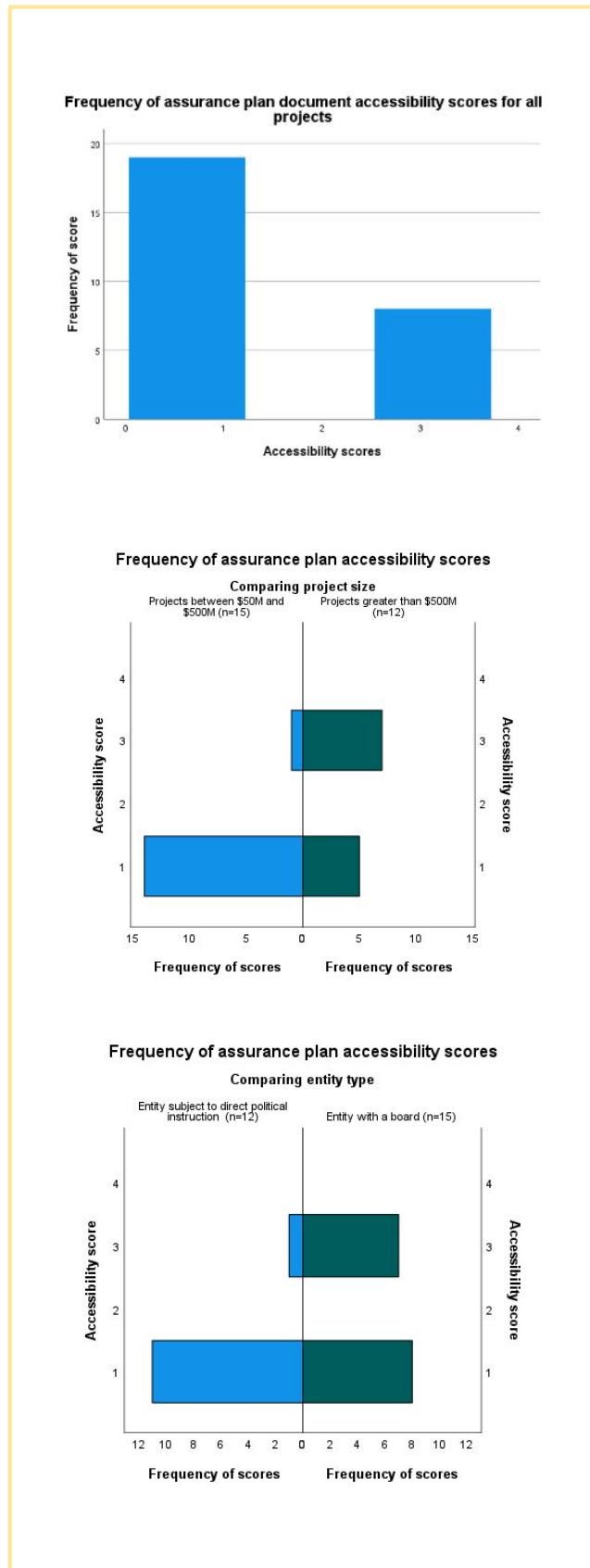


Table 7 (BELOW): Results for assurance plan (target document 2) accessibility scores for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (1-3 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
1	70.4% (19)	93.3% (14)	41.7% (5)	91.7% (11)	53.3% (8)
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	29.6% (8)	6.7% (1)	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)	46.7% (7)
Mean	1.60	1.13	2.33	1.17	1.93
Mean rank		10.90	17.88	11.13	16.30
Std. Dev	0.93	0.74	0.99	0.58	1.03
Exact Sig		0.021**		0.093*	
Statistical test results	<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document accessibility scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M</p>		<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document accessibility scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for those run by entities subject to direct political instruction were statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</p>		

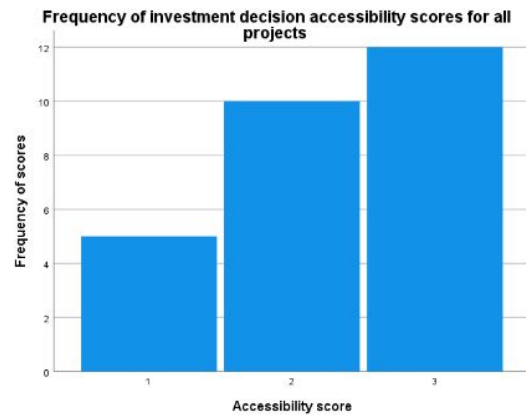
*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Investment decision document accessibility scores

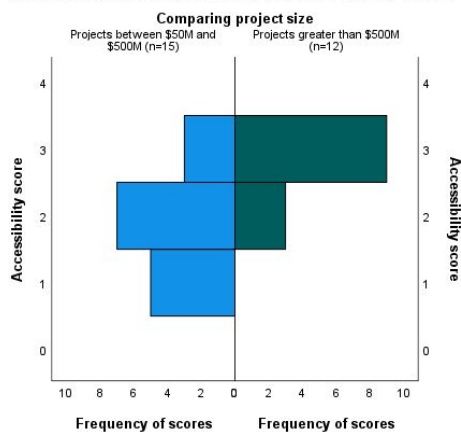
In contrast to the high number of inaccessible business case and assurance plan documents, investment decision documents were noticeably more accessible. Here, only five investment decision documents (18.5%) were categorised as not accessible while 22 (81.5%) were accessible or easily accessible. Similar to the business case and assurance plan document accessibility scores, we also found that:

- Projects greater than \$500M in value had a statistically significant higher score than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value.
- Notably, projects greater than \$500M in value had no inaccessible investment decision documents and a relatively high number of easily accessible investment decision documents (75.0%).

Figure 7 (RIGHT): Frequency of investment decision (target document 3) accessibility scores for all projects and subgroups



Frequency of investment decision accessibility scores



Frequency of investment decision accessibility scores

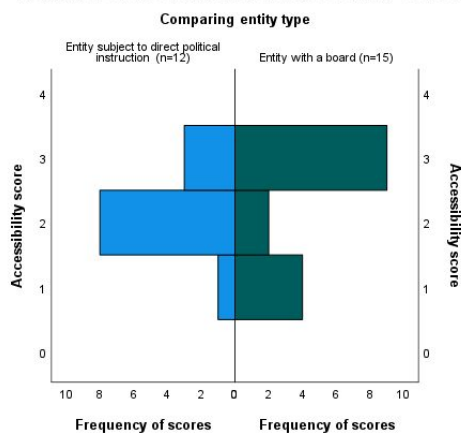


Table 8 (BELOW): Results for investment decision (target document 3) accessibility scores for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (1-3 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
1	18.5% (5)	33.3% (5)	0	8.3% (1)	26.7% (4)
2	37.1% (10)	46.7% (7)	25.0% (3)	66.7% (8)	13.3% (2)
3	44.4% (12)	20.0% (3)	75.0% (9)	25.0% (3)	60.0% (9)
Mean	2.26	1.87	2.75	2.17	2.33
Mean rank		10.20	18.75	12.63	15.10
Std. Dev	0.76	0.74	0.45	0.58	0.90
Exact Sig		0.004***		0.427	
Statistical test results		<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document accessibility scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M.</p>		<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document accessibility scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</p>	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Ex-post document accessibility scores

Of the 27 projects examined, six were historical projects. Of the six historical projects, five were completed and one was cancelled with its funding redirected. As a result, five ex-post reports were sought, with all ex-post documents being categorised as inaccessible (100%). Due to the low number of ex-post reports, we did not undertake any additional statistical analysis for accessibility.

Tier-two document accessibility scores

Figure 8 and Table 9 show the frequency and results of scores for all 18 tier-two documents for each of the 27 projects. The minimum achievable score was 18 ('inaccessible' representing a score of 1 for each document) and the maximum achievable score was 54 ('easily accessible' representing a score of 3 for each document). Further to Figure 8 and Table 9, Appendix 5 shows the tier-two document scores assigned to each project.

Overall, the mean score for all projects was 30.4. We also found that:

- Projects greater than \$500M in value and projects had a statistically significant higher score than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value.
- Projects in which the controlling entity has a board had a statistically significant higher score than projects where the controlling entity is subject to direct political instruction.
- Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value had lower levels of accessibility when looking at the frequency of scores between 20-25 (73.3%).
- In contrast to the low accessibility mentioned above, projects greater than \$500M in value recorded 83.3% of scores between 36 and 42. Comparatively, 6.7% of projects between \$50M and \$500M scored in this range.

Figure 8 (RIGHT): Frequency of tier-two document (combined target documents 5 to 18) accessibility scores for all projects and subgroups

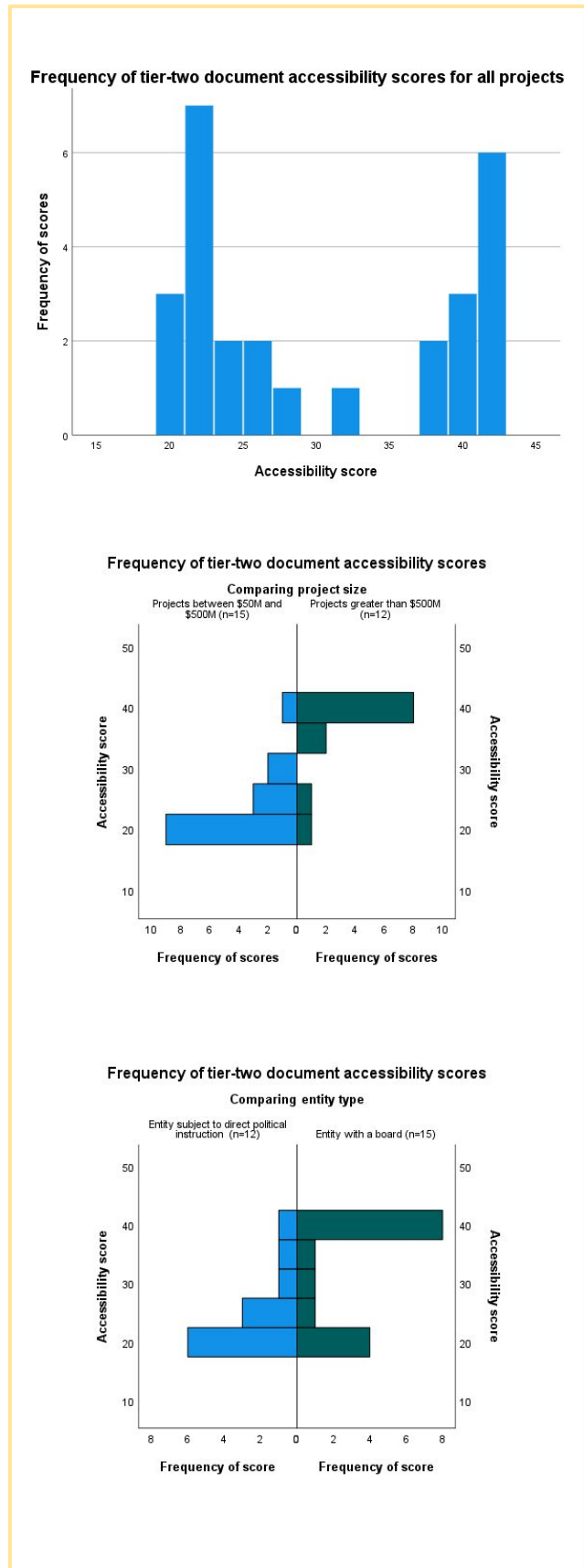


Table 9 (BELOW): Results for tier-two document (combined target documents 5 to 18) accessibility scores for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (20-42 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
20-25	44.4% (12)	73.3% (11)	8.3% (1)	66.7% (8)	26.7% (4)
26-30	11.1% (3)	13.3% (2)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	13.3% (2)
31-35	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	8.3% (1)	0
36-40	18.5% (5)	6.7% (1)	33.3% (4)	16.6% (2)	20.0% (3)
41-42	22.2% (6)	0	50.0% (6)	0	40.0% (6)
Mean	30.33	24.40	37.42	25.92	33.87
Mean rank		9.03	20.21	10.17	17.07
Std. Dev	8.98	5.41	6.73	6.72	9.17
Exact Sig		0.000***		0.025**	
Statistical test results		<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of tier-two document accessibility scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M.</p>		<p>A visual inspection of the distributions of tier-two document accessibility scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were statistically significantly higher than scores of entities run by entities that have a board.</p>	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

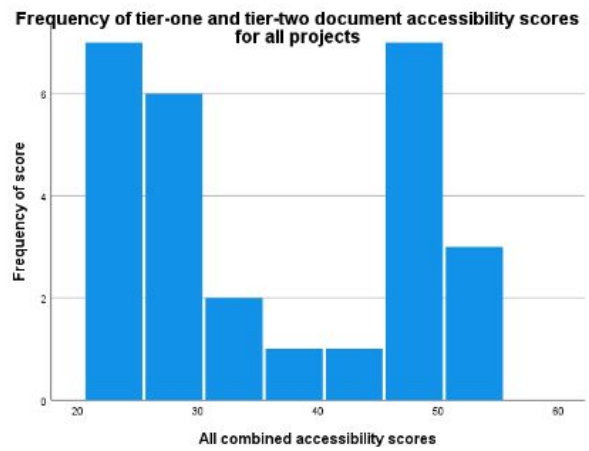
Tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores

Figure 9 and Table 10 show the frequency and results of scores for both tier-one and tier-two documents (combined target documents 1 to 3 and 5 to 22) for each of the 27 projects. As the ex-post reports were assessed separately, the minimum achievable score was 21 ('inaccessible' representing a score of 1 for each document). The maximum achievable score was 63 ('easily accessible' representing a score of 3 for each document)

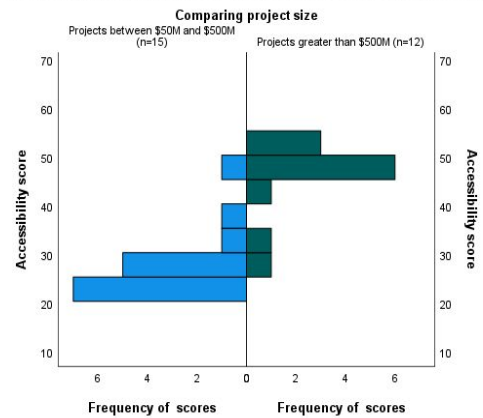
We found that:

- Projects greater than \$500M in value had a statistically significant higher score than Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value.
- Projects in which the controlling entity has a board had a statistically significant higher score than projects where the controlling entity is subject to direct political instruction.

Figure 9 (RIGHT): Frequency of tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores (combined target documents 1 to 18) for all projects and subgroups



Frequency of tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores



Frequency of tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores

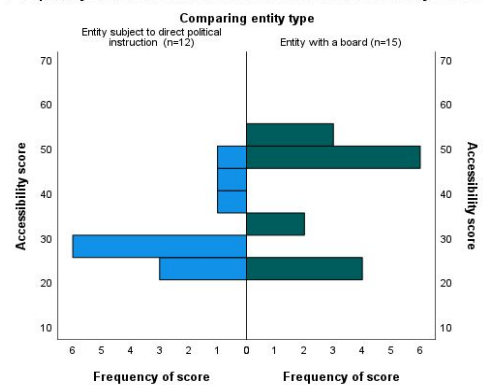


Table 10 (BELOW): Results for tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores (combined target documents 1 to 18) for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (20-42 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
20-25	25.9% (7)	46.7% (7)	0	25.0% (3)	26.7% (4)
26-30	22.2% (6)	33.3% (5)	8.3% (1)	50.0% (6)	0
31-35	7.4% (2)	6.7% (1)	8.3% (1)	0	13.3% (2)
36-40	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	8.3% (1)	0
41-45	3.7% (1)	0	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	0
46-50	46.7% (7)	6.7% (1)	50.0% (6)	8.3% (1)	40.0% (6)
51-55	11.1% (3)	0	25.0% (3)	0	20.0% (3)
56-60	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	36.00	27.60	45.91	30.67	40.27
Mean rank		9.03	20.21	10.67	16.67
Std. Dev	10.94	6.65	8.21	7.55	11.56
Exact Sig		0.000***		0.053*	
Statistical test results		<p><i>A visual inspection of the distributions of all tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M.</i></p>		<p><i>A visual inspection of the distributions of all tier-one and tier-two document accessibility scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i></p>	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Stage 2: Official information request results

Figures 10 to 13 presents the outcomes of our official information requests. Results indicate that:

- All project entities responded to our official information request.
 - All responded no later than three days after the initial request was made.
 - One project entity responded 13 days outside the required 20 working-day window. In this instance, the official information request had been transferred between two entities.
- Eleven requests for documents resulted in a document other than the requested document being received. These actions were perceived as being in the spirit of official information requests as the requested document did not exist and supplementary information approximating the request (as closely as possible) was provided.
- There was a high level of difficulty in receiving assurance plans from official information requests. Of the 19 official information requests made, 63.2% did not result in an assurance plan being supplied.

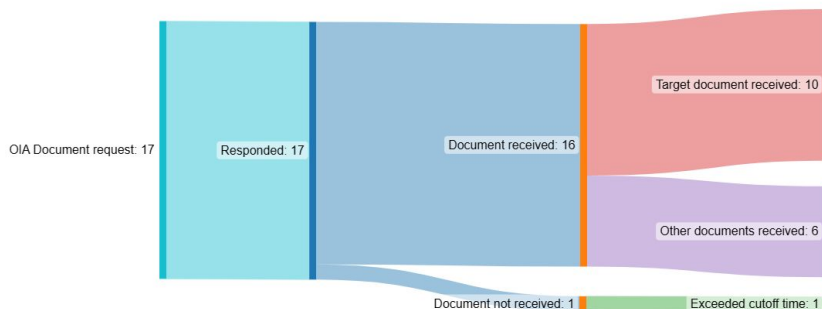


Figure 10 (ABOVE): Official information request outcomes for business case documents (target document 1)

Note: Exceed cut-off times where requested documents not received by 10 December 2022. Official information requests were done in two batches on either 12 September 2022 or 20

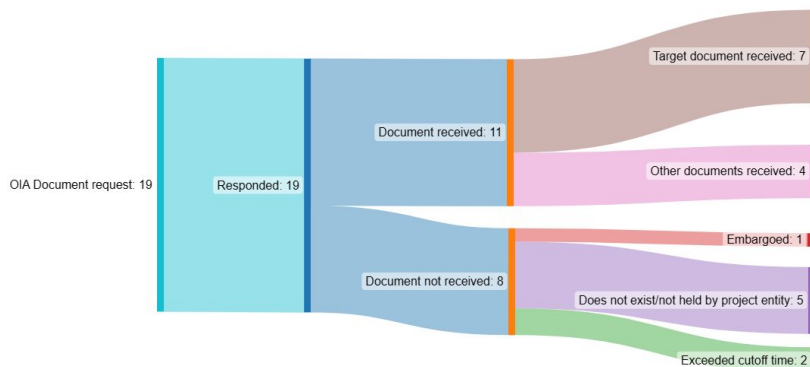


Figure 11 (ABOVE): Official information request outcomes for assurance plan documents (target document 2)

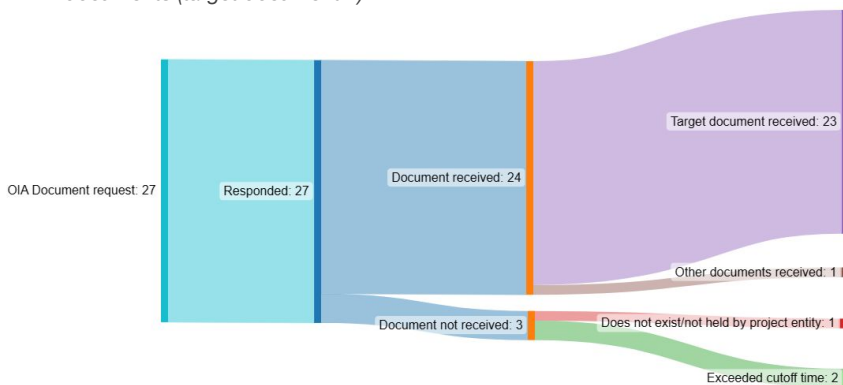


Figure 12 (ABOVE): Official information request outcomes investment decision documents (target document 3)

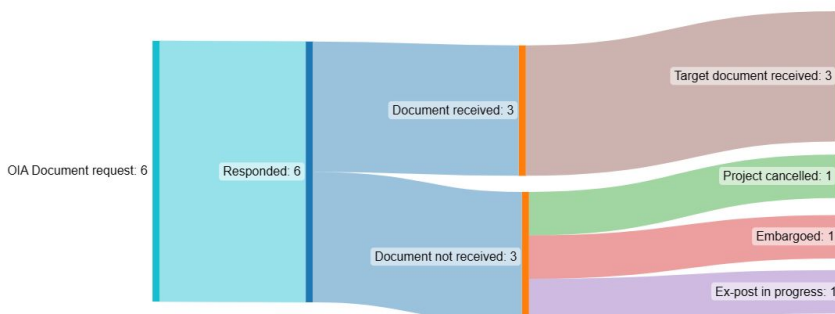


Figure 13 (ABOVE): Official information request outcomes ex-post documents (target document 4)

Additional official information request findings

- All projects met the Ombudsman’s criteria for facilitating official information requests. Each of the entities responsible for the 27 projects had easily accessible contact information on their website to facilitate official information requests as well as useful information about making official information requests.
- We found a search of the words ‘official information’ and the name of the entity responsible for projects quickly allowed access to instructions on how official information requests could be made in all 27 projects (100%).
- 37% of the official information requests made to project entities resulted in clarification request responses.
- While the Official Information Act allows for clarification requests, we observed in one instance a practice that could potentially be deemed as concerning. This entailed a clarification request from a project entity with the following verbatim responses: “For the avoidance of doubt, we understand that you are seeking the following documents. Can you confirm this is correct?”. The entity then went on to list verbatim the documents that were initially requested. While not occurring in any other request responses, we highlight this response because it is a non-value-adding engagement that could be seen as a mechanism to reset the official information response clock.

- One official information request resulted in an official information written response stating that no such document existed. After this, we received a phone call stating that an assurance plan existed but would not be released due to commercial sensitivity.
- 40.7% of project entities made extension requests. In total, 18.5% of responses then exceeded the 20 working-day extension limit.

Figure 14 shows that in total nine official information document requests out of 68 resulted in a potential breach of the Official Information Act. A potential breach may have been small (a response occurring one day outside the allotted 20 working day response time) or more serious by exceeding by 60 days. Of the nine potential breaches, five were resolved and four were unresolved as of the project cut-off date of December 10th, 2022. We note that there was a document request that had met all requirements of the Official Information Act, communicating extensions and requests for clarity, yet had not provided the information that was requested by the 10th of December.

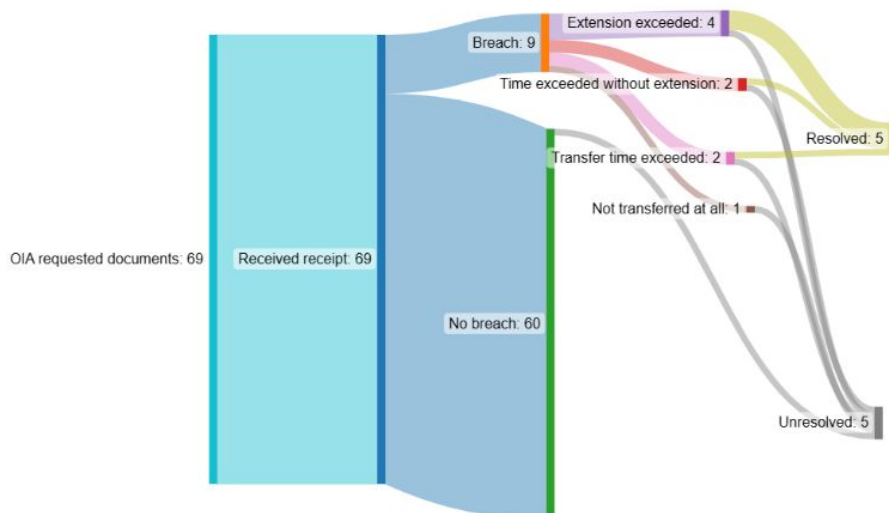


Figure 14 (ABOVE): Official Information Act potential breaches

Stage 3: Usability scores

Business case document usability scores

Stage three reports the frequencies and results of the scores for the usability of tier-one target documents. Figures 15 to 17 and Table 11 show the frequency and results of usability scores for business case documents (target document 1) for each of the 27 projects and sub-groups. We found that:

- No statistically significant differences were observed between any subgroups
- Frequencies of projects scoring 1 were relatively low for disclosure (14.8%) and breadth (11.1%), but slightly higher for quality (22.2%)
- We note that business case documents are guided by the Treasury's 'better business case guidance' which, in theory, means that detailed guidance is available. We would have accordingly expected higher overall scores than those reported from our 27 evaluated projects.

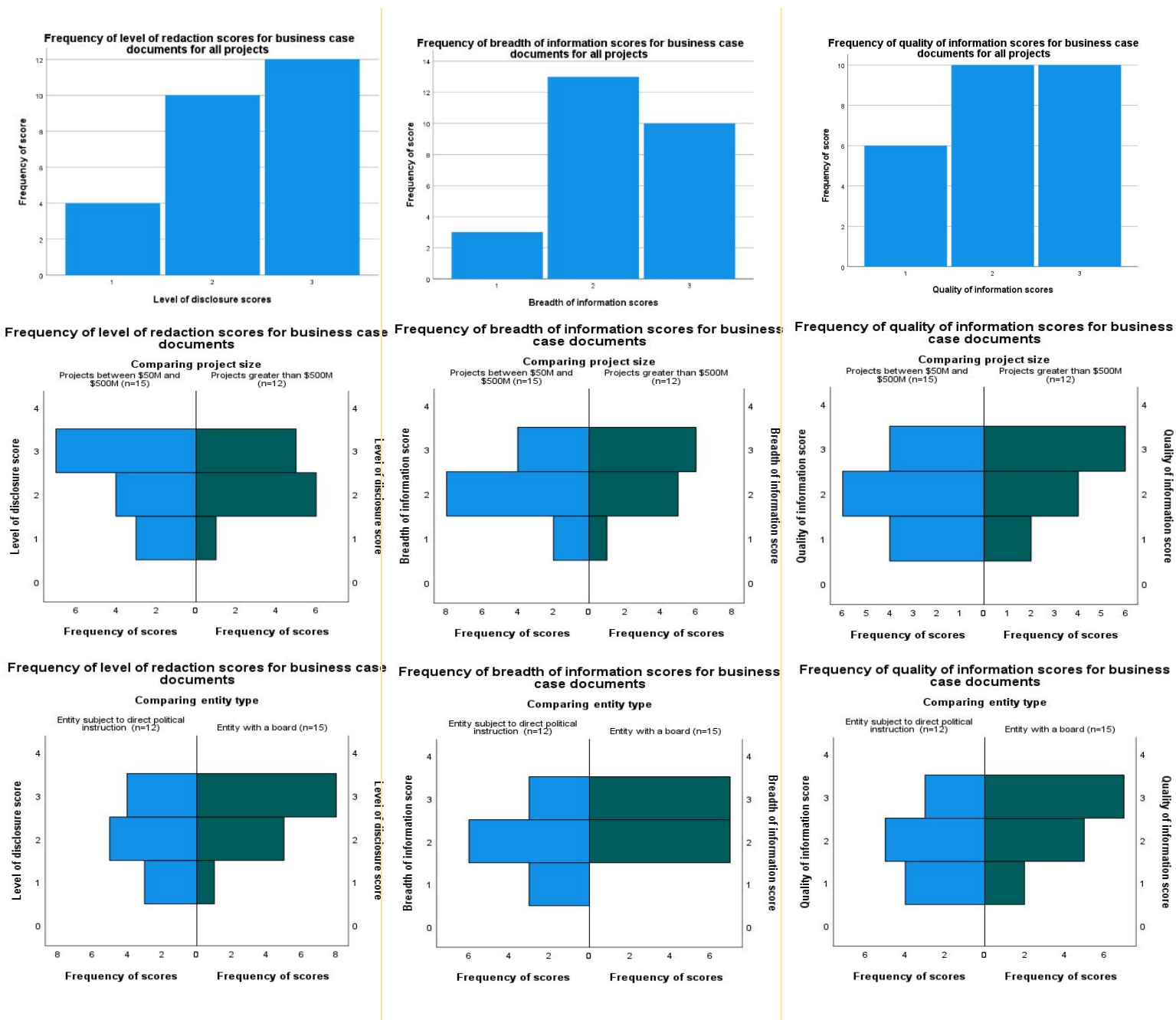


Figure 15 (ABOVE): Frequency of level of redaction scores for business case documents for all projects and subgroups

Figure 16 (ABOVE): Frequency of breadth of information scores for business case documents (target document 1) for all projects and subgroups

Figure 17 (ABOVE): Frequency of quality of information scores for business case documents (target document 1) for all projects and subgroups

Table 11: Results for business case document (target document 1) usability scores for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (1-3 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
Redaction score					
Missing document	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	0	6.7% (1)
1	14.8% (4)	20.0% (3)	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	6.7% (1)
2	37.1% (10)	26.7% (4)	50.0% (6)	41.7% (5)	33.3% (5)
3	44.4% (12)	46.7% (7)	41.7% (5)	33.3% (4)	53.3% (8)
Mean	2.31	2.29	2.33	2.08	2.50
Mean rank		13.50	13.50	11.42	15.29
Std. Dev	0.74	0.82	0.65	0.79	0.65
Exact Sig		1.000		0.212	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case document level of disclosure scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, Statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case documents level of disclosure scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board indicated (shown above) the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i>	
Breadth score					
Missing document	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	0	6.7% (1)
1	11.1% (3)	13.3% (2)	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	0
2	48.1% (13)	53.3% (8)	41.7% (5)	50.0% (6)	46.7% (7)
3	37.1% (10)	26.7% (4)	50.0% (6)	25.0% (3)	46.7% (7)
Mean	2.27	2.14	2.42	2.00	2.50
Mean rank		12.14	15.08	10.88	15.75
Std. Dev	0.67	0.66	0.67	0.74	0.52
Exact Sig		0.347		0.106	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case document breadth of disclosure scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, Statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case documents breadth of information scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board indicated (shown above) the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i>	
Quality score					
Missing document	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	0	6.7% (1)
1	22.2% (6)	26.7% (4)	16.6% (2)	33.3% (4)	13.3% (2)
2	37.1% (10)	39.9% (6)	33.3% (4)	41.7% (5)	33.3% (5)
3	37.1% (10)	26.7% (4)	50.0% (6)	25.0% (3)	46.7% (7)
Mean	2.15	2.00	2.33	1.92	2.36
Mean rank		12.07	15.17	11.33	15.36
Std. Dev	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.79	0.75
Exact Sig		0.322		0.193	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case document quality of information scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of business case documents the quality of information scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i>	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Assurance plan document usability scores

Figures 18 to 20 and Table 12 present the frequency and results of usability scores for assurance plan documents (target document 2) for each of the 27 projects and two sub-groups.

Over and above the statistically significant higher scores of projects over 500M in value, we found that:

- An overall low level of usability for the assurance plan document across all projects. The frequency of projects that scored 1 exceeded 40% of projects in each category.

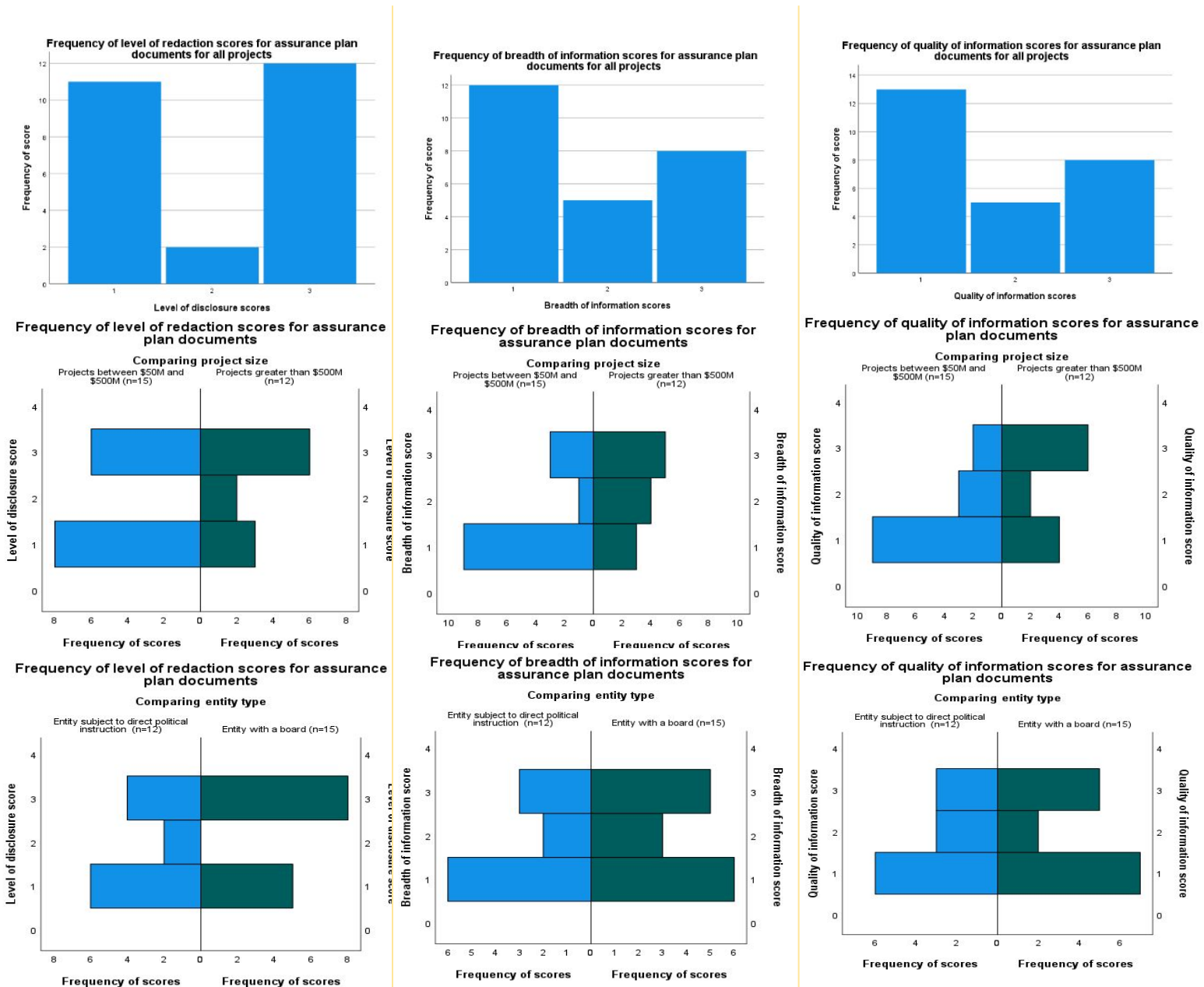


Figure 18 (ABOVE): Frequency of level of redaction scores for assurance plan documents for all projects and subgroups

Figure 19 (ABOVE): Frequency of breadth of information scores for assurance plan documents for all projects and subgroups

Figure 20 (ABOVE): Frequency of quality of information scores for assurance plan documents for all projects and subgroups

Table 12: Results for assurance plan document (target document 1) usability scores for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (1-3 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50 and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
Redaction score					
Missing	7.4% (2)	6.7% (1)	8.3% (1)	0	13.4% (2)
1	40.7% (11)	53.3% (8)	25.0% (3)	50.0% (6)	33.3% (5)
2	7.4% (2)	0	16.7% (2)	16.7% (2)	0
3	44.5% (12)	40.0% (6)	50.0% (6)	33.3% (4)	53.3% (8)
Mean	2.04	1.86	2.27	1.83	2.23
Mean rank		11.79	14.55	11.58	14.31
Std. Dev	0.98	1.03	0.90	0.94	1.01
Exact Sig		0.373		0.376	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document level of disclosure scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document's level of disclosure scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i>	
Breadth score					
Missing document	7.4% (2)	13.3% (2)	0	8.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
1	44.5% (12)	60.0% (9)	25.0% (3)	50.0% (6)	40.0% (6)
2	18.5% (5)	6.7% (1)	33.3% (4)	16.7% (2)	20.0% (3)
3	29.6% (8)	20.0% (3)	41.7% (5)	25.0% (3)	33.3% (5)
Mean	1.84	1.54	2.17	1.73	1.93
Mean rank		10.62	15.58	12.14	13.68
Std. Dev	0.90	.088	0.83	0.90	0.92
Exact Sig		0.098*		0.609	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document breadth of information scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M.</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document's breadth of information scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i>	
Quality score					
Missing document	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	0	6.7% (1)
1	48.2% (13)	60.0% (9)	33.3% (4)	50.0% (6)	46.7% (7)
2	18.5% (5)	20.0% (3)	16.7% (2)	25.0% (3)	13.3% (2)
3	29.6% (8)	13.3% (2)	50.0% (6)	25.0% (3)	33.3% (5)
Mean	1.80	1.50	2.17	1.75	1.86
Mean rank		11.14	16.25	13.13	13.82
Std. Dev	0.90	0.76	0.94	0.87	0.95
Exact Sig		0.095*		0.820	
<i>Statistical test results</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document quality of information scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. Statistical analysis revealed scores for projects greater than \$500M were statistically significantly higher than projects between \$50M and \$500M.</i>		<i>A visual inspection of the distributions of assurance plan document quality of information scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.</i>	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Investment decision document usability scores

Figures 21 to 23 and Table 13 show the frequency and results of usability scores for investment decision documents (target document 3) for each of the 27 projects as well as two sub-groups. We found that:

- Investment decision documents had a higher frequency of scores meeting or exceeding the standard than other documents evaluated.

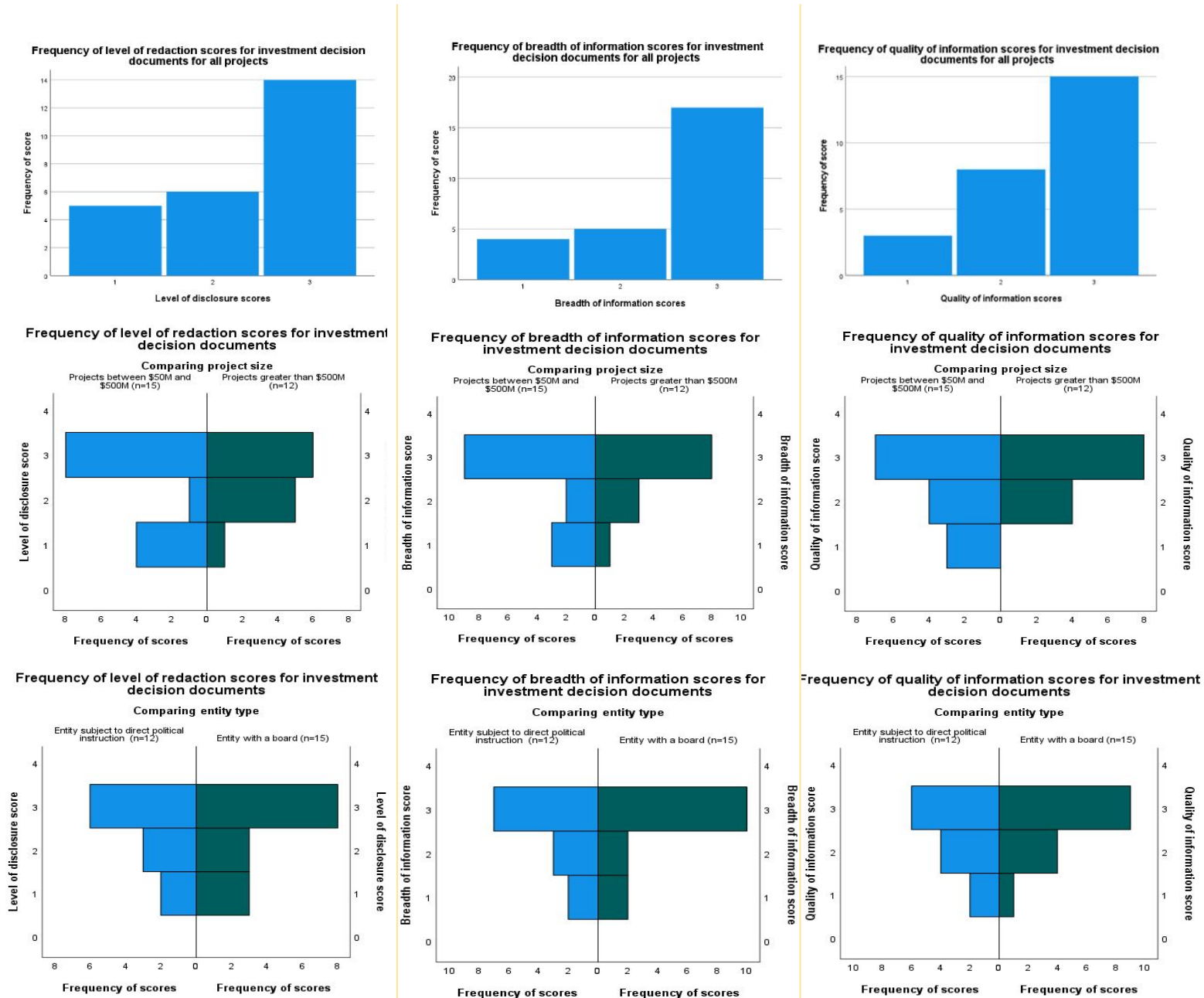


Figure 21 (ABOVE): Frequency of level of redaction scores for investment decision documents for all projects and subgroups

Figure 22 (ABOVE): Frequency of breadth of information scores for investment decision documents for all projects and subgroups

Figure 23 (ABOVE): Frequency of quality of information scores for investment decision documents for all projects and subgroups

Table 13: Results for investment decision document (target document 1) usability scores for all projects and subgroups

Summary score (1-3 scale)	All projects (n=27)	Breakdown 1: Project size		Breakdown 2: Entity type	
		Projects between \$50 and \$500M in value (n=15)	Projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)	Entity subject to direct political instruction (n=12)	Entity with a board (n=15)
Redaction score					
No document	7.4% (2)	13.3% (2)	0	8.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
1	18.5% (5)	26.7% (4)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	20.0% (3)
2	22.2% (6)	6.7% (1)	41.7% (5)	25.0% (3)	20.0% (3)
3	51.9% (14)	53.3% (8)	50.0% (6)	50.0% (6)	53.3% (8)
Mean	2.36	2.31	2.42	2.36	2.36
Mean rank		12.96	13.04	12.95	13.04
Std. Dev	0.81	0.95	0.67	0.81	0.84
Exact Sig		1.000		1.000	
Statistical test results		A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document level of disclosure scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.		A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document level of disclosure scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.	
Breadth score					
Missing	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	0	6.7% (1)
1	14.8% (4)	20.0% (3)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	13.3% (2)
2	18.5% (5)	13.3% (2)	25.0% (3)	25.0% (3)	13.3% (2)
3	63.0% (17)	60.0% (9)	66.7% (8)	58.3% (7)	66.7% (10)
Mean	2.50	2.43	2.58	2.42	2.57
Mean rank		13.11	13.96	12.67	14.21
Std. Dev	0.76	0.85	0.67	0.79	0.76
Exact Sig		0.781		0.631	
Statistical test results		A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document breadth of information scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.		A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document breadth of information scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.	
Quality score					
Missing	3.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0	0	6.7% (1)
1	11.1% (3)	20.0% (3)	0	16.7% (2)	6.7% (1)
2	29.6% (8)	26.7% (4)	33.3% (4)	33.3% (4)	26.7% (4)
3	55.6% (15)	46.7% (7)	66.7% (8)	50.0% (6)	60.0% (9)
Mean	2.46	2.29	2.67	2.33	2.57
Mean rank		12.07	15.17	12.33	14.50
Std. Dev	0.71	0.82	0.49	0.78	0.65
Exact Sig		0.322		0.494	
Statistical test results		A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document quality of information scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M and projects greater than \$500M (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects between \$50M and \$500M were not statistically significantly higher than projects greater than \$500M.		A visual inspection of the distributions of investment decision document quality of information scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction and projects run by entities that have a board (shown above) indicated the distributions were different. However, statistical analysis showed scores for projects run by entities subject to direct political instruction were not statistically significantly higher than projects run by entities that have a board.	

*marginally significant at the 0.1 level ** significant at the 0.05 level *** highly significant at the 0.01 level

Ex-post document usability scores

Off the five historical projects, we were only able to access three ex-post documents through official information requests. The frequency of scores for redaction, breadth and quality for these are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Results for Ex-post document (target document 1) usability scores.

	Redaction	Breadth	Quality
Summary score (1-3 scale)			
1	0	0	0
2	33.3% (1)	66.7% (2)	66.7% (2)
3	66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)



Discussion and recommendations

In this section, we provide a discussion of our findings followed by five recommendations for future action.

Core document accessibility: We assessed how accessible target documents were in terms of the level of research effort.

Proactive release

In New Zealand, the proactive release of official information is a key tenet of the country's open government initiatives. However, we found that accessing information about large publicly funded infrastructure projects was a time-consuming and taxing task. It took considerable time to gather all the relevant data and information for this study. Accordingly, in our view, this places increased importance on the academic arguments supporting the proactive release of appropriate information. Despite there being no requirement for proactive disclosure under the official information legislation, there are compelling reasons to do so. The Ombudsman, Auditor-General, Public Service Commission and academic arguments relating to 'open government' either mandate such action or provide a clear rationale for doing so.

In our view, current guidance documentation and commentary around the proactive release of information from the Public Service Commission and Ombudsman needs to be embraced by all project entities controlling large publicly funded infrastructure projects.

1. The Public Service Commission provides guidelines for government departments to follow in terms of proactive disclosure, and many departments have developed their own policies and procedures. However, the broader proactive release guidance that exists may not adequately allow for the context of the infrastructure environment and the core documents relating to transparency in this sector. To the best of our knowledge, there is no specific guidance in New Zealand around proactive disclosure for infrastructure documents. This may have created a lack of clarity around what documents are expected to be proactively released.

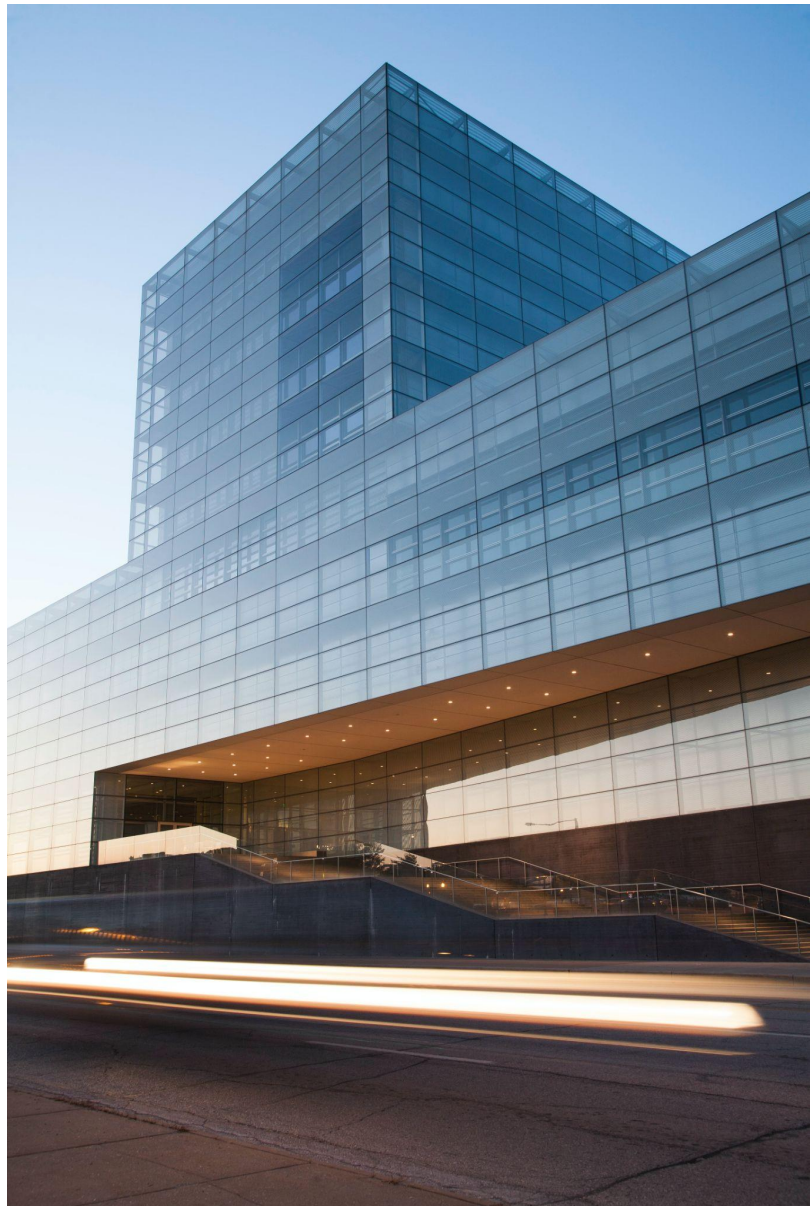
2. Our differentiation between tier-one and tier-two documents was intended to facilitate insights into how projects were justified and how well they are being managed. In our view, specified core documents should be categorised as critical for transparency and directed for proactive release. To improve transparency, we argue that ambiguity needs to be removed and specific documents need to be specifically mandated for proactive release.

1. Accessibility and discoverability

Our findings also indicate the poor levels of accessibility of target documents. In particular, we noted that only a quarter of all project tier-one documents were easily accessible. Areas of concern were both business case and assurance plan documents where 55.5% and 51.8% respectively were inaccessible. In contrast, only five investment decision documents (18.5%) were inaccessible.

- The Ombudsman's findings in the report "*Not a Game of Hide and Seek*" suggests that government agencies should take a proactive and transparent approach to document discoverability. The report emphasises the importance of using search functionality, metadata tagging, and indexing to enhance document discoverability, as well as providing training and support to government staff to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage and release official information. Accessing information can be simple and quick when metadata tagging is used to enhance search results. In addition, where multiple documents are indexed on a central project webpage, information becomes easily discoverable and accessible. It would therefore seem essential that all large projects refer to the Ombudsman's report and improve discoverability.
- We found that the sub-group of projects greater than \$500M had statistically significant higher levels of accessibility than projects between \$50M and \$500M in value across all areas assessed for accessibility. In one respect this is very encouraging.

-
- This, however, also highlights the dichotomy of our results. That is, statistically significant lower accessibility for projects between \$50M and \$500M in value. While we did not seek to understand the reason behind this finding, we do stress its importance given that \$50M is still a substantive amount of money. A better understanding of the dynamics driving this is, in our view, warranted.
 - We also found that projects where the controlling entity had a board, had greater accessibility of documents than projects controlled by entities subject to direct political instruction in all areas of core document accessibility. Two of these were marginally statistically significant and one was statistically significant. Our statistical power was relatively weak given our sample size, yet we returned combinations of weakly significant and significant findings for this sub-group. Similar to our remarks on project size, we stress the importance of this finding and the need for a better understanding of the dynamics surrounding this finding. We do note there are limits around the cross-tabulation of sub-groups given the small sample. Nine of the 27 projects were both greater than \$500M in size and had a controlling entity with a board. Nonetheless, this would certainly warrant further investigation where a greater sample size would allow for more definitive results. A better understanding of the role of political instruction and an entity's positions towards transparency in the infrastructure space would seem a very useful pursuit.
 - There were several projects in the greater than \$500M in value sub-group that acted as exemplars for core document accessibility. We suggest project entities should review other project entities' documents and project web pages to understand how to make information more accessible.



"There were several projects in the greater than \$500M in value sub-group that acted as exemplars for core document accessibility"

Official information request effectiveness:

The objective of stage two was to understand how entities in control of significant infrastructure projects responded to official information requests in a manner consistent with the legal requirements specified in the Official Information Act 1982. We found:

2. Official information request interaction

An official information request can be a lengthy process even when there are no breaches of the act. There are certainly legitimate reasons why the process is lengthy, but as argued above, the nature of the act means that both those that request information and those that supply it would benefit greatly from proactive release. We agree with the Ombudsman who notes that project entities can greatly reduce time and resource allocation through proactive release. This in our view is more feasible within infrastructure projects where there is greater consistency of document type used consistently across projects.

- It is encouraging to report that the very basics around official information request lodgements had 100% compliance. We reported all projects had easy-to-access and navigate website pages detailing how official information requests can be made. These pages also offer other general information on official information requests that would be useful for a first-time user. Further to this, all project entities issued prompt confirmation of receipt of our official information request within three days of receiving the request. These emails also outlined the next steps of the process.
- While the basics of official information requests were processed well, nine potential breaches occurred through the process of the official information requests we made. Our study is unable to suggest the underlying reason for these potential breaches. The lingering effects of COVID-19 may have impacted the frequency of potential breaches we observed.

If this is the case, we would argue that it is time to take action to address resourcing as we move beyond COVID-19. If the possible breaches are more a by-product of internal system failure or inadequate training resulting in a lack of understanding around the obligation of entities under the act (as the Ombudsman has indicated), then industry-wide training should be embraced given the quantum of money budgeted for the New Zealand infrastructure pipeline.

Core document usability. The objective of stage three was to understand how easily and intuitively users can access, read and comprehend core documents. We assessed the level of redaction, the breadth of information and the quality of information of core documents. We found:

3. Consistency

Our findings reveal the substantive variation of outcomes relating to redaction, breadth and quality of document information. Consistency is a central theme of our findings, and we believe that in principle there are no substantive barriers to ensuring that there is consistency around how useability is approached by project entities.

- It was promising to observe that some documents had virtually no redaction at all and that these same documents returned high scores in other assessment areas. The highest performers had virtually no redaction throughout their entire documents. Only minor redactions were observed around protecting personal contact information. While it is important to strike a balance between protecting sensitive information and ensuring that a document is useful to the intended audience, applying too much redaction can impede understanding. In our analysis, we have not been able to reconcile the variance of disclosure levels between projects that should be similar. Further work to better understand this phenomenon is recommended.

Here, an understanding is needed of what is being redacted and why. We were unable to look behind the curtain of redacted information to see what was actually redacted. This however is something Te Waihangā can do. Nonetheless, there are exemplars of sophisticated high-value projects where redaction has not occurred.

- As we evaluated business case documents for breadth and quality it became obvious in some instances Treasury New Zealand's better business case guidance had not optimally been used. This was despite all projects being classified as major infrastructure projects exceeding \$50 million, where the better business case guidance would be mandated by Cabinet Office Circular CO (19) 6, or if not, arguably be an optimal framework given the quantum of investment. Further enquiry is encouraged to understand where and why this guidance in some cases is not being followed.
- We observed that a noticeable number of assurance plan documents were incorporated into business case documents to varying degrees. In other cases, they were often not completed for a specific project. If they were completed, access could be refused under the Official Information Act noting: 1. the project entity would breach an obligation of confidence and contravene future releases of information by stakeholders involved; 2. It would prejudice the supply of further information in the future, or 3. information was commercially sensitive. This seemed unnecessarily overreaching as contractor-specific information could be redacted rather than completely embargoing the document. We encourage more work to understand elements surrounding the use and release of assurance plans given their role in accountability.

Based on the above discussion we offer five recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That coordination with all relevant infrastructure stakeholders occurs to develop a consistent approach to what should be proactively released. It should offer best practices around document accessibility to all entities engaged in running large publicly funded infrastructure projects. In addition to providing remedies to accessibility issues identified in this, report, we recommend that this should be available in a single document for easy reference by users and should be distributed to all relevant entities who undertake large publicly funded infrastructure projects. The document should embrace the principles of SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound while also drawing on successful practices already used. Doing so removes ambiguity for all stakeholders and will offer a clear standard that can be measured in the future.

Recommendation 2

That consideration be given to the creation of a mechanism for greater scrutiny of the content of core documents surrounding the delivery of large infrastructure projects. Publicly available technical scrutiny of infrastructure core documents would be of significant value to the general public. We note that there are many processes for oversight, however, one that specifically scrutinises the usability of core infrastructure documents with the ability to comment on the quality of analysis and decisions would address many of the accessibility and usability issues identified within this report.

Recommendation 3

That a review is undertaken of what content is redacted within the core infrastructure documents. The review should focus on both what information is being redacted and the justifications provided by the entity on why the information was redacted. We note that this may be difficult, however doing so could be the basis for a more consistent approach to justify redaction.

Recommendation 4

That additional research is commissioned to better understand the performance variations within the sub-groups (project size and entity type). If project size and entity type have a causal effect on transparency performance within a larger sample size, then understanding the dynamics surrounding this would arguably be of great public interest. Here we note the need to first confirm and expand our findings in a larger statistical study that also includes causal effect. A follow-up qualitative study could then investigate the mechanics of these variations concerning transparency.

Recommendation 5

That ongoing measurement around infrastructure transparency be undertaken. While sufficient time would be required to ensure interventions around improved transparency are instigated and have time to develop, we recommend that this should be done regularly, approximating every two years. Regular measurement offers the ability to track the impact of any intervention and adjust resources and priorities accordingly.



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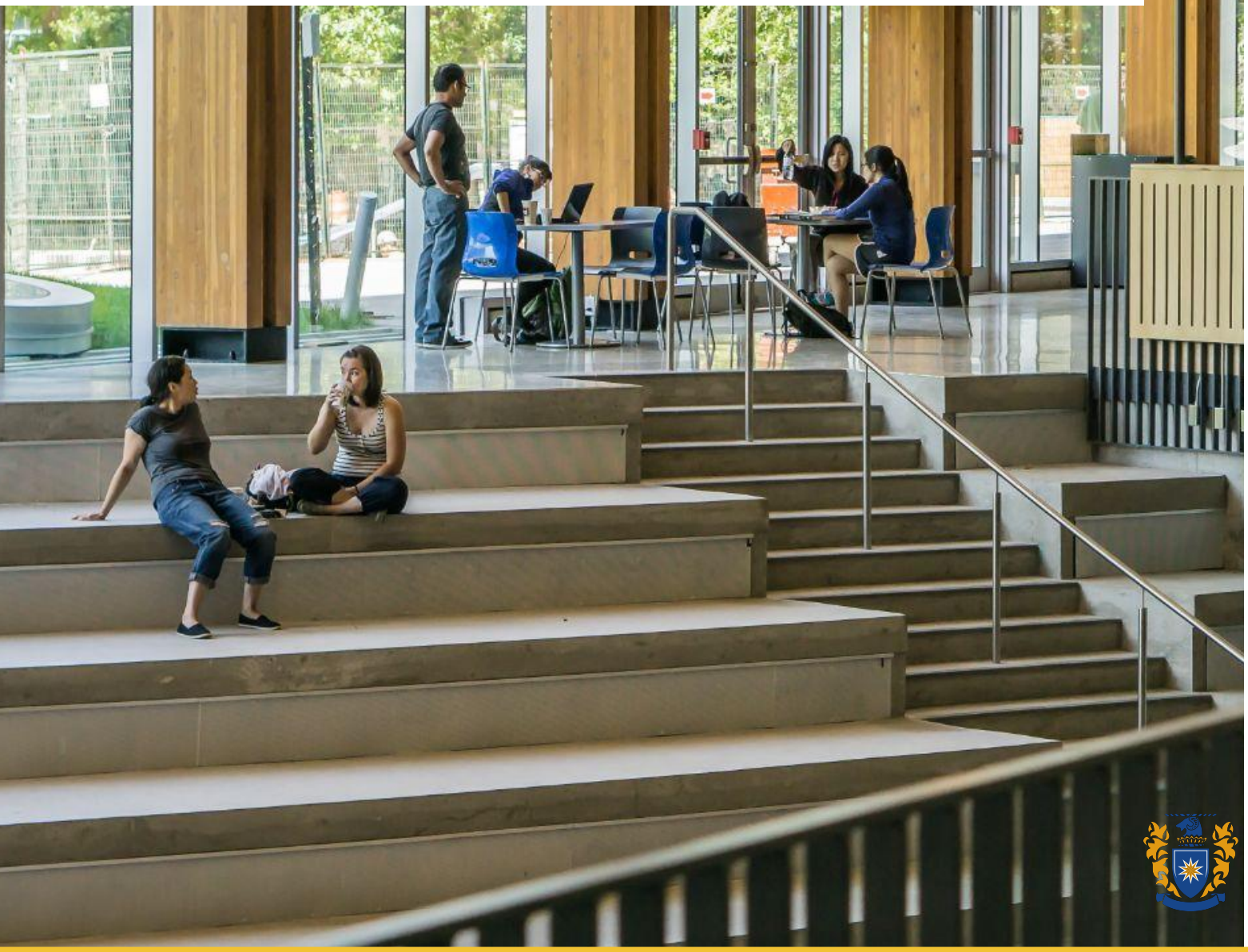
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Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights, there are several limitations to consider. First, the sample size of 27 may limit the generalisability of the findings. While the sample size represents a substantive dollar value of infrastructure projects, with a smaller sample size, there is a greater risk of random error and a reduced ability to detect significant effects. In the case of the latter, it is promising significant effects were found between sub-groups given the small sample size. Caution should however be taken when extrapolating these findings to larger populations. Second, we note there are limits around the cross-tabulation of sub-groups given the small sample. Nine of the 27 projects were both greater than \$500M in size and had a controlling entity with a board. Finally, due to the limitations of cross-tabulation, the Mann-Whitney U tests only investigated significant differences between groups for project size and entity type. This may not fully capture the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation.



Appendix 1: List of case projects assessed with summary information

Case project name	The primary entity controlling the case project	Budget range
Ashburton College Combined - Ashburton	Ministry of Education - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$50-100 million
	Redevelopment of Ashburton College	
Ara Tūhono – Pūhoi to Warkworth	Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency -Entity with a board	\$500 million-1 billion
	Construction of a new 18.5 km, four-lane motorway that will connect the Northern Motorway (SH1) at Pūhoi to the towns of Warkworth and Matakana.	
Auckland Light Rail Project- Auckland	Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency - Entity with a board	\$1 billion +
	The Auckland Light Rail Project is a proposed infrastructure pipeline project in New Zealand that aims to provide a rapid transit system for the city of Auckland.	
Auckland Transport Alignment Project - Auckland	Joint Initiative - Entity with a board	\$1 billion +
	The Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) is a joint initiative between the New Zealand Government and the Auckland Council, aimed at addressing the transportation challenges faced by the Auckland region.	
Christchurch Bus Interchange - Christchurch	Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$50-100 million
	The construction of the Bus Interchange was part of a broader infrastructure pipeline of projects aimed at revitalising Christchurch's central business district and improving the city's transportation network.	
Christchurch District Court, Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct - Christchurch	Ministry of Justice - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$250-500 million
	The Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct is a government project that was undertaken in response to the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. The Precinct is located in the Central Business District of Christchurch, New Zealand and provides modern, purpose-built facilities for the justice and emergency services.	
Christchurch Schools Rebuild Programme - Christchurch	Ministry of Education- Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$1 billion +
	The Government is investing over \$1.3 billion in the Christchurch Schools Rebuild (CSR) programme to rebuild and repair 115 schools in greater Christchurch following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes.	
City Rail Link - Auckland	City Rail Link Limited- Entity with a board	\$1 billion +
	A 3.45km underground rail link will connect the Britomart Transport Centre in the heart of Auckland's central business district with the existing Western Line at Mt Eden Station.	
Facilities Infrastructure Remediation Programme - Tranche 2 - Auckland	Te Whatu Ora, Health NZ - Entity with a board	\$250-500 million
	Tranche 2 of the programme is focused on addressing key infrastructure issues in Auckland City Hospital, Starship Children's Hospital, and Greenlane Clinical Centre.	
Hobsonville Schools Project- Auckland	Ministry of Education - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$100-250 million
	The Hobsonville Schools Project is a development project that includes the construction of several new schools in the Hobsonville area of Auckland, New Zealand.	

Appendix 1: List of case projects assessed with summary information

Case project name	The primary entity controlling the case project	Budget range
Let's Get Wellington Moving - Wellington	Joint Initiative - Entity with a board	\$1 billion +
	Let's Get Wellington Moving is a major infrastructure programme aimed at improving transport and urban development in the Wellington region of New Zealand. The programme was launched in 2016 by the New Zealand government in partnership with Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, and the New Zealand Transport Agency.	
New Dunedin Hospital – Whakatuputupu - Dunedin	Te Whatu Ora, Health New Zealand - Entity with a board	\$1 billion +
	The New Dunedin Hospital - Whakatuputupu project is a significant healthcare infrastructure development in Dunedin, New Zealand. The project aims to replace the existing Dunedin Hospital with a modern and state-of-the-art healthcare facility that can meet the current and future healthcare needs of the region.	
Northern Pathway- Auckland	Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency - Entity with a board	\$500 million-1 billion
	The Northern Pathway is a proposed infrastructure project in New Zealand that would provide a dedicated pedestrian and cycleway connecting the Auckland city centre with the North Shore.	
Ōpōtiki Harbour Development Project - Ōpōtiki	Ōpōtiki District Council - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$50-100 million
	Development of a new harbour and associated infrastructure, including wharves, berthing areas, and breakwaters.	
Peacocke Development - Hamilton	Hamilton City Council - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$100-250 million
	The Peacocke programme will deliver a new bridge, main roads, parks and strategic water, wastewater and stormwater networks.	
Provincial Growth Fund- National	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$1 billion +
	The Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) is a New Zealand government initiative that aims to support economic development in regional areas. The infrastructure pipeline is a key part of the PGF, which involves identifying and funding priority infrastructure projects in regional areas.	
Scott Base Redevelopment Project - Antarctica	Antarctica New Zealand - Entity with a board	\$250-500 million
	The Scott Base Redevelopment Project is a major undertaking by Antarctica New Zealand to modernise and upgrade its scientific research facility located on Ross Island, Antarctica. The project aims to ensure that the base can continue to support cutting-edge scientific research and exploration for the next 50 years.	
Taranaki Base Hospital Redevelopment - Project Maunga - Stage 2 - Taranaki	Te Whatu Ora, Health NZ - Entity with a board	\$250-500 million
	Stage 2 of the project involves the construction of a new Acute Services Building, which will provide state-of-the-art facilities for emergency, intensive care, and surgical services.	
Te Maunga WW Treatment Plant Programme - Tauranga	Tauranga City Council - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$100-250 million
	The programme is designed to improve the capacity and efficiency of the treatment plant, which is critical for the sustainable management of wastewater in the region.	
Transmission Gully Motorway - Wellington	Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency	\$500 million-1 billion
	The project is part of the Wellington Northern Corridor Road of National Significance, which aims to improve transport links between Wellington and other parts of the North Island.	

Appendix 1: List of case projects assessed with summary information

Case project name	The primary entity controlling the case project	Budget range
Waikeria Prison Build - Waikeria	Ara Poutama Aotearoa, Department of Corrections - Entity subject to political direction	\$500 million-1 billion
	The project is aimed at replacing the existing Waikeria Prison with a modern, fit-for-purpose facility that can accommodate the growing prison population in the region.	
Wastewater Network Renewals - Upper Hutt	Wellington Water - Entity with a board	\$100-250 million
	Upgrading and renewal of the city's wastewater infrastructure. This project is designed to ensure that the wastewater system in Upper Hutt is reliable and efficient, and can continue to meet the needs of the community.	
Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade - Pukekohe	Watercare - Entity with a board	\$100-250 million
	Upgraded wastewater treatment plant. This includes installing the equipment and systems, laying the piping and infrastructure, and constructing the buildings and facilities.	
Waterview Tunnel - Auckland	Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency - Entity with a board	\$1 billion +
	The Waterview Tunnel is a major infrastructure project in Auckland, New Zealand. It is a 4.8-kilometre-long motorway tunnel that connects the Northwestern Motorway (State Highway 16) with the Southwestern Motorway (State Highway 20). The tunnel forms part of the Western Ring Route, a 48-kilometre-long motorway route that bypasses central Auckland.	
Wellington Metro Rail Network Programme - Stage 4 - Network Capacity Improvements - Wellington	KiwiRail - Entity with a board	\$100-250 million
	The main objective of Stage 4 is to increase the number of trains that can operate on the network, reduce travel times, and improve reliability. The improvements will be made through various projects, including upgrades to existing rail infrastructure and the construction of new infrastructure.	
Wellington Town Hall Redevelopment - Wellington	Wellington City Council - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$100-250 million
	The project involves upgrading and modernising the building to enhance its functionality and improve its accessibility, as well as addressing earthquake resilience and building code compliance issues	
Yarrow Stadium Redevelopment - New Plymouth	Taranaki Regional Council - Entity subject to direct political instruction	\$50-100 million
	Yarrow Stadium is being redeveloped to ensure its stands meet earthquake standards and the venue remains fit for purpose	

Appendix 2: Assessment rubric

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC			
CRITERION	3	2	1
MARKING FACTORS	Exceeds the expected standard	Meets the expected standard	Below the expected standard
OVERALL DESCRIPTOR	Exceeds the minimum standard expected.	Meets the minimum standard expected.	Does not meet the minimum standard expected.
MARKING FACTORS	Easily accessible	Accessible	Inaccessible
Ability to access	Content is accessible and was proactively released. Requires little research effort where it is searchable, prominently located and categorised in an organised manner.	Content is accessible and was proactively released. It is searchable, but not prominently located and/or categorised in an organised manner.	Unable to access relevant material. An official information request is required.
Ability to access times	Less than 3 minutes to access the target document.	3-20 minutes to access the target document.	>20 minutes, target document search terminated.
Level of disclosure	Excellent level of disclosure. Little to no redaction. If redacted, justification is clearly articulated. Redaction does not materially impact the understanding and intent of the document.	A fair and reasonable level of disclosure. Overall redaction is clearly justified. Does not impact the understanding and intent of the document for further development.	Resources are heavily redacted and negatively impact the understanding and intent of the document. Weak level of disclosure or partially redacted with considerable scope for further development.
Breadth of information	The information presented is specific to an understanding of the project. The document aligns with all elements that would be expected in a document of this nature. The information provided aligns well with all domains within appropriate guidance documents (e.g., business case, assurance plan, investment decision and ex-post development guidance documents).	The information presented is specific to an understanding of the project. The document includes most elements that would be expected in a document of this nature. The information provided aligns with most domains provided within appropriate guidance documents (e.g., business case, assurance plan, investment decision and ex-post development guidance documents).	The information does not contribute well to an understanding of the project. The document includes a small number of elements that would be expected in a document of this nature. The information provided aligns to no or few domains within appropriate guidance documents (e.g., business case, assurance plan, investment decision and ex-post development guidance documents).
Quality of information	The information presented is highly relevant and thorough. The document presents complex information in a clear manner. The writing style is concise and avoids unnecessary jargon, and the document uses a range of techniques to convey information. The document serves its intended purpose exceptionally well, providing a valuable resource for the audience.	The information presented is mostly relevant and thorough. The document presents complex information in a mostly clear manner. The writing style is concise and avoids unnecessary jargon, and the document uses appropriate techniques to convey information. The document serves its intended purpose effectively, providing a useful resource for the audience.	The information presented is incomplete, immaterial, or presented confusingly. The document may lack depth or fail to present complex information in a way that is easy to understand. The writing style may be unclear or use inappropriate language or jargon, and the document may not inform the audience effectively. The document may not serve its intended purpose well, and may not be a useful resource for the audience. There is significant room for improvement.

Note Digital New Zealand Web Accessibility Standard and the Web Usability Standard produced by digital.govt.nz; The New Zealand Data and Information Management Principles produced by data.govt.nz.

Better Business Case template produced by Te Tai Ōhanga - The Treasury New Zealand.

The PPP Assurance Plan Quality Review Checklist & Template-PPP-assurance-plan produced by the New Zealand Government Chief Digital Officer System Assurance Team.

Investment Management Standard 2017, A guide for Victorian government departments and agencies produced by the Department of Finance and Treasury, Victoria State Government, Australia.

Appendix 3: All tier-one and tier-two target documents.

Target document	Tier-one (primary) target documents	
1	Business case	The Better Business Case (BBC) framework is a structured approach to developing and assessing business cases for government investments in New Zealand. The BBC framework is designed to promote transparency, accountability, and robust decision-making in government investments, and to ensure that investments deliver value for money and align with government priorities.
2	Assurance plan	Provides a structured approach to identifying and managing risks associated with a project or programme. An assurance plan is a document that outlines the key risks and issues that could impact the success of the project or programme, along with the strategies and actions that will be put in place to manage those risks and ensure that the project or programme is delivered successfully.
3	Investment decision document	A critical document for ensuring that infrastructure investments are aligned with strategic priorities, deliver value for money and are supported by robust business cases. It is used to inform decision-making and ensure that infrastructure investments are managed effectively and efficiently. They are typically used by government agencies to seek approval from decision-makers, such as Ministers, for funding and support for a proposed infrastructure project.
4	Post-ex report/review (benefit realisation reviews, post-implementation review, lessons learnt report) (historical only).	An Ex-Post Report is a formal evaluation of a government programme or policy after it has been implemented. The purpose of the report is to assess whether the programme or policy achieved its intended objectives, identify any unintended consequences, and provide insights and recommendations for future programmes or policies.

Appendix 3: All tier-one and tier-two target documents.

Target document number	Tier-two (secondary) target documents
5	Programme project risk register
6	Risk management framework
7	Terms of reference
8	Probity plan
9	Monthly reporting (internal entity back to sponsor) operations to the Senior Responsible Owner
10	Project governance framework
11	Delegation framework
12	Project management plan
13	Project schedule
14	Communications and stakeholder engagement plan (Including lwi, - should be included even if not used)
15	Project status report (internal report) (3 most recent)
16	Project governance board (steering group) meeting minutes (board) (3 most recent)
17	Procurement strategy
18	Conflict of interest management plans or entity frameworks
19	Communication protocols (for engaging with stakeholder groups or other external parties)
20	Advice to ministers on the project from the entity, and vice versa; a set time limit, specified communications
21	OIA request register and OIA framework
22	Public project updates through communication channels directly controlled by the entity

Appendix 4: All tier-one and tier-two target documents.

Statistical test procedures

A ‘differences between groups test’ was the most suitable type of test to compare our two subgroups of project size and entity type. We used the Mann-Whitney U test as it is a nonparametric alternative to the independent-samples t-test when data fails the assumptions of the independent-samples t-test. Visual inspections and subsequent tests for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that we had significant deviations from normality across all project scores.

Mann-Whitney U test results

Hypothesis test summary for project size: comparing projects between \$50M and \$500M in value (n=15) and projects greater than \$500M in value (n=12)

	Null hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of accessibility scores for tier-one documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test.	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of accessibility scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.032	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of accessibility scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.021	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of accessibility scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.004	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of accessibility scores for tier-two documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of accessibility scores for tier-one and tier-two documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of redaction scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	1.00	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of breadth of information scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.347	Retain the null hypothesis.

Appendix 4: All tier-one and tier-two target documents.

	Null hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
9	The distribution of quality of information scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.322	Retain the null hypothesis.
10	The distribution of redaction scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.373	Retain the null hypothesis.
11	The distribution of breadth of information scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.098	Reject the null hypothesis.
12	The distribution of quality of information scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.095	Reject the null hypothesis.
13	The distribution of redaction scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	1.00	Retain the null hypothesis.
14	The distribution of breadth of information scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.781	Retain the null hypothesis.
15	The distribution of quality of information scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.322	Retain the null hypothesis.

Appendix 4: All tier-one and tier-two target documents.

Hypothesis test summary for entity type: comparing projects where the controlling entity is subject to direct political instruction (n=12) and projects where the controlling entity has a board (n=15).

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of accessibility scores for tier-one documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test.	.200	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of accessibility scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.093	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of accessibility scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.093	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of accessibility scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.427	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of accessibility scores for tier-two documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.025	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of accessibility scores for tier-one and tier-two documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.053	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of redaction scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.212	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of breadth of information scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.106	Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of quality of information scores for business case documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.193	Retain the null hypothesis.
10	The distribution of redaction scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.376	Retain the null hypothesis.
11	The distribution of breadth of information scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.609	Retain the null hypothesis.

Appendix 4: All tier-one and tier-two target documents.

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
12	The distribution of quality of information scores for assurance plan documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.820	Retain the null hypothesis.
13	The distribution of redaction scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	1.00	Retain the null hypothesis.
14	The distribution of breadth of information scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.631	Retain the null hypothesis.
15	The distribution of quality of information scores for investment decision documents is the same across both categories of project size.	Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.494	Retain the null hypothesis.

Appendix 5: All tier-two document accessibility scores showing target documents 5-22

TARGET DOCUMENT	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	TOTAL
Case 1	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	42
Case 2	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	26
Case 3	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	37
Case 4	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	41
Case 5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	20
Case 6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	26
Case 8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	20
Case 9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 11	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	42
Case 12	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	24
Case 13	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	42
Case 14	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	24
Case 15	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	40
Case 16	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	28
Case 17	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	32
Case 18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 19	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	37
Case 20	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	42
Case 21	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 22	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	40
Case 23	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 24	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	42
Case 25	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	20
Case 26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Case 27	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	40

Note The case numbers used have been randomized and are not arranged in any particular order.



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