



FoI and the Delivery of Diminishing Returns, or How Spin-Doctors and Journalists have Mistreated a Volatile Reform

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ABSTRACT

Freedom of Information (FoI), spin-doctors, and journalists offer a volatile mix in Australian politics. Whilst the promise of open government is seen as an essential prerequisite for a functioning representative democracy the dynamics of FoI seem to offer no easy path to that destination. Australian journalism has tended to undervalue, under use and underestimate the potential of FoI. The increasing involvement of spin-doctors in the day-to-day activities of public administration further hampers the fourth estate role of journalism. Paradoxically it is the resurgence of public service ethics and values that may offer the best way to reform the practice, administration and effectiveness of FoI.

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ISSN 1443-8607

Volume 2, Number 3: March 2002, 187–207

The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs

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