

**Freedom of info: S'gor to table sunshine law bill**  
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Selangor will be the first state to table the Freedom of Information Enactment in its state assembly in the next sitting which is scheduled from July 12 to 16.

According to state research officer Tricia Yeoh (below), the first reading of the law which was first mooted in 2009 will be the first of three stages before the draft becomes law.

030407 tricia yeoh She added that following this, the draft will be handed to a select committee which will gather public feedback and study similar laws in countries like Finland, Australia and the UK, where it is also referred to as the sunshine laws.

This will be used to amend the draft, after which it will be tabled for a second reading at the state assembly.

"No decision has been made over who the members of the committee will be but it would consist of representatives from the state assembly and other experts.

"We also hope to have involvement from the backbenchers club," she said when contacted.

The act has received considerable attention, with the attorney-general saying that he would study it to ensure that it does not contradict the Official Secrets Act (OSA).

However, according to Yeoh, the Freedom of Information Enactment will not interfere with the federal Act as it only pertains to information under the state's purview.

Decentralising power

As it stands, she said, the Menteri Besar is allowed under Section 2C of the Official Secrets Act to declassify information to do with the state.

"What we are doing essentially is to decentralise this power," she said.

Selangor's enactment will however come with a list of restrictions, she said, mainly to do with national, state or personal security and state resources.

"But the exemptions will be clear so people will know what they can apply for and what they cannot," she said.

She added that other areas which could fall under the enactment include information about government procurement and tenders, as long as it does not affect the outcome of bids.

The enactment in Selangor is likely to influence other Pakatan Rakyat-ruled states, with Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng in May announcing the state's intention to follow suit.

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