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To: ALL MEDIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Recipient of the 4th Annual Information Commissioner's Award Honoured

Hamilton, Bermuda. Information Commissioner Gitanjali Gutierrez formally announced the recipient of the 2022 Information Commissioner's Award for Information Officers. This is the fourth year for the Award, which is presented annually as part of the Information Commissioner's Office's (ICO) commemoration of the International Right Know Day, falling on 28 September each year.

This year's recipient is Mr. David Northcott, Information Officer for the Ministry of Home Affairs Headquarters. This Award honours individuals who have excelled in their role as Information Officers under the Public Access to Information (PATI) Act in one or more of the following areas: Communication, Innovation, Leadership and Service. Nominations for the award were invited and encouraged from all public authorities, providing an opportunity to recognize individuals for their hard work and dedication while serving as Information Officers.

Commissioner Gutierrez recognizes Mr. Northcott for his steadfast commitment to ensuring that all PATI stakeholders that he interacts with are knowledge of public access to information (PATI) Act requirements. He has demonstrated a commitment to improving the coordination and cooperation between PATI requesters, public authorities and the ICO. Mr. Northcott has consistently and respectfully upheld requesters' PATI rights while also encouraging his coworkers to understand and adhere to effective PATI procedures. His positive influence also extends to providing valued support to Ms. Rozy Azhar, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs, as well as working diligently with his fellow Information Officers within the Ministry.

Permanent Secretary Azhar, stated "I am very pleased and excited that David has won this award. David is an invaluable asset to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Before he came, PATI requests were handled in a haphazard way causing internal reviews and, at times, have had to be escalated to the Information Commissioner. David has provided training, advice and assistance to all the Departments in the Ministry of Home Affairs. This award recognises his excellent work and I am thankful to the Information Commissioner for selecting him."

Information Commissioner Gitanjali Gutierrez stated, "Bermuda's Information Officers are often the first people that PATI requesters interact with when submitting their PATI requests. Information Officers that embrace this important role and make empowered decisions on behalf of their public authority are invaluable assets in enforcing PATI rights. An Information Officer that is knowledgeable of the PATI Act and supported in this role, can have a positive impact on not only their public authority but the relationships that their public authority has with the public that they serve. This year's award recipient, Mr. David Northcott, upholds the best qualities of an effective Information Officer. My team and I celebrate Mr. Northcott and commend him for his commitment to the principles of the PATI Act."

The ICO expresses its appreciation to all Information Officers across all of Bermuda's public authorities for their service and commitment to the principles of public access to information, transparency and good governance.

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Editor's Notes:

The Information Commissioner's Office is an independent public office responsible for promoting the use of and overseeing compliance with the Public Access to Information (PATI) Act 2010. The PATI Act gives the public a right to access records held by public authorities, subject to listed exemptions and administrative grounds for denial of access. Individuals who are dissatisfied with the response of a public authority may seek an independent review by the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner shall investigate, and the decisions by the Information Commissioner are legally binding.

Photo:

Ms. Rozy Azhar, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs; The Hon. Walter H. Roban JP, MP, Minister of Home Affairs; Mr. David Northcott, Information Officer, Ministry of Home Affairs Headquarters; and Ms. Gitanjali Gutierrez, Information Commissioner for Bermuda.

Further information about the Information Commissioner's Office is available at www.ico.bm.