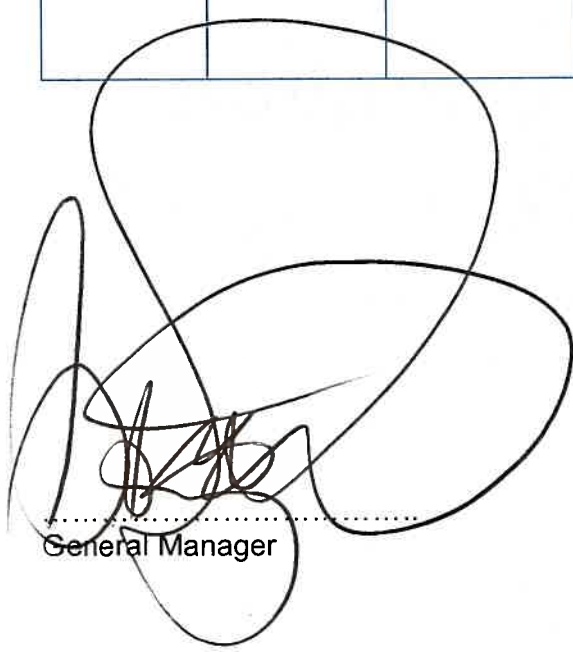




Access to Information Policy

DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:		MANAGER OF GOVERNANCE RISK AND CORPORATE PLANNING			
REVIEWED BY:		MANEX			
REVIEW DUE DATE:		June 2024			
VERSION NUMBER:		4			
DOCUMENT NUMBER:		NA			
VERSIONS:	DATE:	RESOLUTION NO:	DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS:	AUTHOR / EDITOR:	APPROVED / ADOPTED BY:
4	24/06/2021	11.06/21	Amendments are minimal with most changes associated with formatting adjustments to fit Council's new Policy Template.	Manager of Governance Risk and Corporate Planning	Council
3	28/06/2018	12.06/18		Director of Corporate and Community Services	Council
2	23/09/2010	14.09/10		Director of Corporate and Community Services	Council
1	26/06/2008	4.06/08		Director of Corporate and Community Services	Council



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General Manager

29/7/21
.....
Date

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to describe Council's principles regarding public access to information and to facilitate the processing of requests for such access. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Access to Information Guidelines.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to:

- Anyone wishing to access information from Glen Innes Severn Council;
- All staff that handle customer information; and
- The Public Officer – who will ultimately decide if the information sought will be accessed or not.

OUTCOMES

Glen Innes Severn Council is committed to the following principles regarding public access to documents and information:

- Open and transparent government;
- Consideration of the overriding public interest in relation to access requests;
- Proactive disclosure and dissemination of information; and
- Respect for the privacy of individuals.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Policy will be communicated to all new employees that are affected by it as part of their induction. Revised versions of the Policy that contain significant changes will be communicated to all affected staff by the **Manager of Governance, Risk and Corporate Planning (MGRCP)**. New versions will be distributed via Council's digital Policies Register to all applicable staff, including managers for highlighting at team meetings.

All Staff

All staff should notify the Public Officer of any request to access Government Information and not release any information without receiving authorisation from the Public Officer.

POLICY STATEMENT

Public access to information held by Council is facilitated by the **Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)** subject to certain restrictions as set out in the Act and summarised in this Policy.

Council is also required to comply with the Information Protection Principles prescribed by the **Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIIP Act)** relating to the management of personal information held by Council. This policy must therefore be read in conjunction with Council's Privacy Policy which is available for inspection on Council's website.

IMPLEMENTATION

Council:

- Publishes specific open access information on its website free of charge unless to do so would impose unreasonable additional costs to Council. Council will facilitate public access through this and other appropriate mediums;
 - Publishes for inspection documents listed under Schedule 5 of the GIPA Act held by it unless there is an overriding public interest not to do so. Council will keep a record of all open access information that is not published because of an overriding public interest against disclosure;
 - Makes as much other information as possible publicly available in an appropriate manner, including on its website. Such information is also available free of charge or at the lowest reasonable cost;
 - Endeavours to release other information in response to an informal request, subject to any reasonable conditions Council may impose having regard to the circumstances of the case;
 - Publishes an Access to Information Guidelines associated with this Policy which identifies the documents and types of information that are available for public access and any restrictions that may apply. The General Manager has authority to approve Guidelines for Information Access, which is to be available to members of the public;
 - Understands that some documents may require a formal Access Application in accordance with the GIPA Act;
 - Will assess all requests for access to information and Access Applications in a timely manner, in accordance with the 'Access to Information Guidelines' and relevant legislation;
 - May, depending upon the nature of the request and the form of access requested, apply charges in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges and/or relevant legislation;
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- May refuse broad requests or Access Applications seeking to access many unspecified documents which, if processed, would divert substantial Council resources from dealing with other requests, or from performing other Council functions as such a diversion of resources may be contrary to the public interest;
- Will endeavour to assist the applicant in defining the request or Access Application to a more manageable one; and
- Will, where information is released to an applicant under a formal access application and Council considers that it will be of interest to other members of the public, provide details of the information in a disclosure log for inspection by the public on its website.

LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Industry Standards include:

- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009;
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998;
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002;
- State Records Act 1998;
- Local Government Act 1993;
- Environmental Planning and Assessment (EPA) Act 1979; and
- Companion Animals Act 1998.

Relevant Council Policies and Procedures include:

- Access to Information Guidelines;
- Agency Information Guide; and
- Privacy Policy.

VARIATION AND REVIEW

The Access to Information Policy will be reviewed every three (3) years, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council. The term of the Policy does not expire on the review date, but will continue in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.
