

BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL



AGENCY INFORMATION GUIDE

Prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

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STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Blayney Shire Council has adopted this Agency Information Guide (Guide) in accordance with section 20 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act).

By describing Council's functions, responsibilities and organisational structure, the Guide aims to promote a better understanding of Council's work in our community. It also describes the various types of information held by Council, how that information can be accessed and how members of the public can participate in Council's decision-making processes.

OVERVIEW

Blayney Shire Council is constituted under the Local Government Act 1993 and was proclaimed in August 1978.

The Council is an undivided area, with seven (7) Councillors. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected for a 2 year term by the Councillors from among their numbers.

The roles of the Councillors, as members of the elected body are:

- to direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act and other applicable legislation
- to participate in the optimum allocation of the Council's resources for the benefit of the area
- to play a key role in the creation and review of the Council's policies, objectives and criteria relating to the exercise of the Council's regulatory functions
- to review the performance of the Council and its delivery of services, management plans and revenue policies of the Council

The role of a Councillor is, as an elected person:

- to represent the interests of the residents and ratepayers
- to provide leadership and guidance to the community
- to facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

The Mayor presides at meetings of the Council, carries out the civic and ceremonial functions of the office, exercises, in cases of necessity, the decision making functions of the body politic, between its meetings and performs any other functions that the Council determines.

The Principal Officer of the Council is the General Manager. The General Manager is responsible for the efficient operation of the Council's organisation and for ensuring the implementation of Council decisions. The General Manager is also responsible for the day to day management of the Council, the exercise of any functions delegated by the Council, the appointment, direction and where necessary, the dismissal of staff, as well as the implementation of Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan.

To assist the General Manager in the exercise of these functions, there are 3 Directorates of Council. These Directorates are Corporate Services, Planning and Environmental Services and Infrastructure Services. Each of these Directorates is headed by a Director.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The functional structure of the organisation is set out in the below diagram:



COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

Council has functions conferred or imposed on it by the Local Government Act, 1993. These functions include:

SERVICE FUNCTIONS	REGULATORY FUNCTIONS	ANCILLARY FUNCTIONS	REVENUE FUNCTIONS	ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS	ENFORCEMENT FUNCTIONS
Including: * Provision of community health, recreation, education & information services * Environmental protection * Waste removal & disposal * Land & property, industry & tourism development & assistance * Civil Infrastructure Planning * Civil Infrastructure Maintenance & Construction	Including: * Approvals * Orders * Building Certificates	Including: * Resumption of land * Powers of entry and inspection	Including: * Rates * Charges * Fees * Borrowings * Investments	Including: * Employment of staff * Management plans * Financial reporting * Annual reports	Including: * Proceedings for breaches of the Local Government Act & Regulations and other Acts & Regulations * Prosecution of offences * Recovery of rates and charges

As well as the Local Government Act, Council has powers under a number of other Acts including:

Biosecurity Act 2015

Community Land Development Act 1989

Companion Animals Act 1998

Contaminated Land Management Act 1997

Conveyancing Act 1919

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989

Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957

Food Act 2003

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Heritage Act 1977

Library Act 1939

Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997

Public Health Act 2010

Recreation Vehicles Act 1983

Roads Act 1993

State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989

State Emergency Service Act 1989

Strata Schemes Management Act 2015

Swimming Pools Act 1992

Unclaimed Money Act 1995

HOW COUNCIL FUNCTIONS AFFECT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

As a service organisation, the majority of the activities of Blayney Shire Council have an impact on the public. The following is an outline of how the broad functions of Council affect the public.

Service functions affect the public as Council provides services and facilities to the public. These include provision of human services such as libraries, halls and community centres, recreation facilities, infrastructure and the removal of garbage.

Regulatory functions place restrictions on developments and buildings to ensure that they meet certain requirements affecting the amenity of the community and not endanger the lives and safety of any person. Members of the public must be aware of, and comply with, such regulations.

Ancillary functions affect only some members of the public. These functions include, for example, the resumption of land or the power for Council to enter onto a person's land. In these circumstances, only the owner of the property would be affected.

Revenue functions affect the public directly in that revenue from rates and other charges paid by the public is used to fund services and facilities provided to the community.

Administrative functions do not necessarily affect the public directly but have an indirect impact on the community through the efficiency and effectiveness of the service provided.

Enforcement functions only affect those members of the public who are in breach of certain legislation. This includes matters such as the non-payment of rates and charges and unregistered dogs.

Community planning and development functions affect areas such as cultural development, social planning and involves:

- Advocating and planning for the needs of our community. This includes initiating partnerships; participating on regional, State or Commonwealth working parties; and preparation and implementation of the Community Plan.
- Providing support to community and sporting organisations through provision of grants, training and information.
- Facilitating opportunities for people to participate in the life of the community through the conduct of a range of community events such as Australia Day Awards and Youth Week, as well as promoting events of others.

HOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN PARTICIPATE IN COUNCIL'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND THE EXERCISE OF FUNCTIONS

There are a number of avenues available to members of the public to enable participation in policy development and the general activities of Council. These avenues can be broken down into two categories, namely:

- representation;
- personal participation.

1. REPRESENTATION

Local Democracy

Councils in New South Wales are elected every four years. The next election for Blayney Shire is scheduled for September 2024.

At each election for Blayney Shire Council, voters elect seven Councillors for a four-year term. The Mayor is elected for a 2 year term by the Councillors from among their numbers. All residents of the area who are on the electoral roll are eligible to vote. Property owners who live outside of the area and rate paying lessees can also vote but must register their intention to vote on the non-residential roll. Voting is compulsory.

Making Representations to Councillors

Residents are able to raise issues with, and make representations to, the elected Councillors. The Councillors, if they agree with the issue or representation, may pursue the matter on the resident's behalf thus allowing members of the public to influence the development of policy.

Appointments with Mayor

After speaking to Councillors and/or appropriate staff, members of the public may make an appointment with the Mayor to discuss issues that require further attention.

2. PERSONAL PARTICIPATION

Open Council Meetings

Blayney Shire Council meets regularly at Ordinary Council meetings to discuss local issues and make decisions on behalf of the community. All meetings of Council are open to the public and residents are welcome to attend, unless closed for specific reasons under the *Local Government Act*. Meetings are also [streamed](#) from Council's website for viewing by members of the public and residents. Ordinary [Council meetings](#) are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Public Address to Council

Members of the public are able to attend [Council meetings](#) (third Tuesday of each month – except January where there is no meeting and June is the fourth Tuesday of the month) in the Blayney Shire Community Centre - Council Chamber, 41 Church Street, Blayney.

The opportunity is offered to interested persons to address Council prior to meetings on any matters that are within its jurisdiction. A [Public Forum Speaker Request Form](#) must be completed and lodged before scheduled deadline of 4.00pm on the day of the Council meeting. Forms are available from Council's website: <https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-meetings/public-speaker-request>

Section 355 Committees

There are several [Committees](#) to which Council has delegated a function of Council to under s.355 of the Local Government Act. Council has the following Community Committees comprising and including members of the public:

- Blayney Shire Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- Blayney Shire Council Australia Day Committee
- Blayney Shire Financial Assistance Committee
- Blayney Shire Floodplain Management Committee
- Disability Inclusion Working Group

Community Committee meeting times are promoted on Council's website and meeting calendar within [Council Business Paper Agendas](#). Invitations for membership of committees are called after Council elections and as committee vacancies arise. Notification of vacancies are publicised on Council's website and in the local newspaper. Members of the public interested in being involved with any community committee should contact Council in the first instance to enquire of any vacancies.

Public Exhibitions / Submissions to Council

[Public exhibition](#) of Council documents are an important way for the community to participate in local government. Members of the community can submit feedback on proposed policies, plans, projects or development that Council is considering. Members of the public can, either personally or in writing, address any matter that falls within Council jurisdiction.

Information provided to Council in correspondence, submissions or requests, including personal information such as names and addresses may be made publicly available in accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act (GIPA).

INFORMATION HELD BY BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL

Council holds a wide range of information, in both hard copy and electronic form in respect of the wide range of functions undertaken by it. That information is contained in:

1. Records – either physical or electronic
2. Policy documents
3. General Information

1. RECORDS

Prior to 1996 Council had a “hard copy” records system, with material being held as physical records. Since then, Council’s records have been maintained in electronic format, physical records being dispensed with, except for development/building/construction applications.

Council’s records are not available on the website however this information may be made available either by informal release or via an access application, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information, in accordance with the provisions of GIPA.

Members of the public who require an informal release or an access application can do so by contacting the Right to Information Officer at Council on telephone (02) 6368 2104.

2. POLICY DOCUMENTS

Council’s policies are maintained in a policy register – access to which is available from Council’s website using the following link: <https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-information/council-policies>

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The following list of general information held by Council has been divided into four sections as outlined by the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018:-

1. Information about Council;
2. Plans and Policies;
3. Information about Development Applications;
4. Approvals, Orders and other Documents.

The Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 requires that these documents held by Council, are to be made publicly available for inspection, free of charge. The public is entitled to inspect these documents either on Council’s website (unless there is an unreasonable additional cost to Council to publish these documents on the website) or at the offices of the Council during ordinary office hours or at any other place as determined by the Council. Any current and previous documents of this type may be inspected by the public free of charge. Copies can be supplied for reasonable copying charges.

These documents are:

a. Information about Council

- The model code of conduct prescribed under section 440 (1) of the LGA
- Council's adopted Code of Conduct
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Annual Report
- Annual Financial Reports
- Auditor's Report
- Community Strategic Plan
- Delivery and Operational Plan including resourcing strategy documentation such as Workforce Plan; Long-term Financial Plan; and Asset Management Plans
- EEO Management Plan
- Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities to the Mayor and Councillors Policy
- Annual Reports of Bodies Exercising Functions Delegated by Council
- Any Codes referred to in the Local Government Act
- Returns of the Interests of Councillors, Designated Persons and Delegates
- Agendas and Business Papers for any meeting of Council or any Committee of Council
- Minutes of any meeting of Council or any Committee of Council
- Departmental Representative Reports presented at a meeting of Council
- Land Register
- Register of Investments
- Register of Delegations
- Register of Graffiti removal works
- Register of current Declarations of Disclosures of Political donations
- Register of Voting on Planning Matters

b. Plans and Policies

- Local Policies adopted by Council concerning approvals and orders
- Plans of Management for Community Land
- Environmental Planning Instruments, Development Control Plans and Contribution Plans

c. Information about Development Applications

Development Applications and any associated documents received in relations to a proposed development:

- Home Warranty Insurance documents
- Construction Certificates
- Occupation Certificates
- Structural Certification Documents
- Town Planner Reports
- Submissions received on Development Applications
- Heritage Consultant Reports
- Tree Inspection Consultant Reports
- Acoustic Consultant Reports
- Land Contamination Consultant Reports
- Records of decisions on Development Applications including decisions on appeals
- Records describing general nature of documents that Council decides to exclude from public view including internal specifications and configurations, and commercially sensitive information

d. Approvals, Orders and Other Documents

- Applications for approvals under Part 1 of Chapter 7 of the LGA
- Applications for approvals under any other Act and any associated documents received
- Records of approvals granted or refused, any variation from Council Policies with reasons for the variation, and decisions made on appeals concerning approvals
- Orders given under Part 2 of Chapter 7 of the LGA, and any reasons given under section 136 of the LGA
- Orders given under the Authority of any other Act
- Records of Building Certificates under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Plans of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired by Council
- Compulsory Acquisition Notices
- Leases and Licenses for use of Public Land classified as Community Land

HOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ACCESS AND AMEND COUNCIL DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THEIR PERSONAL AFFAIRS

As far as practicable, Council documents will be accessible by members of the public during office hours.

Persons interested in obtaining access to documents or who wish to seek an amendment to the Council's records concerning their personal affairs, should contact a Customer Service Officer. If you experience difficulty in obtaining documents or information you should contact Council's Public Officer.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY THE COUNCIL

Blayney Shire Council is dedicated to good public decision making, transparency and accountability, and will provide access to information in accordance with the provisions of the GIPA Act.

Council has adopted a policy on access to information (Policy 2G: Access to Information), to facilitate public access to the information held by Council. This policy is publicly available from Council's policy register on Council's website using the following link:

<https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-information/council-policies>

In accordance with the GIPA Act, Council will make information available to the public in the following ways, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of information:

OPEN ACCESS INFORMATION

Through the mandatory disclosure of open access information (see above, Information Held by Council) – where practicable, this information will be made available free of charge on Council's website. Where it is not practicable for Council to provide open access information on the website, the information will be made available free of charge in at least one other format.

To access information that is not currently available on Council's website, please contact Council's Right to Information Officer on (02) 6368 2104.

PROACTIVE RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Through the proactive release of as much information as possible – this information will be made available free of charge, or at the lowest reasonable cost.

INFORMAL ACCESS REQUESTS

In response to an informal request (without the need for a formal application, unless there are good reasons to require one) – this information will be made available free of charge, subject to any reasonable conditions that may be imposed by Council. Where information sought requires significant allocation of staff resource fees will be payable. Council may require a written record of an informal request to access information.

FORMAL ACCESS APPLICATIONS

In response to a formal access application (for information that Council does not provide proactively or informally) – application fees and processing charges apply as per the GIPA Act.

The GIPA Act sets out the procedure for making and dealing with formal access applications. An application for information that is not already available by other means must be made on the [Formal Access Application](#) form, which is available at the Council office or on Council's website using the following link: <https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-information/access-to-council-information>

A formal application is not a valid application unless it is accompanied by an application fee of \$30. The application fee counts as payment of the first hour of any processing charge that may be payable by the applicant. Processing charges for dealing with formal access applications are charged at a rate of \$30 per hour for each hour of processing time.

Enquiries regarding formal access applications should be made to Council's Right to Information Officer on (02) 6368 2104.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COPYRIGHT

Some information may be subject to copyright laws and the consent of the copyright owner will be required before releasing copies of such information. Alternatively, Council may grant 'view only' access to such material.

The Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968 takes precedence over State legislation. Therefore, the right to copy documents under the GIPA Act does not override the Copyright Act. Nothing in the GIPA Act or Regulations permits Council to make government information available in any way that would constitute an infringement of copyright.

Access to copyrighted documents will be granted by way of inspection only unless the copyright owner's written consent is provided. Where authority is unable to be obtained or the copyright owner is not able to be contacted, copies of copyright material will not be provided.

Copyright material includes, but not limited to, plans/drawings, consultant reports and survey reports.

Council's staff will advise if the information sought is subject to copyright.

INTERACTION WITH PRIVACY LEGISLATION

Access to certain information may be limited in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act) and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (HRIP Act). The PPIP Act and HRIP Act provide for the protection of personal and health information and for the protection of the privacy of individuals generally.

In accordance with the PPIP Act and the HRIP Act, Council has adopted a Privacy Management Plan (available on Council's website) which outlines Council's practice for dealing with privacy and

personal information in accordance with Information Protection Principles contained within the PPIP Act and the Health Protection Principles contained within the HRIP Act.

DISCLOSURE LOG

Council's [Disclosure Log](#) lists information released under a formal access application under the GIPA Act that is considered to be of interest to the wider public.

It should be noted that applicants can object to inclusion in Council's Disclosure Log.

PUBLIC OFFICER – RIGHT TO INFORMATION OFFICER

The Director Corporate Services is the appointed as the Public Officer. Amongst other duties, the Public Officer may deal with requests from the public concerning the Council's affairs and has the responsibility of assisting people to gain access to public documents of the Council. The Director Corporate Services is also Council's Right to Information Officer and, as such, is responsible for determining applications for access to documents or for the amendment of records. If you have any difficulty in obtaining access to Council documents, you may wish to refer your enquiry to the Public Officer. Also, if you would like to amend a document of Council which you feel is incorrect it is necessary for you to make written application to the Public Officer (Right to Information Officer) in the first instance.

Enquiries should be addressed as follows:

General Manager
Blayney Shire Council
PO Box 62
BLAYNEY NSW 2799

Email: council@blayney.nsw.gov.au

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION NSW

If you require any other advice or assistance about access to information you may contact the Information and Privacy Commission by telephone on 1800 472 679 (free call), in person at Level 15, McKell Building, 2-24 Rawson Place, Haymarket NSW 2000 in writing to GPO Box 7011 Sydney NSW 2001 or by email at ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au . Further information may also be obtained from website: www.ipc.nsw.gov.au

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