



# **WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL**



## **AGENCY INFORMATION GUIDE**

**Modified June 2019**

## PREFACE

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* requires Council to maintain an Agency Information guide.

The Agency Information Guide includes information such as:

- Structure and Functions of Council
- How Council's Functions affect the members of the public
- Arrangements for Public Participation in Policy Development
- What type of information Council holds and how members of the public can access this information.

The Agency Information Guide is reviewed annually and can be accessed on Council's website.



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# 1 Structure and Functions of Council

## 1.1 ABOUT WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

The City of Greater Wollongong was proclaimed on 12 September 1947 and came into effect on 24 September 1947. It was the result of an amalgamation of the Bulli Shire, North Illawarra Municipality, City of Wollongong and Shire of Central Illawarra.

On 30 October 1970 the City of Greater Wollongong was proclaimed as the City of Wollongong.



For more information of our city's history, suburbs and population refer to our [History & Demographics](#) on our website.

## 1.2 COUNCIL ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

### 1.2.1 Council Role

The guiding principles for Councils are set out under Section 8A of the Local Government Act 1993. It includes:

- (a) Councils should provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decision-making.
- (b) Councils should carry out functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers.
- (c) Councils should plan strategically, using the integrated planning and reporting framework, for the provision of effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community.
- (d) Councils should apply the integrated planning and reporting framework in carrying out their functions so as to achieve desired outcomes and continuous improvements.

- (e) Councils should work co-operatively with other Councils and the State Government to achieve desired outcomes for the local community.
- (f) Councils should manage lands and other assets so that current and future local community needs can be met in an affordable way.
- (g) Councils should work with others to secure appropriate services for local community needs.
- (h) Councils should act fairly, ethically and without bias in the interests of the local community.
- (i) Councils should be responsible employers and provide a consultative and supportive working environment for staff.

The following principles apply to decision-making by Councils:

- (a) Councils should recognise diverse local community needs and interests.
- (b) Councils should consider social justice principles.
- (c) Councils should consider the long term and cumulative effects of actions on future generations.
- (d) Councils should consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- (e) Council decision-making should be transparent and decision-makers are to be accountable for decisions and omissions.

Councils should actively engage with their local communities, through the use of the integrated planning and reporting framework and other measures.

### **1.2.2 Council Functions**

The functions imposed on Council under the Local Government Act include regulatory, ancillary, revenue, administrative, enforcement and service or non-regulatory.

There are also other functions conferred on Council by a number of other Acts.

In undertaking these functions there are a diverse range of services provided to the community together with internal support services.

Council's Service Catalogue is aligned with [Wollongong 2028](#) – a long term Community Strategic Plan for the City. The plan plays a vital role in the future of the Wollongong, and provides the direction for the delivery key projects and services, which will help meet the needs of the community now and into the future. The Community Strategic Plan is supported by Council's Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program and Annual Plan including the Budget, Capital Budget and Revenue Policy, Fees and Charges. These documents are available on Council's website.

## **1.3 COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

### **1.3.1 Elected Council**

The Council of the City of Wollongong is divided into three wards consisting. The Council consists of a Lord Mayor and twelve Councillors, being four Councillors per ward.

Both the Lord Mayor and the Councillors are popularly elected by people enrolled on the Commonwealth electoral roll. The current Lord Mayor and Councillors were elected for a one-off, three-year term on 9 September 2017.

A full list of Councillors is can be accessed on the [Councillor Webpage](#).

*Council Ward Maps can also be accessed at [Wollongong Council's Ward Boundaries](#).*

### **1.3.2 Role of the Council and the Lord Mayor**

The role of the Council in accordance with section 223 of the Local Government Act 1993 is to:

- (a) to direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with this Act,
- (b) to provide effective civic leadership to the local community,
- (c) to ensure as far as possible the financial sustainability of the Council,
- (d) to ensure as far as possible that the council acts in accordance with the principles set out in Chapter 3 and the plans, programs, strategies and polices of the Council,
- (e) to develop and endorse the community strategic plan, delivery program and other strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council,
- (f) to determine and adopt a rating and revenue policy and operational plans that support the optimal allocation of the Council's resources to implement the strategic plans (including the community strategic plan) of the council and for the benefit of the local area,
- (g) to keep under review, the performance of the Council, including service delivery,
- (h) to make decisions necessary for the proper exercise of the council's regulatory functions,
- (i) to determine the process for appointment of the General Manager by the Council and to monitor the General Manager's performance,
- (j) to determine the senior staff positions within the organisation structure of the Council,
- (k) to consult regularly with community organisations and other key stakeholders and keep them informed of the Council's decisions and activities,
- (l) to be responsible for ensuring that the Council acts honestly, efficiently and appropriately.



**LORD MAYOR COUNCILLOR  
GORDON BRADBERRY AM**

The governing body is to consult with the General Manager in directing and controlling the affairs of the Council.

The role of the Lord Mayor in accordance with section 226 of the Local Government Act 1993 is as follows:

- (a) to be the leader of the Council and a leader in the local community,
- (b) to advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness,
- (c) to be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council as to its local priorities,

- (d) to exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the Council between meetings of the council,
- (e) to preside at meetings of the Council,
- (f) to ensure that meetings of the Council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with this Act,
- (g) to ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the Council,
- (h) to promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the Council,
- (i) to promote partnerships between the Council and key stakeholders,
- (j) to advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the general manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the Council,
- (k) in conjunction with the General Manager, to ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the Council and the local community,
- (l) to carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office,
- (m) to represent the Council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at Regional, State and Commonwealth level,
- (n) in consultation with the Councillors, to lead performance appraisals of the General Manager,
- (o) to exercise any other functions of the Council that the Council determines.

### **1.3.3 Organisational Structure**

Council is required to appoint a General Manager who is generally responsible for the efficient and effective operation of the Council's organisation and for ensuring the implementation, without undue delay, of decisions of the Council. The General Manager has a number of particular functions specified in the *Local Government Act 1993* as well as any other functions as may be conferred or imposed by that Act.

To support the General Manager in exercising these functions there are four Council Departments. These are Community Services, Corporate Services, Infrastructure and Works, and Planning and Environment. Each Department is managed by a Director.

Click [here](#) to access the current management structure as determined by Council.

## 2 How Council's Functions Affect Members of the Public

In performing its role, the functions of Council are many and varied as indicated in clause 1.2.2 above.

As a service organisation the majority of the functions and activities of Council impact on the public in one way or another and examples in respect of each of the broad functions of Council are:

### Service or Non-Regulatory Functions

The provision of a wide range of property and people services that impact directly on the public.

This includes matters such as;

- Waste removal
- Sporting facilities
- Community facilities
- Stormwater drainage
- Environmental protection and conservation measures



### Regulatory Functions

The placing of restrictions on developments and buildings to ensure that they meet certain requirements affecting the amenity of the area and not endanger the lives and safety of any person.

Members of the public need to be aware of, and comply with, such regulations and laws, controlling such things as:

- Activities that can only be carried out with Council approval i.e. operate a public car park or deliver a public address on community land
- Ordering a person to do, or stop doing, something i.e. keep fewer animals on specific premises







### Ancillary Functions

Functions that are auxiliary to, give support to, and aid the carrying out of, the other functions of Council, particularly its service and regulatory functions. These functions only affect some members of the public and include the;

- Power to compulsorily acquire land
- Power to enter land and buildings to carry out inspections
- Power under the Roads Act 1993.

### Revenue Functions

Relates to the ability of Council to raise income through the collection of different kinds of rates and charges, which directly impacts on ratepayers and residents. These functions include:

- Levying ordinary and special rates
- Imposing charges for use of facilities
- Generating income from business activities
- Borrowing money or obtaining Grant funds.



### Enforcement Functions

The prosecution of offences under relevant legislation which only impacts on those members of the public who are in breach of legislation, including:

- Breaches of the Local Government Act and other relevant legislation
- Recovery of unpaid rates and charges
- Parking Offences.



## Administrative Functions

How Council carries out its functions and makes decisions and how it is made accountable for its actions. These functions indirectly impact on the community through the efficient and effective provision of services and include functions relating to:

- Employing staff
- Developing long term strategic and management plans
- Delegation of functions
- Obtaining insurance coverage
- Defining meeting procedures – Code of Meeting Practice.



### 3 Arrangements for Public Participation in Policy Development and the Exercise of its Functions



#### 3.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Council has a [Community Engagement Policy](#) adopted on 23 July 2018 which guides how Council will involve the community in the planning and delivery of community focussed services.

This policy affirms Council's commitment to involving the community in decision-making processes and outlines a number of engagement activities that Council will support.

These include:

- Development of the Community Strategic Plan, and the supporting suite of integrated plans including the Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program, and Annual Plan.
- **Neighbourhood Forums**  
There are eight community groups are established across the Local Government Area. Six of the groups meet regularly with support from Council however Coledale and Unanderra Forums are currently inactive. For further information regarding the Neighbourhood Forums, please refer to our Community Engagement webpage (<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/haveyoursay/Pages/default.aspx>)
- **Community Forums**  
There are interactive sessions held to consult on specific polices, projects or plans
- **Wollongong Local Planning Panel [WLPP]**  
The Wollongong Local Planning Panel [formerly known as IHAP], was established to provide an independent hearing forum for objectors and applicants on certain applications. The WLPP provides an independent assessment of particular Development Applications and submit recommendations to Council for a decision.
- **Electronic Consultation**  
Council has an online community engagement site, [Have your Say Wollongong](#). It allows the community to be informed and have their say on future projects, draft policies or strategies. There are also other forms of electronic consultation such as online surveys, discussions and through social media platforms.

- **Public Hearings**

These are used for consultation on re-zonings, re-classifications and Plans of Management.

- **Public Access Forum**

This provides an opportunity for members of the community to address Council in a formal meeting environment with relevant issues they may have. The Public Access Forum seeks to improve communication between Council and its residents and assist in portraying Council as an open and accessible organisation. For more information refer to the following link -

<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/meetings/Pages/default.aspx>.

- **Reference Groups**

Reference group members provide Council management with information, knowledge and advice on their specific area of interest or issue and group members should also represent the views of the community. A central focus of the reference groups is to provide input into Council's Community Strategic Plan and other relevant Council policies. More information can be found on Council's website,

<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/meetings/other-groups/Pages/default.aspx>

- **Community Engagement Stands**

These are held at markets and events; offer an opportunity for Council and the community to interact out of office hours and out of the office context.

Council also provides a weekly Community Update in the Wollongong Advertiser, a free newspaper circulating in the Local Government Area to inform the public of community matters such as upcoming Council meetings, public notices, development application approvals, proposals and recruitment opportunities.

### 3.2 REPRESENTATIONS TO COUNCILLORS

Councillors have two distinct roles under the Local Government Act 1993: as a member of the governing body of the Council; and as an elected person. Councillors, as members of the governing body, should work as part of a team to make decisions and policies that guide the activities of the Council. The role as an elected person requires Councillors to represent the interests of the community and provide leadership.

The community are able to raise issues with their Councillors. The Councillors, if they agree, may be able to pursue the issue on behalf of the community member.

Please see below for the contact information for the current Councillors.



**WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCILLORS**

Wollongong Lord Mayor Cr. Gordon Bradbery AM		
 <b>Cr. Mithra Cox</b> Cr.MCox@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0419 720 322	 <b>Cr. David Brown</b> Cr.DBrown@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0409 897 597	 <b>Cr. Vicky King</b> Cr.VKing@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0418 426 651
 <b>Cr. Leigh Colacino</b> Cr.LColacino@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0417 195 189	 <b>Cr. Cath Blakey</b> Cr.CBlakey@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0428 690 177	 <b>Cr. Dom Figliomeni</b> Cr.DFigliomeni@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0427 114 307
 <b>Cr. Jenelle Rimmer</b> Cr.JRimmer@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0418 147 015	 <b>Cr. John Dorahy</b> Cr.JDorahy@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0450 917 262	 <b>Cr. Ann Martin</b> Cr.AMartin@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0435 535 390
 <b>Cr. Janice Kershaw</b> Cr.JKershaw@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0407 383 927	 <b>Cr. Tania Brown</b> Cr.TBrown@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0428 604 999	 <b>Cr. Cameron Walters</b> Cr.CWalters@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 0401 558 359

### **3.3 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS**

We will accept submissions on a proposed development or Wollongong City Council's strategies and policies from all interested parties. All submissions must be made in writing. If you are objecting to a development proposal, you must clearly state your reasons and if possible, provide positive suggestions that you feel would be appropriate. This can be useful to clarify issues and establish facts.

All submissions in writing, quoting the application number, should be forwarded to:

The General Manager  
Wollongong City Council  
Locked Bag 8821  
WOLLONGONG DC NSW 2500

Or email to [council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au) by the specified closing date.

## 4 Information Held by Council and Available to the Public

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, which can be found at [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol\\_act/giaa2009368/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/giaa2009368/), facilitates public access to Council information.

Council holds a vast amount of information in relation to its operations and, whilst not exhaustive, the following matters are an indication of the types of information maintained:

- Rating of land
- Development of land
- Library services
- Roads and related infrastructure
- Waste management
- Environmental management
- Management of Council-owned public land
- Provision of community facilities
- Financial management
- Employee records
- Correspondence files and
- Other administrative records.

This Act requires Council to make the following 'open access information' available to the public:

- Council's policy documents
- An Information Guide with information about the Council's structure and functions, and listing the type of information that is publicly available
- A Disclosure Log of formal access applications where in Council's opinion the information released may be of interest to other members of the public
- A Register of Contracts worth more than \$150,000 that Council has with private sector bodies
- A record of open access information that Council does not make publicly available on the basis of an overriding public interest against disclosure
- Information about Council contained in any document tabled in Parliament by or on behalf of Council, other than any document tabled by order of either House of Parliament and
- Such other Council information as may be prescribed by the Regulations as open access information.

The *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009* requires Council to make certain open access information available to the public for inspection, free of charge, unless there is an overriding public interest against public disclosure.

The specific 'open access information' required by the Regulation is divided into four sections as detailed hereunder:

## **4.1 INFORMATION ABOUT WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL**

### ***4.1.1 Information contained in the current version and the most recent previous version of the following records:***

- The model code of conduct prescribed under section 440(1) of the *Local Government Act*
- Council's adopted Code of Conduct
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Annual Report
- Annual Financial Reports
- Auditor's Report
- Management Plan
- EEO Management Plan
- Policy concerning the Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to the Mayor and Councillors
- Annual Reports of Bodies Exercising Functions Delegated by Council (eg section 355/377 Committees)
- Any Codes referred to in the *Local Government Act*.

### ***4.1.2 Information contained in the following records, whenever created:***

- Returns of the Interests of Councillors, Designated Persons and Delegates
- Agendas, Business Papers and Minutes of Council/Committee meetings (except meetings that are closed to the public)
- Office of Local Government Representative Reports presented at a meeting of Council.

### ***4.1.3 Information contained in the current version of the following records:***

- 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 – (Council's current Policy requires the register to contain the voting patterns on all matters).



## 4.2 PLANS AND POLICIES

Information contained in the current version and the most recent previous version of the following records:

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

## 4.3 INFORMATION ABOUT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

### **4.3.1 Information contained in the following records, whenever created:**

- a) Development Applications and any associated documents received in relation to a proposed development, including:
  - Town Planner Reports
  - Technical Consultant Reports including heritage, tree inspection, acoustic, land contamination and geotechnical etc.
  - Construction Certificates
  - Home Warranty Insurance documents
  - Structural Certification Documents
  - Occupation Certificates.
- b) Records of decisions on Development Applications including decisions on appeals;
- c) Records describing the general nature of documents that Council decides to exclude from public view after application of public interest test considerations.

### **4.3.2 This Clause does not apply to so much of the information referred to in subclause 5.3.1(a) as consists of:**

- a) the plans and specifications for any residential part of a proposed building, other than plans that merely show its height and its external configuration in relation to the site on which it is proposed to be erected; or
- b) commercial information, if the information would be likely to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it or to reveal a trade secret.

### **4.3.3 Council must keep the record referred to in subclause 5.3.1(c).**

#### 4.4 APPROVALS, ORDERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Information contained in the following records, whenever created:

- Applications for approvals under Part 1 of Chapter 7 of the *Local Government Act* and any associated documents received
- 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 *Local Government Act* , and any reasons given under section 136 of the *Local Government Act*
- 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.

Information that is not open access information may be made available upon request or application made in accordance with Council's Public Access to Information Held by Council Policy which can be found on Council's [Access to Information](#) page. All applications will be dealt with in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

## 5 How to Access Council Information

Council will publish the current version of this open access, or mandatory release, information on its website unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure or to do so would impose an unreasonable additional cost on Council.

Where Council has deemed certain information to be unsuitable for publication on its website, this will be noted on the website and the information may be made available for inspection at Council. Similarly, the most recent previous version of the records identified in part 4 above, will be made available for inspection at Council as soon as practicable.

Copies can be supplied and may incur a copying charge as per Council's Fees and Charges.

Where copyright exists in a document, it is provided for information purposes only in accordance with Council's statutory obligations and copyright laws still apply. The copyright owner's consent is required if any part of the document is used for any other purpose.

In addition, from time to time Council will make as much other information as possible publicly available in an appropriate manner, including on Council's website. The information will be available free of charge or at the lowest reasonable cost. Such other information includes frequently requested information or information of public interest that has been released as a result of other requests. Such information may be contained within Council's [Disclosure Log](#) which is available on Council's website.



## 5.1 OPEN ACCESS INFORMATION AND INFORMAL REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Anyone wishing to view or obtain copies of documents identified in this Guide can do so by way of the following options:

Internet	<p>All information outlined in this publication, where possible, will be accessible and downloadable free of charge from Council's website at <a href="http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au">www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au</a>, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ there is an unreasonable additional cost to Council to publish this information on the web, or</li> <li>○ there is an overriding public interest against disclosure on the web</li> </ul>
Electronic Lodgement	<p>Completing the <a href="#">Informal Access Application</a> online.</p> <p>Note that there is no processing fee however, if you wish to obtain copies of documents, copying charges may apply as per Council's Fees and Charges which can be found at <a href="http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/">http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/</a> .</p>
Council Office	<p>Telephone Council on 4227 7111 or visit Council's Customer Service Centre, Ground Floor, 41 Burelli Street, Wollongong during the hours of 8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday (except Public Holidays).</p>

## 5.2 OTHER THAN OPEN ACCESS INFORMATION - FORMAL ACCESS APPLICATIONS

Notwithstanding the lodgement of an informal application, Council may require a Formal Access Application to be submitted where the information sought:

- is of a sensitive nature that requires careful weighing of the considerations in favour of and against disclosure, or
- contains personal or confidential information about a third party that requires consultation, or
- would involve an unreasonable amount of time and resources to produce.

Anyone wishing to view or obtain copies of documents and/or files held by Council that fall within the above categories may download the following form and return to Council's Customer Service Centre with the appropriate fee:



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Formal Access Applications can be found at <http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/> - \$30 application fee applicable. Further processing charges (charged at \$30/hr, subject to reductions) may apply.

## 6 Further Information

Should you require any further information or assistance from Council please contact:

Right to Information Officer

Wollongong City Council

Address: 41 Burelli Street, WOLLONGONG NSW 2500

Mail: Locked Bag 8821 WOLLONGONG DC NSW 2500

Telephone: (02) 4227 7111 (9.00am to 5.00pm Mon-Fri excl. public holidays)

Facsimile: (02) 4227 7277

Email: [council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au)

Web: [www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au)

Additional information in relation to access to information and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 is available from the:

Information and Privacy Commission

Address: Level 17, 201 Elizabeth Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000

Mail: GPO Box 7011 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Free call: 1800 472 679 (9.00am to 5.00pm Mon-Fri excl. public holidays)

Email: [ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au)

Web: [www.ipc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au)

If you have any hearing or speech impairment, you can call Council through the National Relay Service (NRS) on 133 677 or if you want to talk to us with the assistance of an interpreter, you can call us through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

<b>SUMMARY SHEET</b>	
<b>Responsible Division</b>	Information Management
<b>Date adopted by General Manager</b>	2 July 2019
<b>Date of previous adoptions</b>	9 July 2018 26 July 2016 21 July 2015 27 May 2014 Amended 11 October 2013 18 July 2012 29 July 2011 22 September 2010 11 August 2010
<b>Date of next review</b>	June 2020
<b>Prepared by</b>	Right to Information Officer
<b>Authorised by</b>	Manager Governance & Information