

Agency Information Guide 2025



What is the Agency Information Guide?

This guide has been produced in accordance with section 20 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, and exists to provide members of the public with a comprehensive overview of:

- The structure and functions of Snowy Monaro Regional Council
- How those functions affect the community
- The ways we engage with the community
- The type of information we hold; and
- How we make information publicly available

Record of versions				
Version	Date Published	Reason for amendments	Resolution	Author or Document Owner
4	2025	Annual review – updated org. structure, council functions, and population statistics	132/25	Governance
3	21 March 2024	Updates to Organisational chart, relevant Acts, management of information requests, and list of committees.	52/24	Governance
2	24 September 2019	Updated to incorporate amendments to the GIPA Act 2018	17/20	Governance
1	9 August 2018	Annual review		Governance

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About Snowy Monaro Regional Council

The Snowy Monaro Regional Council provides local government infrastructure and services to 22,132* people spread over 15,162sq km, extending from the Australian Capital Territory in the north to the Victorian border in the south. Council's head office is in Cooma, other offices are in Berridale, Bombala and Jindabyne.

Eleven Councillors represent the community, with the Mayor being elected by the Councillors from amongst their number.

* Australian Bureau of Statistics

How Council Operates

Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act (The Act) 1993* and is governed by a body of councillors who are elected by the residents and ratepayers of the region.

The Act provides a legal framework for Council to operate under, setting out its responsibilities, powers and function.

The Role of the Governing Body

- Ensure as far as possible that Council acts in accordance with the principles set out in the Act.
- Direct the affairs of the Council, through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in accordance with the Act.
- Endorse the community strategic plan, delivery program and other strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council.
- Determine and adopt a rating and revenue policy.
- Exercise responsible decision making to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council.
- Determine the process for appointment of the CEO and monitor the CEO's performance.
- Determine the senior staff positions and reporting lines within the organisations structure.
- Consult regularly with community organisations and other key stakeholders.
- Keep the community informed of Council's decisions and activities.

The Role of the Mayor and Councillors

Councillors are elected corporate bodies responsible for significant decision making that affects the local community.

In their role as the governing body of the council, councillors are expected to demonstrate acceptable conduct while representing the views of the community in the decisions they make.

Table 1: Role of the Mayor and Councillors

Mayor	→ Be the leader of the Council and a leader in the local community → Advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness → Be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council → Exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the Council → Preside at meetings of the Council → Ensure that meetings of the council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with the Act → Ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council → Promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the Council → Promote partnerships between the Council and key stakeholders → Advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the CEO in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the Council → In conjunction with the CEO, to ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the Council and the local community → Carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office → Represent the Council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at regional, State and Commonwealth level → Consultation with the councillors, to lead performance appraisals of the CEO → Exercise any other functions of the Council that the Council determines
Councillors	→ Be an active and contributing member of the governing body → Make considered and well-informed decisions as a member of the governing body → Participate in the development of the integrated planning and reporting framework → Represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community → Facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body → Uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the governing body → Make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor

The Role of Council

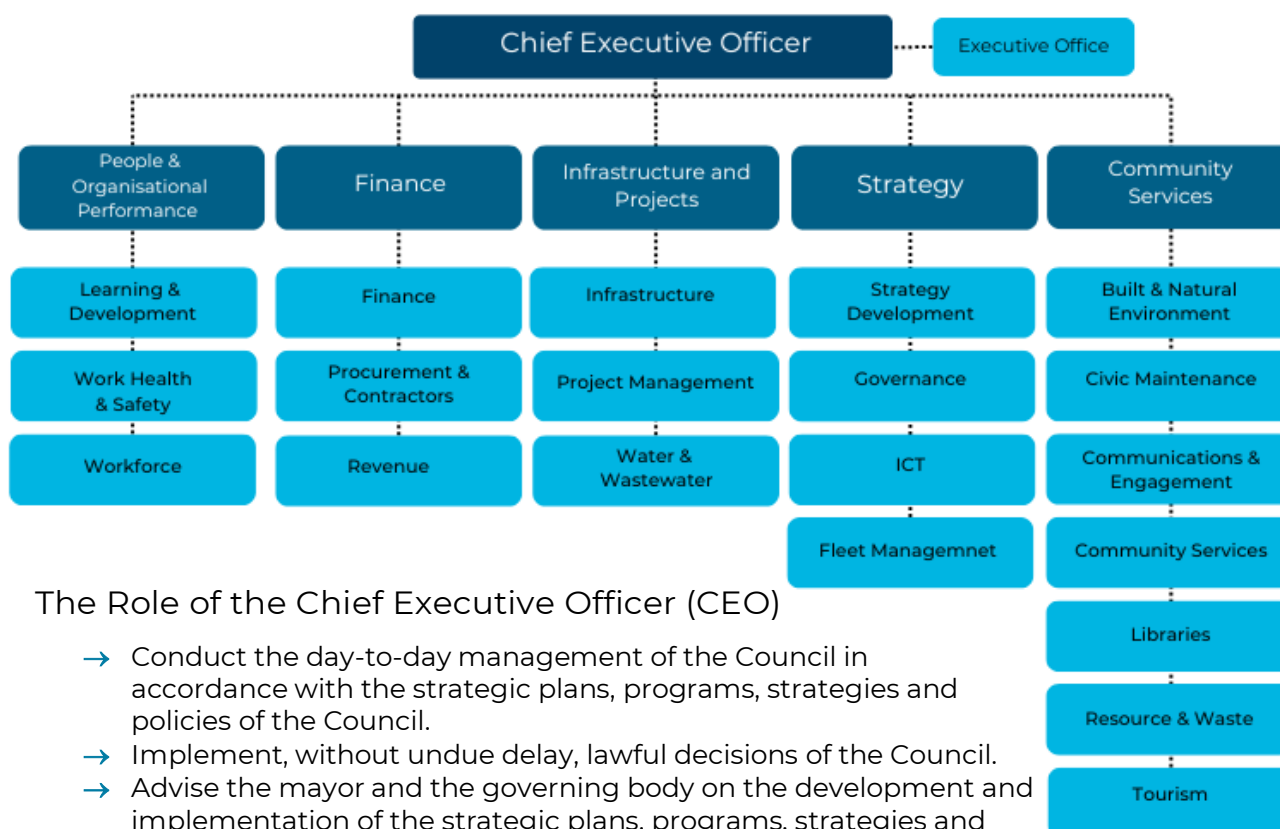
- Provide strong and effective civic leadership on behalf of the local community
- Undertake the proper exercise of Council's regulatory functions
- Manage infrastructure for the benefit of the broader community
- Provide services that benefit the broader community

Organisation Structure

In determining the organisational structure, Council must also determine the senior staff position and the reporting lines within the structure.

The current structure has been in place since 16 May 2024, Council *resolution 131/24*.

Table 2: Organisational Structure:



The Role of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

- Conduct the day-to-day management of the Council in accordance with the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council.
- Implement, without undue delay, lawful decisions of the Council.
- Advise the mayor and the governing body on the development and implementation of the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council.
- Advise the mayor and the governing body on the appropriate form of community consultation on the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council and other matters related to Council.
- Prepare, in consultation with the mayor and the governing body, the Council's community strategic plan, community engagement strategy, resourcing strategy, delivery program, operational plan and annual report.
- Ensure that the mayor and other councillors are given timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary to effectively discharge their functions.
- Exercise any of the functions of the council that are delegated by the Council to the CEO
- Appoint staff in accordance with the organisation structure determined under this Chapter and the resources approved by the Council
- Direct and dismiss staff
- Implement the council's workforce management strategy
- Any other functions that are conferred or imposed on the CEO by or under this or any other Act

Senior Staff

Council has one senior staff position being the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

There are five chief officer positions that assist the CEO in the execution of Council functions.

Chief Strategy Officer

Chief Financial Officer

Chief of Community Services

Chief Infrastructure and Projects

Chief People & Organisational Structure Performance Officer

Public Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is to appoint a public officer that:

- may deal with requests from the public concerning the council's affairs
- has the responsibility of assisting people to gain access to public documents of the council
- may receive submissions made to the council
- may accept service of documents on behalf of the council
- may represent the council in any legal or other proceedings
- has such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Public Officer by the CEO or by or under the LG Act.

The Public Officer is subject to the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

Council's designated public officer is the Coordinator Governance. Council's Chief Strategy Officer is the alternative public officer if required due to the public officer not being available.

Council Functions

Function		Impact on the Community
Service	→ Provision of health, recreation, education & information services → Environmental protection → Waste removal & disposal → Water supply, sewerage & storm water → Land & property, industry, tourist development & assistance → Civil infrastructure & planning → Civil infrastructure, maintenance & construction	The services and functions provided by Council benefit the everyday lives of the community. These include services such as: → Libraries → Halls and community centres → Recreation facilities → Roads → Removal of garbage
Regulatory	→ Approvals → Orders → Building certification	Development and buildings in the region have restrictions placed on them to ensure that they are meeting 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.
Enforcement	→ Prosecution of offences → Proceedings for breaches of the Act and other legislation → Recovery of rates and charges	This function only affects those members of the community who have raised concerns with Council and those who are in breach of certain legislation.
Ancillary	→ Reassuming possession of land → Power of entry → Establishment of entertainment precinct	Ancillary functions are other functions that support the operations of the council. These include the resumption of land, or the power for the council to enter a person's land to conduct a council service. In these circumstances, only the owner of the property would be affected.
Revenue	Generation of income from: → Rates → Charges → Fees → Grants → Borrowings → Investment	Revenue has a direct impact on the community, as it is generated from rates and charges paid by the public. The revenue generated funds services and maintenance on community assets for continued use.
Administrative	→ Employment of staff → Strategic planning → Financial management → Annual reporting → Council meetings → Delegation → Audit requirements	This function has a mostly indirect impact on the community through the efficiency and effectiveness of service provided. However, the community will be involved in the consultation of strategic plans, and council meetings.

Function	Impact on the Community
Community planning and development functions Community planning and development functions address areas such as cultural development, social planning and community profile and involves: → advocating and planning for the needs of our community. This includes preparation and implementation of the Community Strategic Plan. → facilitating opportunities for people to participate in the life of the community through a range of community events such as NAIDOC Week, Youth Week, International Day of People with Disability, as well as promoting events of others; and → preparation and implementation of legislative obligations such as Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Child Safe Organisation.	Community planning and development aims to enhance the quality of life in communities by focusing on long-term goals like stronger, more unified communities, improved social capital, building community capacity, increased civic engagement, greater community safety, and better health and well-being outcomes.

Council is responsible for ensuring local communities run as smoothly and efficiently as possible, with the community able to access the services and programs they need to live safe and healthy lives.

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP), developed in consultation with the community, guides and directs the decision making of Council and the services provided, from water, to waste and open spaces.

Along with the large range of services, Council manages millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure and public assets. These fall into function conferred or imposed on Council by the Local Government Act 1993.

As well as The Act, Council has powers under several other acts, some of these are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Biodiversity Conservation Act 2019 → Commons Management Act 1989 → Community Land Development Act 2021 → Companion Animals Act 1998 → Contaminated Land Management Act 1997 → Conveyancing Act 1919 → Crown Lands Management Act 2016 → Dividing Fences Act 1991 → Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 → Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989 → Fire & Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 → Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957 → Food Act 2003 → Government Information (Public Access Act 2009 → Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 → Heritage Act 1977 → Library Act 1939 → Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Privacy and Personal Protection Act 1998 → Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 → Public Health Act 2010 → Recreation vehicles Act 1983 → Roads Act 1993 → Rural Fires Act 1997 → State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989 → State Emergency Services Act 1989 → State Records Act 1998 → Strata Schemes Developments Act 2015 → Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 → Swimming Pools Act 1992 → Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 → Unclaimed Money Act 1995 → Water Management Act 2000 → Work Health & Safety Act 2011 → Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 |
|---|--|

Councils Engagement with the Public

Council supports the principles of open government and encourages community involvement in policy development and the general activities of Council.

There are two broad ways in which the public may participate in the development of strategy and policy and the general activities of Council. These are through councillor representation and public participation.

Councillor Representation	Councillor engagement with the community through: • Discussion of local community concerns with community members. • Reflecting the views of the broader community in the development of the policies and strategies of the Council and the debate in council meetings • Serving on committees, including as members of the public and stakeholder organisations, which deal with various areas of responsibility.
Public Participation	Members of the public can participate in the development of strategies, policy and the general activities of council in various ways by: • Participating on council committees • Completing surveys and request for information • Participate in community consultation or forums • Making submissions to the council • Addressing the council at council meetings • Contacting councillors directly

Engagement with the Community

Council has two main strategies that direct how Council engages with the community.

- The community participation plan (CPP), which is designed to make participation in the planning system clearer for communities. It achieves this by setting out when and how members of the public can participate in the planning system; and
- The community engagement strategy, which guides how the council involves and listens to the community.

In addition to the above strategies the council maintains two major platforms to actively engage with the community:

Social Media

Council utilises social media platforms, such as Facebook, to provide timely information to the community on:

- Current council activities
- Information about council decisions
- Community events and activities
- Requests for community assistance in rehoming or returning lost animals

Website

Council's website is kept up to date with information accessible to the public, such as:

- Access to council facilities
- Latest news
- Current engagement activities
- An online newsletter
- Services provided by the council
- Planning applications and proposals

Community Participation

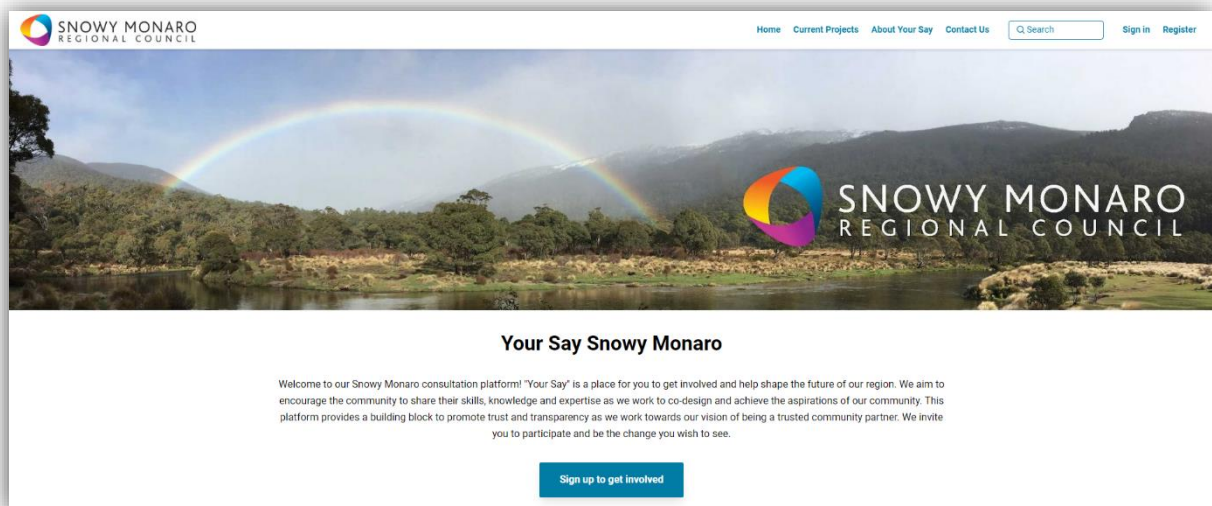
The community can participate in the development of council plans through the integrated planning and reporting (IPR) frame work, and other means as described in council's communication engagement strategy.

All strategic plans, and policies that affect how council provides its services to the public are placed on public exhibition in draft form. Interested members of the public may view these and provide comments (submission) back to council.

IPR is prescribed under the Act and is the framework that allows the community to be engaged with council in identifying and prioritising the objectives of SMRC. The strategic plans that form part of IPR, and the plans that support IPR, establish the communities' expected outcomes and the strategies of council in achieving the objectives of the community.

Council utilises the **Your Say** platform as its primary avenue when consulting with the community. All documents on public exhibition can be accessed through this site, or at a council office.

Comments may also be submitted through council's website.



Making a Submission to Council

When providing a submission in writing (not within the Your Say option)

Submission should be addressed to:

The Chief Executive Officer
Snowy Monaro Regional Council
PO Box 714
Cooma, NSW 2630

Why address to the CEO?

As the responsible officer for the day-to-day operations of the business, submissions should be addressed to the CEO. Once received the submission will be tasked to the appropriate officers for a response. Submissions are not responded to directly in many cases. They are used to develop the information provided to the councillors to allow them to be informed prior to deciding on the matter.

Council Meetings

Councillors make decisions on behalf of the Snowy Monaro community at Council meetings. A meeting agenda is made publicly available prior to each meeting. Following a council meeting the unconfirmed minutes are published on the website.

Members of the public can attend council meetings in person. The meetings are held at different locations on different months. Meetings may be at either the Cooma Chambers, Bombala Community Centre or Jindabyne Hall. Other locations may be used as required. The location of meetings will be advertised on council's website.

To support open, accessible and transparent government, the council meetings are streamed live. This service allows greater access to council proceedings, decisions and debate and eliminates barriers that prevent some people from attending meetings. Any part of the meeting that is held in closed session will not be streamed.

To watch live webcasts of council meetings, access archived sessions, and review agendas and minutes, visit [Council's website](#).

Public Forum

Council holds a public forum to allow members of the public to address council on items of business to be considered at the meeting. Members of the public may apply to address council at a public forum. More information is available on Council's website.

Council meetings and public forum are held in accordance with Council's code of meeting practice.

Council Committees

Council has several committees that have been established to provide advice and direction to Council on a range of relevant issues. These committees are called advisory committees and include:

- Arts and Culture
- Biosecurity
- Cemeteries
- Sale Yards and Transit Stock Facilities
- Cooma North Ridge Reserve
- Community Support Programs
- Yamaga Sister City
- Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities

Accessing Council Information

Council holds a significant amount of government information; most of this information relates to council's core functions.

Government information is defined in the Government Information (Public Access) (GIPA) Act 2009 as:

'Information contained in a record held by council'.

A record means

'Any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form, or by electronic process or in any other manner'.

Examples of the type of information council holds are:

- Information gathered during business which can include data, reports, financial information, correspondence, and more, from community members
- Policies
- Publications
- Minutes and reports – administrative, operational and financial
- Contracts and associated documents
- Committee minutes and papers
- Correspondence – with the Premier, ministers, the public and other organisations
- Records relating to personal information of Council and/or Council staff and members of the public.
- Health records
- Development information

How to access information

There are four main ways council can provide access to information under GIPA.

- **Open access information**
- **Proactive release**
- **Informal release**
- **Formal release (access application)**

Open Access

Under the GIPA Act Council must make government information that is defined as 'open access information' publicly available, free of charge on council's website. Where information is not available on the website the public may contact the appropriate department to arrange to view the document at a council office during office hours.

The following records are open access:

- Council's code of conduct
- Code of meeting practice
- Minutes and agendas for council meetings
- Annual reports
- Annual financial reports
- Auditor's reports
- EEO management plan
- Policies, including the payment of expenses incurred by, and the provision of facilities, to councillors
- Annual reports of bodies exercising functions delegated by Council
- Register of contracts valued from \$150,000
- Land register
- Register of investments
- Register of delegations
- Register of graffiti removal
- Register of current declarations of disclosures of political donations
- Register of planning matters
- Register of impounded items
- Register of the returns of interest of councillors and designated persons
- Disclosure log of formal access applications

Plans and policies

- Local policies concerning approvals and orders
- Plans of management for community land
- Environmental planning instruments, development control plans and contributions plan made under the EPA Act

Information about development applications (whenever created)

- *Development applications (DA) and associated documents:*
 - *Home warranty insurance documents*
 - *Construction certificates*
 - *Occupancy certificates*
 - *Structural certification documents*
 - *Town planner's reports*
 - *Submissions received on DAs*
 - *Heritage consultant reports*
 - *Tree inspection consultant reports*
 - *Acoustic consultant reports*
 - *Land contamination consultant reports*

*Records of decisions made **on or after 1 July 2010** on DAs*

Approvals, orders and other documents (whenever created)

- *Applications for approval (under Part 1 of Chapter 7 of the LGA) and associated documents*
- *Applications for approvals under any other Act and associated documents*
- *Records of approvals granted or refused*
- *Orders given (under Part 2 of Chapter 7 of the LGA)*
- *Orders given under the authority of any other Act*
- *Records of building certificates under the EPA Act*
- *Plans of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired*
- *Compulsory acquisition notices*
- *Leases and licences for use of public land classified as community land*
- *Performance improvement orders issued to council (under Part 6 of Chapter 13 of the LAG)*

What **is not** included as open access?

- plans and specifications for any residential parts 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.
- commercial information, if the information would prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it or to reveal trade secret.
- Development applications (DA) made **before 1 July 2010*** and any associated documents received (whether before, on or after that date) in relation to the application.

**Refer to Informal application for accessing DA and associated records before 1 July 2010.*

Viewing Documents

Viewing some open access documents requires an appointment, to allow documents to be retrieved from hard copy files or transferred between offices.

Appointments can be made to view documents at Council offices from 9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays). Open access information may be inspected free of charge. Copies can be supplied per council's fees and charges, subject to copyright.

Proactive Release (*s7 of the GIPA Act*)

In addition to the information Council is required to release, the GIPA Act authorises agencies to make government information available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

When considering information for public release council will consider any public interest consideration in favour of and against the information, and release information when the factors in favour of disclosure outweigh the factors against disclosure.

Informal Release of Information

Informal release of information allows the public to request **government information** from council, promptly and at the lowest reasonable cost. Council is not obliged to consider an informal request but will endeavour to accommodate reasonable requests through this avenue.

The public are encouraged to seek information, in the first instance, via Council's website. If the information is not available on the website, you may request the information from Council.

- In person
- Over the phone
- E-mail council@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au

Council will decide by what means information is to be released in response to an informal request and may redact content from a record if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Viewing

If you are seeking extensive information, you may be invited to view the documents.

Copies

If you request printed copies of the information, a printing charge will apply per Council's fees and charges, and printing availability is subject to copyright.

While there is no legislated timeframe imposed on Council for an informal request council will respond to the request in line with the customer service charter.



Council will respond to a written request within 10 business days.

This means, staff will provide a response to the request. The information may not be provided in the first instance; however, a timeframe will be provided advising when the request will be completed.

Informal Access Application

Council has applied conditions on the following information, which must be applied for through an informal access application:

- Simple request for government information
- Simple requests for development applications, and any associated documents, made before 1 July 2010.
- Neighbour contact details. *Requests for personal details are subject to third party consultation.*

An Informal access application form may be obtained from council's [website](#) or at any council office.

A simple request means: in the instance of DAs, if it is the personal information of the applicant and searches do not require access to archived documents.

Formal Release (Access Application)

If the information you are seeking is not available on Council's website and is not otherwise routinely provided by our office, or available through an informal request, you may formally apply for access to the information.

Formal access application compels Council to consider your request in depth and provide you with a written decision on access to the information. This decision is subject to strict timeframes and provides you with review rights if you are dissatisfied with the decision.

A decision does not imply immediate access to the information, and you may be requested to pay a processing fee before the information is released.

The GIPA Act provides for members of the public to apply for access to information formally in instances where:

- The information is not available through an informal request.
 - A request involves a large volume of information, requires extensive research or is stored in archives.
 - Personal or confidential information about a third party is requested.
 - The information requested is of a sensitive nature that requires weighing of the considerations in favour for and against disclosure.
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Applications should be made to Council by submitting a Formal Access Application form, available on Council's [website](#). A \$30 application fee is applicable to formal applications and must be paid at the time of lodgement.

The application fee covers the first hour of processing, subsequent time spent processing the application will incur a charge of \$30 per hour.

To seek advice about information requests contact council's governance team.

Formal access applications take priority, over informal requests, as they are required to be completed under strict legislative timeframes.

Third Party Consultation

When a person requests information from Council, that information often contains details about other individuals, business, or agencies. Council may need to consult with those parties before deciding whether to release the information.

Neighbours contact details

Where an informal request for an individual's contact information is received, the request will only be accepted if it is in relation to a Council function or to assist adjoining neighbours. *E.g. to construct a boundary fence.*

If you are seeking contact information for other reasons, Council may determine not to release this information to you.

Requests for this type of information is subject to consultation with the individual and the information may not be released if an objection is received.

Personal details contained within a document

(e.g. name and contact details)

Information contained within a document that shows your name and contact details, may not always be excluded from a document, if it is determined that information is already known to the applicant.

Council will apply any public interests for and against, when deciding the release of this type of information.

Public Interest

The public interest will be applied to request for government information. Council will consider any interest for and against release of the information and balance these against the objective of the GIPA Act to determine the release of the information.

Privacy Management

Council collects personal information from members of the public in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PIPP) Act 1998, Health Records and Information Privacy (HRIP) Act 2002 and Council's privacy management plan. This information is stored within Council's corporate systems and used by staff to provide Council services.

Copyright

Nothing in the GIPA Act or regulations requires or permits council to make open access information available in any way that would constitute an infringement of copyright.

Access to copyright documents will only be granted with the copyright owner's written consent. 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. These documents include plans/drawings, consultant reports, statements of environmental effects and other miscellaneous reports submitted with a DA, or other associated functions of Council (please note that this list is not definitive).

Open Data

The [NSW Government Open Data Policy](#) focuses on datasets as an aspect of information defined in the GIPA Act. A dataset is an identifiable collection of government held information or data. Most commonly a dataset refers to a single database table, a single statistical data matrix, a collection of closely related tables, or a subset of data within a larger dataset.

Data sharing is where NSW government agencies provide authorised access, within government or research institutions, to the data they hold in a controlled manner, to help deliver better outcomes to the community.

Council currently manages data sharing under the ICT standards system which includes a legal compliance standard and is only sharing data with contractors working on Council projects.

Information and Privacy Commission

The Information and Privacy Commission oversees the GIPA Act, PIPPA Act and Open Data. Information is provided on the IPC website for the public on access regarding information and privacy.

Phone: 1800 472 679
E-mail: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
Website: <https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/>

Contacting Council

Members of the public can provide feedback, ask questions, and make a service request or complaint by contacting Council via:

Phone: 1300 345 345
E-mail: Council@Snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au
Website: Snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au
Post: PO Box 714, Cooma, NSW 2630
In Person: Cooma: 81 Commissioner Street
Berridale: 2 Myack Street
Bombala: 71 Caveat Street
Jindabyne: 2/1 Gippsland Street