



**Central
Tablelands
Water**

**Access to Information
(GIPA) Policy**

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Core Proposition

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (the GIPA Act) aims to maintain and advance a system of responsible and representative government that is open, accountable, fair and effective.

The GIPA Act applies to all NSW government agencies, including Central Tablelands Water (CTW). This policy sets out how CTW meets its obligations under the GIPA Act by:

- complying with the mandatory disclosure requirements as prescribed in the GIPA Act;
- proactively releasing government information where possible; and
- ensuring that access to government information is only restricted when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to set out 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.

Principles

Central Tablelands Water 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
- Respect for the privacy of individuals

Implementation

CTW is committed to facilitating, as far as practicable, an open environment which enables members of the public to access government information which CTW holds without the need for formal requests.

In accordance with its obligations under the GIPA Act, CTW makes government information available (unless there is an overriding interest against disclosure) in the following ways:

- mandatory release of information via CTW's website, including:
 - an agency information guide describing CTW's structure and functions and how those functions affect the public, as well as the type of information held by CTW and how that information is made publicly available;
 - documents tabled in Parliament by, or on behalf of, CTW, including our annual reports;

- CTW's policy documents;
 - a disclosure log of information released under formal access applications that may be of public interest; and
 - a register of contracts CTW has with private sector entities with a value of \$150,000 or more (please see Appendix A for more information in relation to the contracts and related information which must be disclosed).
- proactive release of information via CTW's website;
 - informal release of information in response to an informal request for information (where appropriate); or
 - as a last resort, release of information in response to a formal request for access.

The procedure for handling informal and formal requests for access is set out below.

Access Requests

CTW publishes specific open access information on our website, and will facilitate public access through other appropriate mediums. Requests for hard copy information will be provided free of charge, unless to do so would impose unreasonable additional costs on Council.

Council also make other general information relating to Council activities publicly available through media releases and on the internet.

The 'Access to Information Guidelines' document associated with this policy identifies the documents and types of information that are available for public access including any restrictions that may apply.

Depending upon the nature of the request and the form of access requested, charges may be applied in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges and relevant legislation.

Council will assess requests for access to information with reference to:

- 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
- Water Management Act 2000

Consequences of Breach

A staff member who destroys, conceals or alters any record of government information for the purpose of preventing the disclosure of the information as required by the GIPA Act will

be guilty of an offence under the GIPA Act. This offence carries a maximum penalty of \$11,000.

If a staff member becomes aware of a breach of the GIPA Act, the staff member should report the breach in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994.

Further information on public interest disclosures can be found on the NSW Information and Privacy Commission website www.ipc.nsw.gov.au.

Variation

Council reserves the right to review, vary and revoke this policy.