



INFORMAL GIPA APPLICATION

Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 or GIPA Act, you are able to request access to information and documents held by Council. This fact sheet provides answers to our most frequently asked questions relating to informal GIPA applications.

DO I NEED A FORMAL OR INFORMAL GIPA APPLICATION?

For most enquiries, an informal GIPA application will be sufficient. Council usually requires a **formal GIPA application** to be lodged if:

- You are requesting another person's **personal information** (e.g. complainant's details)
- You are requesting information relating to an **insurance claim**
- Your request will involve retrieval of a **large number of documents or files** (five files or more).
- You are requesting information relating to **Companion Animals**.

The most common types of information requested through informal applications are:

- **Development application files** (plans, consent notices, final inspections)
- Postal addresses of **adjoining owners** in order to address **boundary fencing** issues, or other **safety issues** such as overhanging trees.

HOW DO I LODGE AN INFORMAL APPLICATION?

Complete Council's **informal GIPA application form**. Please include the following:

- **Your contact details** (postal address, phone number, email address)
- **As much detail as possible** regarding the information you are requesting
- **Property address or application number** that the information relates to (if relevant)

- Any **personal factors** relevant to the application, such as **why you are requesting the information**
- **Nominate how you would like to access the information**
- **Nominate how you would like to pay the processing fee (if required)**

HOW DO I ACCESS THE INFORMATION?

The GIPA Act allows Council to decide how information is released in response to an informal application. Council's preferred method of providing access is by **electronic transfer through an email or link**.

Hard copies of documents can be produced if required, however **large volumes** of printed documents may incur additional **processing fees**.

Alternative methods of access can be arranged if your circumstances require. Please advise on your application form if you have special access requirements.

HOW LONG WILL MY APPLICATION TAKE TO PROCESS?

The GIPA Act does not specify a time frame for informal requests. We aim to process all informal applications within **20 working days**. However, applications involving research or retrieval of a number of files may take longer. If your application is unlikely to be completed within 20 working days, we will negotiate with you.

There is **no urgency fee** to reduce the processing time of an application.

WHAT ARE THE PROCESSING FEES?

There is **no application fee** to lodge an informal application.

Informal access applications relating to historical **building and development applications** incur fees of **\$55 per hour** of processing time required. This is intended to cover the time taken by staff to process the request, as well as the cost of file delivery from and return to the Government Records Repository at Kingswood.

Requests relating to **other matters** incur fees of **\$21 per hour**.

HOW DO I PAY THE PROCESSING FEES?

The following payment options are available:

- **Credit card over the phone (preferred):** Once the information is ready to be released, Council's Customer Service department can contact you to take payment over the phone. The documents and receipt will be posted or emailed to you as soon as possible once payment is received.
- **Pay in person at Council offices:** You can pay with cash or card at Council's Customer Service Counter. If you are paying by this method, please contact the Governance Officer to ensure that the documents are available to be collected.

WHAT IF THE INFORMATION I REQUESTED COULD NOT BE LOCATED?

If Council is unable to locate the information you have requested, you will be informed in writing, and no processing fees will be incurred.

If the information is likely to be held by **another government agency or organisation**, we will **provide contact information** for that agency.

WHAT IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE DETERMINATION OF MY APPLICATION?

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application (for example, you believe there are additional records which were not located), please **contact the officer** who processed your request. Council staff will attempt to resolve the issue in line with Council's Customer Feedback Policy.

However, there are **no internal or external review rights** available for informal access applications.

If you consider that your request may require an internal or external review (for example, if your request relates to a legal matter, or if your request relates to another person's personal information), you should lodge a **formal access application**.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Hawkesbury City Council website Access to Information page:

www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/your-council/access-to-information

Information and Privacy Commissioner website:

www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009:

www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/giaa2009368/

Contact Council's Governance Officer on **4560 4444** or email

council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

April 2024



Interpreter Service available, call 131 450 131 450 خدمة الترجمة الشفوية متاحة، اتصل على رقم 131 450 可提供傳譯服務，請致電 131 450 Hemm servizz tal-interpretu, cempel 131 450

366 George Street, Windsor (PO BOX 146)
council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au | www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au | 4560 4444

 Hawkesbury
City Council