



Inverell Shire Council

# **PUBLICATION GUIDE**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Structure and Functions of Council**
  - 1.1 Description
  - 1.2 Constitution
  - 1.3 Our Mission Statement
  - 1.4 Our Customer Commitment Statement
  - 1.5 Our Value Statement
  - 1.6 Organisational Structure
  - 1.7 Activities of Inverell Shire Council
- 2 How Council Functions Affect Member of the Public**
- 3 How the Public can Participate in Council's Policy Development and the Exercising of Functions**
  - 3.1 Representation
  - 3.2 Personal or Public Access
  - 3.3 Access to Information Policy
  - 3.4 Information Available and Applicable Charges
- 4 Information**
  - 4.1 Information held by Council
  - 4.2 Policy Information
  - 4.3 General Information
- 5 How Members of the Public May Access and Amend Council Information Concerning their Personal Affairs**
  - 5.1 Public Officer – Right to Information Officer

## **1. Structure and Function of Council**

### **1.1 Description**

The Inverell Shire was formed in July 1979 following the amalgamation of the Macintyre and Ashford Shires and the Inverell Municipality. The Shire comprises an area of 8,623 sq km and is situated in the New England area of New South Wales. The Shire has an overall population of approximately 17,000 and the major town, Inverell, has a population of 11,000.

Inverell is situated on the Macintyre River and is 590 metres above sea level. Inverell is 689 kilometres by road from Sydney, 437 kilometres from Brisbane and only a short drive to the popular mid and northern coastline of eastern Australia. The town is situated on the Gwydir Highway, which connects western New South Wales with the eastern seaboard.

### **1.2 Constitution**

Inverell Shire Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

### **1.3 Our Mission Statement:**

*"To work with the community in providing and facilitating the provision of services that enhance the quality of life of all Shire residents."*

### **1.4 Our Customer Commitment Statement:**

*"Inverell Shire Council is a service-based organisation and will conduct itself accordingly. Its customers, both internal and external to the organisation, can reasonably expect the highest possible standards of service. Council Staff will make every effort to ensure that their response reflects the Council's commitment to providing a quality service".*

### **1.5 Our Value Statement is:**

Council seeks to devote itself to the following corporate values made explicit in its Management Plan:

#### Responsiveness

*Council is committed to being responsive and accessible to the public and to work in a fair and equitable manner with the organisations and individuals with whom it interacts.*

#### Excellence of Service

*Council strives and is committed to achieving excellence in its work. Council expects a quality service to be delivered to its customers and high productivity in all areas of Council operations.*

#### Respect for Staff

*In return for a commitment to council values, council is committed to fostering and utilising the skills of its staff and offering an equitable and safe work environment.*

These values are fundamental to Council's Management and Business Plans as they underpin the setting of objectives and delivery of Council services.

### **1.6 Organisational Structure**

Inverell Shire Council is made up of 9 Councillors, one of whom is the Mayor. The Councillors are elected by residents and ratepayers of the Shire every four years.

Inverell Shire Council is not divided into wards and is governed by the body of 9 Councillors which are elected by the residents and ratepayers of the Shire.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected each year by the Councillors from among their numbers.

The role of the **Council** is:

- To determine Council policies and objectives
- To direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act
- To review the performance of the Council and its delivery of services, and the management plans and revenue policies of the Council
- To represent at all times the needs of the community as a whole

The role of the **Mayor** is:

- To provide leadership and guidance to the community
- To exercise policy-making functions between meetings of the Council
- To preside at meetings of the Council
- To represent Council at civic and ceremonial functions
- To facilitate communication between the community and the Council by way of correspondence, telephone, face to face meetings and inspections

The role of the **Councillor** is:

- 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
- To attend meetings of the Council

The elected member should reflect the views of the community and is primarily responsible for making decisions on policy matters and the allocation of funds for Council services.

The Mayor presides at meetings of the Council, carries out the civic and ceremonial functions of the Council, exercises the decision making functions of the Council between meetings and performs any other functions that the Council determines.

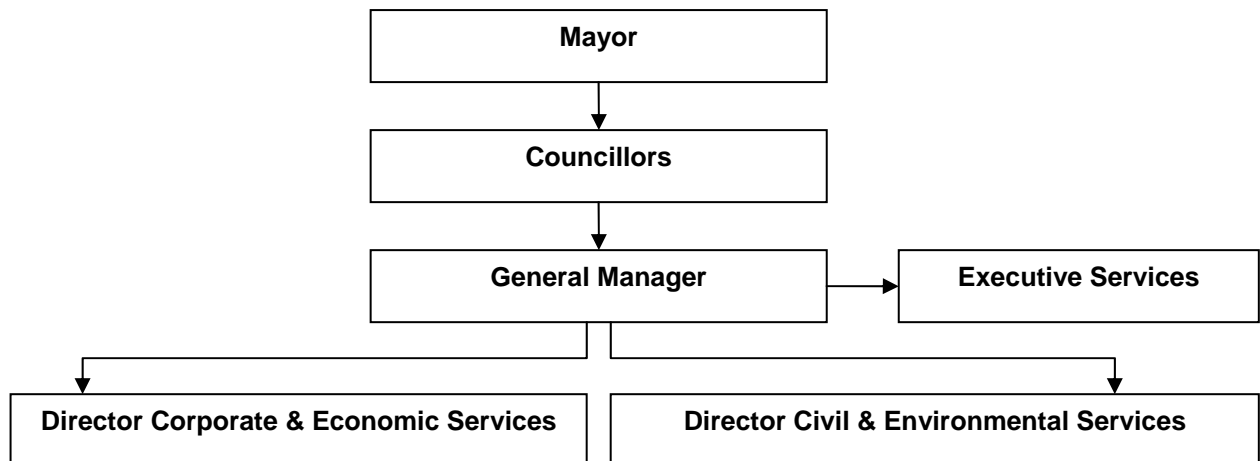
The Principal Officer of the Council is the **General Manager**.

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 two (2) Directorates of Council. These Directorates are Corporate & Economic Services and Civil & Environmental Services. Each of these Directorates is headed by a Director.

Each of the Divisions within Council has a set of goals and objectives that are aimed at creating the environment that will allow Council to fulfil the ideas contained in the Mission Statement, Customer Commitment Statement and Value Statement.

The overall structure of the Inverell Council is set out in the chart detailed below. The organisation consists of the elected members, the General Manager and the two (2) divisional directorates.



The Council's Senior Management Team consists of the General Manager and the two (2) Directors of the divisions.

In carrying out its responsibilities to the community, Council provides a range of services and related functions known as activities.

#### **Objectives of the Corporate & Economic Services Division**

To develop a structure within the organisation that will co-ordinate and achieve all community, Council and Government needs in an efficient and cost-effective manner. This involves the necessary action to ensure that:

- a) The decisions of Council are promptly and efficiently implemented;
- b) An accounting and information system is provided that ensures adequate financial information is available to enable the decision making process by Council and the Departmental Officers to be carried out;
- c) A system is in place to ensure that firm budgetary provisions are made for all income, expenditure and capital items so as to provide a clear indication of Council's overall financial planning; and
- d) To promote public confidence in the Council and its Officers. To keep the residents and ratepayers informed of Council's decisions and aspirations;
- e) Economic development is facilitated within the Shire;
- f) Council's resources are utilised appropriately and in accordance with Council Policy and Procedures and Legislative and Regulatory requirements.

#### **Objectives of the Civil & Environmental Services Division**

To encourage the continued development and growth of the Inverell Shire in an environmentally sensitive manner. This is achieved through the implementation of local environmental plans, development control plans, health and building policies. These are designed to ensure that development occurs in a manner which conforms to the requirements of all Government bodies and environmental guidelines and which are aesthetically pleasing.

In addition, to provide safe, effective, affordable and sustainable technology based services to the community and to Council's internal and external clients and the management of civil infrastructure of the Shire.

## Objectives of Executive Services

To ensure Council's Human Resources needs are met, that Council complies with its legislative and governance requirements, to facilitate the communities Social and Cultural development and to assist in ensuring the communities Industrial Development needs are adequately catered for. Further to ensure residents and ratepayers are kept informed of Council's decisions and aspirations.

### 1.7 Activities of Inverell Shire Council

#### Principal Activities

The following summary identifies the major principal activities and their associated services.

Corporate Activities	Administrative Services Financial Services Information Services Stores/Purchasing Corporate Planning Depots
Community Activities	Library Services Recreation and Culture Community Services Sporting Facilities Services Parks and Reserves Local Emergency Management Fire Control Cemetery Operations
Economic Activities	Industrial and Business Development and Promotion Property Development Livestock Operations Tourism Operations Private Works Aerodrome Operations
Transport and Infrastructure	Works Branch Operations Major Drainage Weight of Loads Traffic Management Services Bridge Maintenance and Construction Roads Construction/Maintenance Fleet Management Services Survey and Design
Health & Development	Planning Services Health Services Building Services Waste Management Services Ordinance Services Water Services Sewerage Services On-site Sewage Management

## 2. How Council Functions Affect Members of the Public

The operation of the Inverell Shire Council has a direct impact on the public due to the nature of the organisation. The content of the Mission Statement as provided in the Management Plan provides the basis for the Council operation. Like any other business, Council exists to fulfil certain needs and expectations throughout the local community. These needs and expectations are diverse and involve Council in numerous activities ranging from road construction to fish restocking programs. All services provided by Council are for the benefit of the community and to some extent impact on the community.

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 aged care facilities, child care services and libraries, halls and community centre, 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 of 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, unregistered dogs and parking offences.

*Community planning and development functions* affect areas such as cultural development, social planning and community profile 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 Youth Week and the Sapphire City Festival, as well as promoting events of others.

## 3. How the Public can Participate in Council's Policy Development and the Exercising of Functions

### 3.1 Representation

**Council** consists of 9 Councillors and is the ultimate decision making body, receiving and acting upon advice from Council Officers, Advisory Sub-Committees and Terminating Committees/Working Parties.

**Advisory Sub-Committees** address specialist issues under their jurisdiction. They consist of Councillors and public representatives and are requested to advise only on matters relating to the recommendations in relation to policy and planning.

**Terminating Committees/Working Parties** are appointed where any matter before Council or a Committee requires detailed investigation. Meetings are held on an "as required" basis and terminate once the matter under investigation is reported to Council for determination.

**Section 377 Committees** are formed under this Section of the Local Government Act to "care, control and manage appropriate functions". These Committees operate under authorities delegated by Council and report annually to Council. Current Section 377 Committees include, but are not limited to; Community Safety, Delungra District Development Council, Equestrian Council, Great Inland Fishing Festival, Inverell Development Support Group, Inverell Liquor Consultative, Inverell on Display, Inverell Sports Council, Newstead Homestead, Oakwood Recreation Area and Sapphire City Festival.

### **3.2 Personal or Public Access**

Ordinary Meetings of Council are conducted on the fourth Wednesday of the month, commencing at 3.00 pm. These meetings are held in the Council Chambers, Administrative Centre, 144 Otho Street, Inverell and members of the public are most welcome to attend.

Matters for discussion are listed in Council's Business paper, copies of which are available for perusal at the Administrative Centre and the Library. In addition, copies are available in the Council Chambers Public Gallery prior to meetings and any person(s) or organisation(s) that make a written request to Council will be added to Council's distribution list to receive Business Papers each month. Alternatively, Business Papers may be accessed via Council's website [www.inverell.nsw.gov.au](http://www.inverell.nsw.gov.au)

Council encourages community input and residents are welcome to attend the half-hour Public Forum Session at every Ordinary Meeting of Council, starting at 3.00 pm. Residents are permitted to make verbal submissions to Council, not exceeding five (5) minutes on any matter.

Also, Council, with the assistance of Radio Station 2NZ, conducts a Talkback Show which is normally held on the fourth Thursday of the month between 11.00 am and 12 noon. In these sessions residents may discuss any matters of concern with the Mayor and General Manager.

Additionally, Council advertises and promotes community attendance at precinct meetings which are held regularly in the surrounding villages.

Other ways in which residents can bring their views to the attention of Council include talking with Councillors or Staff members or writing to the Mayor or General Manager.

### **3.3 Access to Information Policy**

Inverell Shire Council is committed to the principle of open and transparent government. To facilitate public access to Council information Council has adopted an Access to Information Policy. The objective of this policy is to describe Council's principles regarding public and Councillor access to information and to facilitate the processing of requests for such access under GIPA.

### **3.4 Information Available and Applicable Charges**

Council is committed to providing, as far as practicable, an open environment which enables members of the public to access information held by Council without recourse to formal GIPA access applications. Information is made available through this Publication Guide, Council's Disclosure Log and Council's website. Information may also be released administratively on request.

Decisions as to the release of requested information that is not available on the Council's website or in other publications is made within the guidelines of GIPA, taking into consideration the factors relating to public interest.

Where formal applications under GIPA are made, Council will apply application, processing and advanced deposit charges as specified in the Act.



The following information is defined as open access information by Section 18 of GIPA and will be released without the need for a formal application under this Act:

- the agency's publication guide
- information about the agency contained in any document tabled in Parliament by or on behalf of the agency, other than any document tabled by order of either House of Parliament,
- The agency's policy information
- The agency's disclosure log of access applications
- The agency's register of government contracts
- The agency's record of the open access information (if any) that it does not make publicly available on the basis of an overriding public interest against disclosure, and
- Such other government information as may be prescribed by the regulations as open access information.

Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 also stipulates that the following additional information is to be provided as open access information by Council:

## **4. Information**

### **4.1 Information held by Council**

Inverell Shire Council holds information both in hard copy and in electronic form relating to Council's functions. This information is grouped into the following categories:

1. Electronic Information
2. Physical Files
3. Policy Information
4. General Information

Council's Electronic Information and Physical Files are not available on Council's website however this information may be made available either by informal release or via an access application in accordance with Sections 7 – 9 of the GIPA Act, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information as outlined in Section 13 of the GIPA Act. Members of the public who require an informal release or an access application can do so by contacting Council on ph: 02 67 288 288.

### **4.2 Policy Information**

Council has a register of policy information which is available on Council's website at [www.inverell.nsw.gov.au](http://www.inverell.nsw.gov.au).

### **4.3 General Information**

The following list of information held by Council has been divided into four sections as outlined by Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009:

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

The Government Information (Public Access) Act requires that this information held by Council, is to be made publicly available for inspection, free of charge. The public is entitled to inspect this

information either on Council's website (unless there is an unreasonable additional cost to Council to publish this information 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 information of this type may be inspected by the public free of charge. Copies can be supplied for reasonable copying charges.

This information is:

1. Information about Council

- Council's adopted Code of Conduct (model code prescribed under section 440(1) of the LGA)
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Annual Report
- Annual Financial Reports
- Auditor's Report
- Management Plan
- EEO Management Plan
- Policy on Payment of Expenses Incurred by, and the provision of facilities to, Councillors
- Land Register
- Investment Register
- Returns of the Interests of Councillors, Designated Persons and Delegates
- Returns as to Candidates' Campaign Donations
- Agendas, Business Papers and Minutes for Council and Committee Meetings
- Register of Delegations
- Annual Reports of Bodies Exercising Delegated Council Functions
- Register of Graffiti Removal Work
- Departmental Reports presented at a meeting of Council
- Any Codes referred to in the LGA
- Register on Voting on Planning Matters

2. 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 Contributions Plans

3. Information about Development Applications

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

4. Approvals, Orders and Other Information

- Applications for approvals under Part 1 of Chapter 7 of the LGA
- Applications for approvals under any other Act and any associated information 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 the Council
- Compulsory Acquisition Notices
- Leases and Licenses for use of Public Land classified as Community Land.

## **5. How Members of the Public may Access and Amend Council Information Concerning their Personal Affairs**

As mentioned previously, Council has a vast range of information that can be accessed in varying ways. Most information can be inspected at and obtained from Council's Administration office between the hours of 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

For further enquiries about any document, a Customer Services Officer should be contacted. If you experience any difficulty in obtaining information, you should contact the Public Officer

### **5.1 Public Officer – Right to Information Officer**

It should be noted that the Director Corporate & Economic Services is Council's 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 information of the Council. The Public Officer is also Council's Right to Information Officer and, as such, is responsible for determining applications for access to information or for the amendment of records. If you have any difficulty in obtaining access to Council information, you may wish to refer your enquiry to the Public Officer. Also, if you would like to amend information of Council which you feel is incorrect it is necessary for you to make written application to the Public Officer in the first instance. Enquiries should be addressed as follows:

The General Manager  
Inverell Shire Council  
PO Box 138  
**INVERELL NSW 2360**  
Email: [council@inverell.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@inverell.nsw.gov.au)  
Tel: (02) 67288288 Fax: (02) 67288277  
[www.inverell.nsw.gov.au](http://www.inverell.nsw.gov.au)

If you require any other advice or assistance about access to information you may contact:

Office of the Information Commissioner  
GPO Box 7011  
**SYDNEY NSW 2001**  
Tel: 1800 463 626 (free call)  
Email: [oinfo@oic.nsw.gov.au](mailto:oinfo@oic.nsw.gov.au)