



**GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC
ACCESS) ACT 2009**

**AGENCY
INFORMATION
GUIDE**

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AGENCY INFORMATION GUIDE

DIRECTORATE: Customer and Corporate Strategy

BRANCH: Legal and Governance

CATEGORY: 1

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1. Introduction

Council of Camden has adopted this Agency Information Guide (**Guide**) in accordance with section 20 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (**GIPA Act**).

By describing Council's functions, responsibilities and organisational structure, the Guide aims to promote a better understanding of Council's work in our community. It also describes the various types of information held by Council, how that information can be accessed and how members of the public can participate in Council's decision making processes.

In this Guide, you will find information on:

Council's structure	Click this link to Organisational Structure
How you can get involved	Click this link to Public Participation Your Voice Camden
The types of information held by Council and how you can access that information (including whether fees apply)	Click this link to GIPA Applications

2. About Us

2.1 Overview

The Camden Local Government Area, which is located approximately 60km south west of Sydney, extends from Leppington and Rossmore in the north to the township of Camden and Camden South in the south. It includes the rural village of Cobbitty, and localities such as Ellis Lane, Grassmere, Cawdor, Bickley Vale, Kirkham and Bringelly and the residential suburbs of Currans Hill, Mount Annan, Narellan Vale, Smeaton Grange, Harrington Park, Oran Park, Gregory Hills, Catherine Field, Gledswood Hills. Camden covers an area of approximately 206 square kilometres and is bisected by the Nepean River. The area is administered by Camden Council.

Camden Council is currently the fastest growing Local Government Area in Australia. Our residential population was 126,637 in 2022 and is projected to increase to over 214,000 by 2036.

2.2 Structure of Camden Council

Camden Council is incorporated as a Council under the *Local Government Act 1993*. Section 8 of the *Local Government Act 1993* sets out Council's Charter.

Section 222 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that elected representatives called 'Councillors' comprise the governing body of Council. Councillors are elected by the residents and ratepayers of the Local Government Area for a period of 4 years.

The Camden Local Government Area is divided into 3 Wards. Three Councillors are elected for each Ward, with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor elected by Council, in September, every 2 years. The current Ward and Suburb Boundaries and the names of Councillors representing each Ward are located on Council's website at [Councillors](#).

2.2.1 Role of Councillors

Section 232 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that the role of a Councillor is to:

- 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.

A Councillor is accountable to the local community for the performance of the Council.

Section 226 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that the role of the Mayor is to:

- 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 as to its local priorities;
- 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 this 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 general manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the council;

- In conjunction with the general manager, 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;
- In consultation with the councillors, lead performance appraisals of the general manager;
- Exercise any other functions of the council that the council determines.

2.2.2 Role of the General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for the efficient operation of Council as an organisation and for ensuring the implementation of the decisions of Council.

Section 335 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that the General Manager has the following functions:

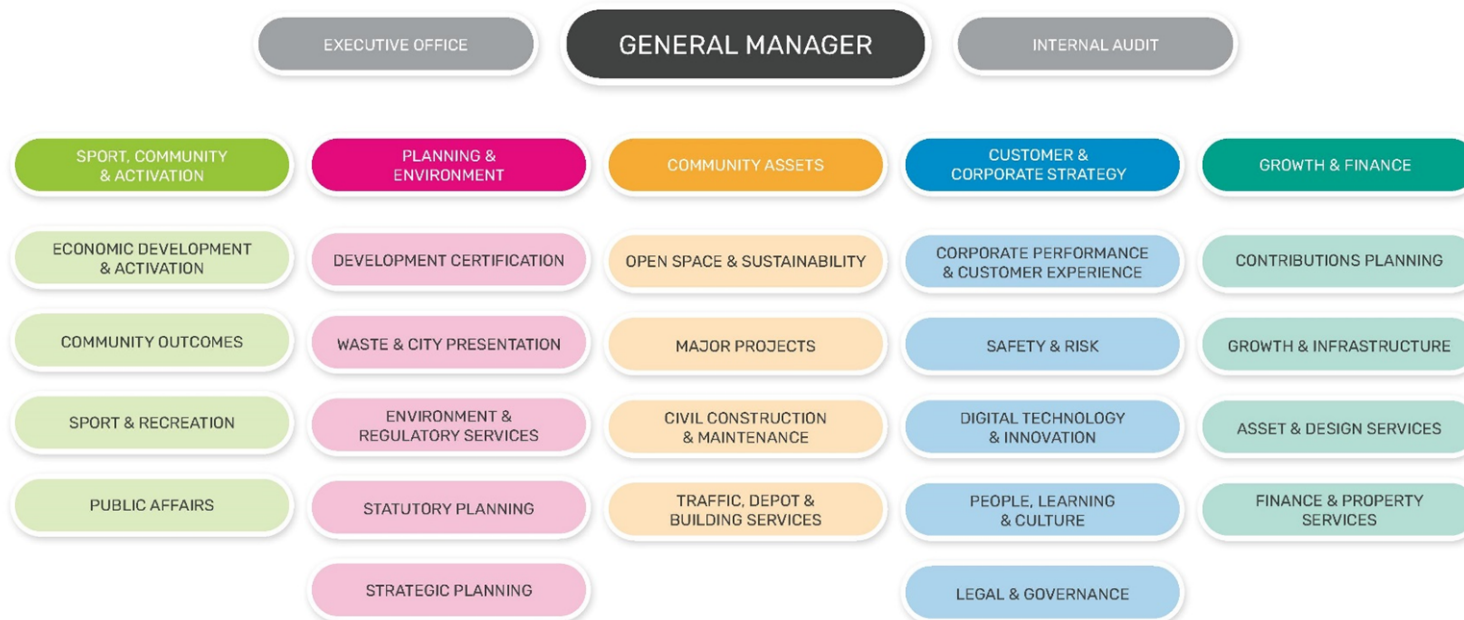
- To conduct the day-to-day management of the council in accordance with the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council;
- To implement, without undue delay, lawful decisions of the council;

2.2.3 Organisational Structure

The current Organisational Framework is shown in the following chart and became effective in May 2023.



CAMDEN COUNCIL
ORGANISATIONAL
FRAMEWORK



2.3 Our Functions

Council has functions conferred upon it by section 21 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. These functions include the following:

Function Type	Examples
Administrative (Chapters 11, 12 and 13, <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of staff • Management plans • Financial reporting • Annual Reports
Ancillary (Chapter 8, <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resumption of land • Powers of entry and inspection
Enforcement (Chapters 16 and 17, <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceedings for breaches of the <i>Local Government Act</i> and Regulations (and other Acts and Regulations) • Prosecution of offences • Recovery of rates and charges
Regulatory (Chapter 7, <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approvals • Orders • Building Certificates
Revenue (Chapter 15, <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates and charges • Fees and borrowings • Investments
Service (non-regulatory) (Chapter 6, <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of community, health, recreation, education and information services • Environmental protection • Waste removal and disposal • Land and property • Industry and tourism development and assistance • Civil infrastructure planning, maintenance and construction

In addition to the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council also has powers under a number of other Acts including (but not limited to):

- [*Community Land Development Act 2021*](#)
- [*Companion Animals Act 1998*](#)
- [*Contaminated Land Management Act 1997*](#)
- [*Conveyancing Act 1919*](#)
- [*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*](#)
- [*Food Act 2003*](#)
- [*Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009*](#)
- [*Heritage Act 1977*](#)
- [*Library Act 1939*](#)
- [*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*](#)
- [*Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*](#)
- [*Public Health Act 2010*](#)

- [Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022](#)
- [Public Spaces \(Unattended Property\) Act 2021](#)
- [Recreation Vehicles Act 1983](#)
- [Roads Act 1993](#)
- [State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989](#)
- [State Emergency Service Act 1989](#)
- [State Records Act 1998](#)
- [Strata Schemes Management Act 2015](#)
- [Swimming Pools Act 1992](#)
- [Unclaimed Money Act 1995](#)

2.3.1 Functions Relating to Council Branches

The major functions allocated to each Branch of Council are set out in the table below:

Major Projects		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital works – buildings, drainage, roadworks • Recreation facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management of Council assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major projects • Community facilities
Civil Construction and Maintenance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths and cycleways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road line-marking • Street and traffic sign installation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency management and support • Stormwater drainage
Traffic, Depot and Building Services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and transport • Street and traffic sign approvals • Bus shelters • Public toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stores and supplies • Depot and workshop • Community road safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building maintenance • Plant/Fleet management • Road line-marking • Graffiti Management
Open Space and Sustainability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery maintenance • Strategic environmental policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and gardens operations • Tree management • Environment reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources • Landcare and bush care • Environmental education • Biosecurity
Economic Development and Activation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development • Community engagement • Tourism development Visitor Information Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camden Civic Centre • Cultural development and arts • Macaria Art Gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicentennial Equestrian Park • Camden Town Farm • Town Centre Vision Place Making

Public Affairs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications • External communications • Website content • Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive services • Events • Civic events • Social media • Public relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross organisation advocacy team coordination • Centralised documentation coordination for advocacy
Community Outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, youth and aged services • Family day care • Library services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community liaison • Community grants & sponsorships • Community planning and development • Community directory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management
Sport and Recreation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport, Recreation and Community Halls management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Club Liaison and management • Community Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Open Space management • Cemetery Planning
Development Certification		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development applications • Building certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Safety • Subdivision certification
Environment and Regulatory Services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air, noise and water pollution • Overgrown land • Industrial and commercial audits • Water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hairdressing and skin penetration salons • Animal education & complaints • Parking regulations • Roadside trading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming pool compliance • Compliance and enforcement • Food shops • Legionnaires inspections • Abandoned vehicles
Waste and City Presentation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Sweeping
Statutory Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre DA advice 	
Strategic Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage planning • Major rezonings • South West Growth Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and regional planning issues • Section 10.7 certificate content • Place planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Growth and advocacy • Airport and rail • City Deals • Strategic land use planning

Assets and Design Services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodplain management and drainage design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering design and survey of roads • Asset management
Growth and Infrastructure		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leppington Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure planning 	
Contributions Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Infrastructure Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions Management (s7.11 VPA and DCMC) 	
People, Learning and Culture		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration management • Performance management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payroll • Organisational Development 	
Corporate Finance and Property Services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term financial planning • Strategic property management • Property services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rating • Accounts payable • Debtors • Revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Accounting • Budget • Financial Management • Purchasing & procurement management
Digital, Technology and Innovation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information services & systems • Telecommunications • Technology services • Website infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical and land information services • Plan printing • IT Strategic Planning • Systems support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road and reserve naming • Section 149 certificate production • App development
Legal and Governance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Information (Public Access) Act • Legislative compliance • Delegations • Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Business papers and minutes • Camden Local Planning Panel (CLPP) • Committee governance framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal panel services • Contracts Management • Heritage Advisory Committee • Companion Animal Advisory Committee

Corporate Performance and Customer Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline customer service • Contact centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Excellence • Corporate planning and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strategic Planning • Business improvement
Safety and Risk		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise risk management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Health and Safety • Workers compensation

2.4 How Council Functions Affect Members of the Public

As a service organisation, the majority of the activities of Camden Council have an impact on the public. 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 the provision of human services such as child care services and local libraries, halls and community centres, sport and recreation facilities and programs, 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 do not endanger the lives or safety of members of the public. 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 Council's power 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 members of the public directly but do have an indirect impact on the community through the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided by Council.

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 animals, 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, including initiating partnerships, participating on regional, State or Commonwealth working parties, and the preparation and implementation of the Community Plan;

- Providing support to community and sporting organisations through the 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 NAIDOC Week, Youth Week, and Children's Week, as well as promoting the events of other groups and organisations.

3. Public Participation

There are a number of avenues available to members of the public to enable participation in policy development and the general activities of Council.

These avenues can be broken down into two categories, namely:

- Representation;
- Personal participation.

3.1 Representation

3.1.1 Local Democracy

Local Government in Australia is based on the principle of representative democracy. This means that the people elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf.

In New South Wales, Local Government elections are held every four years. At each election, voters in the Camden Local Government Area elect nine Councillors across three Wards. All residents of the area who are on the electoral roll are eligible to vote. Property owners who live outside of the area, and rate paying lessees, can also vote but must register their intention to vote on the non-residential roll.

3.1.2 Making Representations to Councillors

[Councillors](#) are the elected representatives of the residents of a Council and make decisions on behalf of their constituents. Residents are able to raise issues with, and make representations to, their elected Councillors. Councillors, if they agree with the issue or representation, may pursue the matter on the resident's behalf thus allowing members of the public to influence the development of policy.

3.1.3 Appointments with the Mayor

After speaking to their relevant Ward Councillors and/or appropriate staff, members of the public may make an appointment with the Mayor to discuss issues that require further attention.

3.2 Personal Participation

In addition to representation, personal participation from members of the public is encouraged via the following means in order to participate in policy development and the exercise of Council functions.

3.2.1 Advisory Committees and Reference Groups

There are several [Advisory Committees and Reference Groups](#) established by Council to help guide the future of the Camden Local Government Area. These committees and groups include community representatives as well as representatives from agencies, industry bodies or community groups where relevant.

Council's advisory committees provide strategic or technical advice and may make recommendations to Council. Council's reference groups are action-oriented and often advise on the planning and delivery of particular projects and events.

3.2.2 Open Council Meetings

Camden Council meets regularly at [Ordinary Council meetings](#) to discuss local issues and make decisions on behalf of the community. All meetings of Council are open to the public and residents are welcome to attend, unless closed for specific reasons under the *Local Government Act 1993*. Ordinary Council meetings are generally held on the second Tuesday of the month.

3.2.3 Public Address to Council

The [Public Address Session](#) in the Ordinary Council Meeting provides an opportunity for people to speak publicly on any item on Council's Business Paper agenda. Speakers must submit an application with Council's Governance team by no later than 5.00pm on the working day prior to the meeting.

3.2.4 Public Address to the Camden Local Planning Panel (CLPP)

Council's Local Planning Panel generally meets on the third Tuesday of each month to determine certain development applications submitted to Camden Council. Members of the public are entitled to attend the CLPP meetings and each meeting includes a [public address](#) session.

3.2.5 Public Exhibitions / Submissions to Council

[Public exhibitions](#) are a key way for the community to participate in local government. Members of the community can submit feedback on proposed policies, plans, projects or development that Council is considering. Members of the public can, either personally or in writing, address any matter that falls within Council jurisdiction.

Information provided to Council in correspondence, submissions or requests, including personal information such as names and addresses, may be made publicly available in accordance with the GIPA Act.

3.2.6 Feedback and Questions

Council encourages members of the public to provide comments on the products and services it provides as well as its performance. Council has a [Feedback Policy](#) and Council's website has a page dedicated for members of the public to be able to [Give Feedback](#).

4. Information Held by Council and Access Arrangements

Council holds information in various formats in respect of the wide range of functions undertaken by it as well as information which is pertinent to different issues relating to the Camden Local Government Area. Information may be held in Council's Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), another digital records repository, Council's website or physical files.

Under the GIPA Act, there is a right of access to certain information held by Council, unless there is an overriding public interest against its disclosure.

There are 4 main ways in which Council provides access to information:

1. Mandatory proactive release;
2. Authorised proactive release;
3. Informal release;
4. Formal access applications.

Any applications made under the GIPA Act will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the GIPA Act.

4.1 Mandatory Proactive Release - Open Access Information

Under Schedule 1 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018*, Council must make the following information, classified as 'open access information', publicly available **unless** there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Where possible, open access information will be made available on Council's [website](#). Where information is not made available on Council's website, it will be made available for viewing at Council's administration offices during normal business hours or an electronic copy can be provided. Please complete the [Informal Request for Information Form](#).

Copies of documents will be available for a reasonable copying charge, as outlined in Council's [Fees and Charges](#).

4.1.1 General Information

Document Type	Method of Access
Agency Information Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This document sets out the structure and functions of Camden, as well as the type of information held by Council and how it can be accessed.
Council Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents used in connection with the exercise of Council's functions that affect the public. Many of Council's policies are readily available to the public on Council's website. Policy documents not available on Council's website can be accessed by filling out an Informal Request for Information Form.
Disclosure Log of Formal (Access) Applications for Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GIPA Act requires Council to publish a Disclosure Log that records details of formal requests for information (access applications) where Council considers that the information requested may be of interest to other members of the public.
Register of Government Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A register of contracts awarded by Camden Council valued at \$150,000 or more.
Record of the open access information (if any) that Council does not make publicly available on the basis of an overriding public interest against disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of the open access information that Council does not generally make publicly available on the basis of an overriding public interest against disclosure under the GIPA Act is available on Council's website
Information about Camden Council contained in any document tabled in NSW Parliament by or on behalf of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is available by filling out an Informal Request for Information Form.

4.1.2 Information about Council

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
The Model Code of Conduct prescribed under section 440 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and Council's Code of	<p>Office of Local Government website: Model Code of Conduct</p> <p>Council's website: Code of Conduct</p>	Outlines the conduct obligations of Council officials.

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Conduct		
Code of Meeting Practice made under section 360 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	Council's website: Code of Meeting Practice	Summarises the procedures for all Council and Council Committee Meetings.
Annual Report and Annual Financial Statements	Council's website: Annual Report and Financial Statements	Outlines Council's performance against its key objectives.
Auditor's Reports	Council's website: Financial Statements	Outlines the financial position of council and is included in the Annual Financial Statements.
EEO Management Plan	Council's website: EEO Management Plan	Outlines the equal employment opportunities within Council.
Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to the Mayor and Councillors Policy	Council's website: Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to the Mayor and Councillors Policy	A policy for expenses incurred by and provision of facilities to the Mayor and Councillors.
Returns of Interests of Councillors and Designated Persons	Council's website: Disclosure of Interests Returns Informal Request for Information Form : Disclosure of Interests Returns by Councillors and Designated Persons. The register is available for inspection at Council offices during ordinary business hours.	Council's register of declarations of pecuniary and other interests.
Agenda, Business Papers, and Minutes for any meeting of Council or Committee of Council	Council's website: Council Meetings	Documents containing the agenda, papers, resolutions, and recommendations for Council Meetings and Committees of Council. NB: There are currently no Committees of Council operating.
Land Register	Council's website: Council Land Register	A register of all lands vested in Council, or under its control.

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Register of Investments	Council Meeting website page: Investments Report	A register of investments and cash for Camden Council. Council's Investment Register is reported monthly to Council Meetings.
Register of Delegations	Council's website: Delegations	A register of the functions delegated to the Mayor, General Manager, and to Council staff.
Register of Graffiti removal works	Informal Request for Information Form : Register of Graffiti Removal Works	A register containing records of graffiti removal works that are maintained in a database which is not in a form suitable for publication on Council's website.
Register of current Declarations of Disclosures of Political Donations	Informal Request for Information Form : Disclosure of Political Donations	A register containing information regarding disclosures of political donations by Development Applicants or Submitters.
	Electoral Funding Authority	A register containing information regarding disclosures of political donations lodged by candidates, groups, members of parliament, local government Councillors, political parties, and political donors.
Register of Voting on Planning Matters	Informal Request for Information : Register of Voting on Planning Matters	Documents containing information of voting on planning matters.

4.1.3 Plans and Policies

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Local Policies adopted by Council concerning approvals and orders	Council's website: Council Policies	Council documents setting out ideas or a plan of what to do in a particular situation or set of circumstances.
Plans of Management for community land	Council's website: Plans of Management	Outlines the plans of management for community land within the Camden local government area.

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Environmental Planning Instruments, Development Control Plans and Contribution Plans made under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> applying to land within the local government area	Council's website: Planning Controls	The principal legal documents for controlling all development within Camden Council.

4.1.4 Information about Development Applications

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Register of Development Applications Lodged and Determined	Informal Request for Information - Development Applications after 1 July 2010 Form : Register of Development Applications Lodged and Determined OR Council's website: DA tracker	A list of full details of current Development Applications and Footway Usage (outdoor dining) applications on exhibition including all documents lodged with the application.
Development Applications and associated documents including, but not limited to: Application Form, Determination and Conditions, Officer's Delegated Authority report, Statement of Environmental Effects, Plans (excluding floor plans), Construction and Occupation Certificates, Home Warranty Insurance documents, Acoustic Consultants' reports, Structural Certification documents, Heritage Consultants' reports, Land Contamination	Informal Request for Information - Development Applications after 1 July 2010 Form	Development and Building Application files and associated documents also available to view at Council's Customer Services Centre.

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
reports, and Tree Inspection Consultants' reports		
Submissions received on Development Applications	Informal Request for Information - Development Applications after 1 July 2010 Form : Submissions NB: Council considers, on balance, the public interest in protecting the personal information of submitters.	Responses by individuals providing their comments in relation to the Development application.
Records of decisions on Development Applications	Informal Request for Information - Development Applications after 1 July 2010 Form : Register of Development Applications Determined OR Council's website: DA tracker	A record of all development applications received and determined by Council (including decisions made on appeal).

4.1.5 Approvals, Orders and Other Documents

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Applications for approvals under section 68 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	Informal Request for Information Form : Applications for approvals under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	An application for approvals under section 68 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and any associated documents received in relation to such an application.
Applications for approvals under any other Act and any associated documents received	Informal Request for Information Form : Applications for approvals under any other Act	An application regarding specific approvals other than development applications.
Records of approvals granted or refused, any variation from Council Policies with reasons for the variation, and decisions made on	Informal Request for Information Form : Records of approvals granted or refused	Outlines information regarding specific approvals other than development applications.

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
appeals concerning approvals		
Orders given under section 124 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> , and any reasons given under section 136 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	Informal Request for Information Form : Orders and reasons given under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	Orders issued and complied with under section 124 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
Orders given under the authority of any other Act	Informal Request for Information Form : Orders given under any other Act	Other Orders issued and complied with under the authority of other Acts.
Records of Building Certificates under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>	Informal Request for Information Form : Building Certificate Register. Copies of Building Certificates available as per Council's Fees and Charges .	A record of Building Certificates issued under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> .
Plans of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired by Council	Informal Request for Information Form : Plans of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired by Council	Plans of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired by Council.
Leases and licences for use of public land classified as community land	Informal Request for Information Form : Register of Leases and Licences of Community Land	Leases and Licences for use of public land classified as community land.

4.2 Authorised Proactive Release

The GIPA Act encourages Council to go beyond the minimum mandatory disclosure requirement, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. This is a discretionary power to release information in any manner considered appropriate, free of charge or at the lowest reasonable cost.

Council reviews its proactive release program annually by identifying the kinds of information it holds that should be released in the public interest. A decision by Council to proactively release information is not reviewable. This may include information that is frequently requested by members of the public or information of public interest that has been released as a result of other (formal access) requests.

Council is committed to the disclosure of both positive and negative information and encourages members of the public to contact Council with suggestions for information which can be considered for authorised proactive release under the GIPA Act.

As part of the authorised proactive release program, Council will make the following information of public interest available on the website where possible.

4.2.1 Council Administration and Governance

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Approved Council Strategies and Plans	Council's website: Plans and Strategies	Documents used in connection with the exercise of Council's functions that affect the public.
Integrated Planning and Reporting Documents	Council's website: Integrated Planning	Council's Community Strategic Plan and associated documents.
Fees and Charges	Council's website: Fees and Charges	Council's pricing policy, fees and charges for the current financial year.
Council News Updates	Council's website: Media and News Desk	Council provides a range of online tools to provide up-to-date Council news, activities, and events, including the quarterly 'Let's Connect' community newsletter, major Council projects and media releases.
Government Submissions	Council's website: Council Meetings OR Submissions and Position Papers	Submissions made to Government by Council.
State of the Environment Reports	Informal Request for Information Form : State of the Environment Report	Report of environmental indicators and activities undertaken by Council to protect and enhance the local environment.
Council Events Information	Council's website: Event Calendar	Information about Council's community and cultural events.
Minutes for meetings of Council's advisory committees and reference groups	Council's website: Advisory Committees and Reference Groups	Documents containing the recommendations and actions for meetings of Council's advisory committees and reference groups.

4.2.2 Regulatory

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Development Application plans	Informal Request for Information - Development Applications after 1 July 2010 Form : Development Application Plans Copies may incur a photocopy fee or be subject to copyright provisions.	Plans associated with a specific development.
Development Application files and associated documents; refer to "Information about Development Applications" section (4.1.4)	Informal Request for Information - Development Applications after 1 July 2010 Form : Development Application files and associated documents	Development and Building Application files and associated documents also available to view at Council's Customer Services Centre.

4.2.3 Other Information

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
Community Information, support, participation opportunities, grants, directories, publications and facilities and services	Council's website: Community Council publishes a wide range of community information on the website including news, information and publications.	Community publication Information.
Major Council Projects	Council's website: Major Council Projects	Outlines major projects within the Camden local government area.
Your own personal information	Informal Request for Information Form or Application For Access to Applicant's Personal Information Form (at Appendix 5 of Council's Privacy Management Plan) and proof of identity	Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

Document type	Method of Access	Definition
	Council will facilitate access to your own personal information holdings in accordance with the requirements of the GIPA Act and <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> .	

4.3 Informal Release

Access to information which is not available as mandatory proactive release (open access) or Authorised Proactive Release may be provided through Informal Release.

As per proactive release methods, Council is authorised to release information unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. To enable the release of as much information as possible, Council is also authorised to redact (delete) content from a copy of information to be released, if the inclusion of the redacted information would otherwise result in the existence of an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Applications should be made to Council by submitting an Informal Request for Information form.

The following table contains Frequently Asked Questions relating to Informal Requests for Information.

FAQs	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many informal requests does Council receive each month? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, Council receives approximately 52 applications per month.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what order will my application be processed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly, applications are processed in the order in which they are received.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long will my application take to be processed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications generally take up to 20 working days to finalise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't the GIPA Act set a time limit for processing informal applications? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, under the GIPA Act, informal requests for information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not require a response; Have no timeframe for dealing with the request; Do not attract review rights.

FAQs	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What if my request is urgent?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is committed to treating all applicants fairly. • As such, Council's Legal and Governance branch will do its best to accommodate your request for a faster turn-around but generally not at the expense of other applicants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why have some of my applications been processed quickly, but others seem to take forever?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many factors that impact on the amount of time it takes to process an Informal Application. • Some of these factors are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The amount/type of information requested; ○ The ease of locating the information; ○ The number of files/documents that need to be reviewed to determine whether the information they contain is relevant to the application; ○ The number of files that need to be reviewed into a secure format before being released; ○ The number of files requiring redaction (that is, the removal of any personal information belonging to third parties or information considered to be commercial-in-confidence, etc).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does Council have a dedicated GIPA Officer?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes.

4.4 Formal Access

Council requires a formal access application to be submitted if the information being sought:

- Is not available via proactive or informal release;
- Is of a sensitive nature that requires careful weighing of the considerations in favour of, and against, disclosure;
- Contains personal or confidential information about a third party that may require consultation; or
- Would involve an unreasonable amount of time and resources to produce.

Applications should be made to Council by submitting the [Formal Request for Information Form](#), accompanied by the application fee (\$30). Additional processing charges may be applicable at a rate of \$30 per hour. Instructions for how to submit an application are provided on the form.

Please note an application will be invalid if it seeks access to excluded information of Council or does not meet the formal requirements for an access application. An application must:

- Be in writing;
- Specify it is made under the GIPA Act;
- State the name of the applicant and an Australian postal address or an email address for correspondence in connection with the application;
- Be accompanied by the \$30 fee;
- Provide sufficient detail to enable Council to identify the information requested.

Applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by Council about the release of information in response to a formal access application under the GIPA Act. There are generally three review options:

- Internal review by an officer who is no less senior than the person who made the original decision
- External review by the Information Commissioner
- External review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

Further information about review rights can be obtained from the NSW Information and Privacy Commission [website](#).

4.5 Additional Information

4.5.1 Copyright

Some information may be subject to copyright laws and the consent of the copyright owner will be required before releasing copies of such information. Alternatively, Council may grant 'view only' access to such material.

Council's Legal and Governance branch will advise if the information is subject to copyright.

4.5.2 Disclosure Log

Council's [Disclosure Log](#) lists information released under a formal access application under the GIPA Act that is considered to be of interest to the wider public.

It should be noted that applicants can object to inclusion in Council's Disclosure Log.

4.5.3 Right to Information Officers

Right to Information Officers are members of staff who have been given specific delegated authority and responsibility for determining informal applications for access to documents under the GIPA Act.

A Right to Information Officer is responsible for determining formal applications for access to documents and they include Council's Director Customer and Corporate Strategy, Manager Legal and Governance, Senior Governance Officer and Senior Legal Officer.

4.5.4 Public Officer

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires Council to appoint a Public Officer. Council's Public Officer is the Director Customer and Corporate Strategy. The Public Officer may:

- Deal with requests from the public concerning Council's affairs;
- Accept service of documents on behalf of Council;
- Receive submissions made to Council;
- Assist the public to gain access to public documents.

4.5.5 Open Data

Council's [Open Data Policy](#) affirms Council's commitment to operating transparently, increasing the community's trust and confidence in Council and inviting new forms of collaboration and innovation through Open Data that anyone can access, use, share and interrogate. Council's [Data Portal](#) is an open data platform where the public can access and use a wide variety of publicly accessible Council data. Council regularly gives consideration to the types of data that can be made available.

As stated at Part 4.2 of this Agency Information Guide, Council is committed to the disclosure of both positive and negative information and members of the public are encouraged to contact Council with suggestions for information which can be considered for authorised proactive release under the GIPA Act. Council takes a similar position with respect to Open Data and invites members of the public to make suggestions as to the kinds of data that Council may consider making publicly available in this way.

There are many other government-based open data initiatives. The Federal Government open data portal can be found [here](#).

The NSW Government open data portal can be found [here](#) and the NSW Government portal to government information and services can be found [here](#).

4.5.6 Continuous Disclosure

Council is committed to the continuous disclosure of information concerning its functions that would be of interest to members of the public, including with respect to performance and the expenditure of public funds.

In addition to the disclosure of information under the access to information pathways set out in the GIPA Act, a report on progress in achieving the Delivery Program (a four-year statement of commitment detailing the principal activities to be undertaken by Council to perform its functions) is reported to a Council meeting at least six monthly. In addition, a review of the financial year budget is reported to a Council meeting each quarter, including adjustments to income and expenditure.

Each of these reports is provided in accordance with Council's legislative requirements and available to the public via the relevant Council meeting [Business Papers](#). Council also continuously discloses via various methods additional information about its functions that is not already disclosed because of statutory obligations. These means of disclosure include social media, media releases, community newsletters, fact sheets and Council's website.

Council's commitment to continuous disclosure excludes certain information where appropriate, such as:

- Access applications made under the GIPA Act (which have their own disclosure regime).
- Information that is subject to confidentiality or is otherwise considered sensitive.
- Information subject to legal privilege or other restriction.
- Personal information about individuals.
- Information which may be defamatory.

4.6 Privacy and Personal Information Protection

Access to certain information may be limited in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PIIP Act) and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (HRIP Act).

The PIIP Act and HRIP Act provide for the protection of personal and health information and for the protection of the privacy of individuals generally.

In accordance with the PIIP Act and the HRIP Act, Council has adopted a [Privacy Management Plan](#) which outlines Council's practice for dealing with privacy and personal information in accordance with Information Protection Principles contained within the PIIP Act and the Health Protection Principles contained within the HRIP Act.

4.7 Public Interest Considerations in Favour of Disclosure

The GIPA Act provides a presumption in favour of disclosure of government information but allows for consideration of any public interest in favour of disclosure.

The GIPA Act lists the following examples of interests Council might consider (but is not limited to considering):

- Promoting open discussion of public affairs
- Enhancing Government accountability or contributing to positive and informed debate on issues of public importance
- Informing the public about the operations of Council and, in particular, policies and practices for dealing with members of the public
- Ensuring effective oversight of the expenditure of public funds
- The information is the personal information of the person to whom it is to be disclosed
- Revealing or substantiating that an agency (or member of an agency) has engaged in misconduct, or in negligent, improper, or unlawful conduct

4.8 Public Interest Considerations Against Disclosure

The GIPA Act provides an exhaustive list of public interest considerations against disclosure under section 14. These are the only considerations against disclosure that Council may consider in applying the public interest test.

Considerations are grouped under the following headings:

- Responsible and effective government
- Law enforcement and security
- Individual rights, judicial processes, and natural justice
- Business interests of agencies and other persons
- Environment, culture, economy, and general matters
- Secrecy provisions
- Exempt documents under interstate freedom of information legislation

4.9 NSW Information and Privacy Commission

The NSW Information and Privacy Commission is responsible for overseeing the application of the PPIP Act, HRIP Act and the GIPA Act.

Further information regarding privacy obligations and your rights to access information can be obtained by contacting the NSW Information and Privacy Commission:

Email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au

Telephone: 1800 472 679

Website: www.ipc.nsw.gov.au

5. Related Materials

5.1. Related Legislation

- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018*
- *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*
- *Health Records and Information Privacy Regulation 2017*
- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Regulation 2019*

5.2. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Guidance Material

- Access to Information Policy
- Open Data Policy
- Privacy Management Plan

Approval and Review	
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Responsible Manager	Manager Legal and Governance
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2	09/10/2013	Information Commissioner	13/8316	Nil.
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		and Privacy Commissioner and ELG		
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