

Agency Information Guide



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Structure and functions of Council

The City of Sydney local area covers about 26.15 square kilometres and is home to more than 225,000 people and 21,500 businesses.

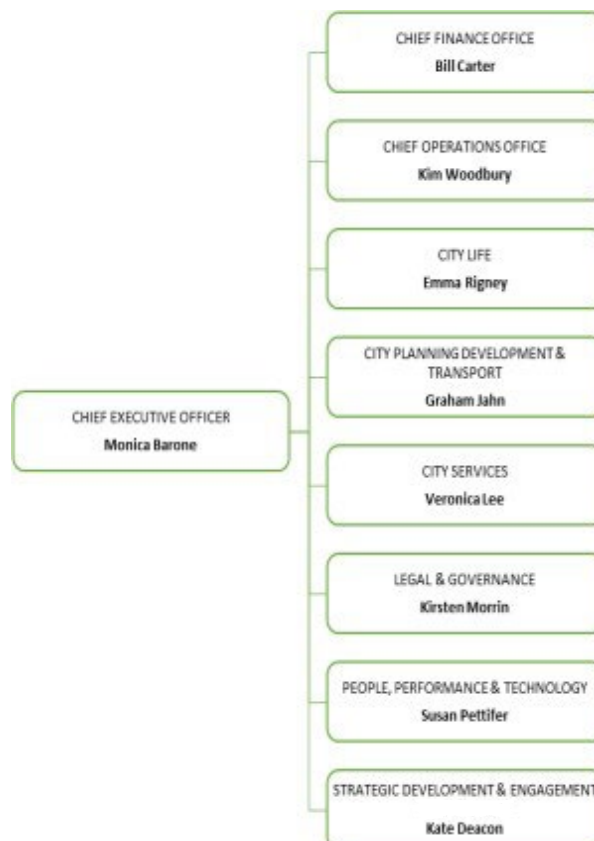
The Council of the City of Sydney is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *City of Sydney Act 1988*. As a capital city council the City is responsible for the commercial, financial, and cultural hub of Sydney. At the same time it's responsible for servicing and enhancing its local precincts and villages. Every day 1.3 million people live, work, study, do business, shop and go out in the City of Sydney local area.

The City's landmark strategy Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 Continuing the Vision is the driving force behind everything we do. It supports how we provide a range of services, programs and initiatives for local residents, businesses and visitors. The strategy aims to help make Sydney as green, global and connected as possible by 2050.

Read more [about us](#) and learn more about the [local area](#).

Organisational overview

The City of Sydney is led by the Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the efficient operation of the organisation and ensuring Council decisions are carried out.



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More detail about the City's organisational structure can be found in the [statutory returns annual report](#).

The City has 8 divisions that assist the Chief Executive Officer to carry out the functions in section 335 of the [Local Government Act 1993](#). Directors head each division and are responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs to achieve the City's vision. There is also an Office of the Chief Executive Officer and an Office of the Lord Mayor.

The City of Sydney's [role and responsibilities](#) include a broad range of commercial, residential, community and cultural services. The City's [corporate and strategic plans](#) detail our priorities and how we set out to achieve them.

Local government functions and the public

As a service organisation, most of the City's activities have an impact on the public. Below is an outline of how the broad functions of Council can affect the public.

Service functions

The City provides services and facilities to the public. These include community health, recreation, education and information services. We also provide services related to environmental protection, waste removal and disposal, land and property, industry and tourism development, civil infrastructure, maintenance and construction.

Regulatory functions

The City regulates developments and buildings to ensure they meet certain requirements affecting community amenity and safety. This includes issuing development and construction or demolition approvals, orders and building certificates.

Revenue functions

Revenue functions affect the public directly. Revenue from rates and other charges paid by the public helps fund services and facilities the City provides for the community. These functions include levying rates, charges and fees as well as borrowings and investments.

Administrative functions

Administrative functions have an impact on the community through the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided. Our administrative functions include employing staff, developing management plans and financial and performance reporting

Enforcement functions

Enforcement functions include matters such as the non-payment of rates and charges, environmental planning or companion animal offences, construction outside of hours and parking offences. The City may issue penalty notices or initiate legal proceedings for breaches.

Participating in local government

Have your say

There are many ways you can participate in the local government policy process. You're encouraged to provide input on issues that Council is considering.

The City holds consultation meetings about precinct issues of concern across the local area, which are an excellent opportunity to meet and talk with councillors and City staff.

Sydney Your Say is where you can provide feedback about the City's community consultations. To provide feedback on development applications, visit the City's [comment or object to a development proposal](#) page.

You can also sign up to one of our [email newsletters](#) to stay informed. Councillors serve on [committees](#), which have different areas of responsibility. The current committees are:

- Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee
- Business and Economic Development Committee
- Housing for All Committee
- Cultural and Creative Committee
- Environment Committee
- Resilient Communities and Economy Committee
- Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee.

City of Sydney representatives are members of the:

- Central Sydney Planning Committee
- Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee.

The City of Sydney Local Planning Panel has 4 members, 3 appointed by Council, 1 (the chair) by the Minister for Planning.

Members of the public are invited to attend and address committee meetings about items listed on the agenda. If you wish to attend and address a committee meeting, read the [Guidelines for speakers at council committees](#).

Report an issue

[Report an issue](#) is where you can notify the City of when and where we can direct resources to services that support a clean and safe community.

The City provides an online and mobile phone reporting facility for common and important issues that the City can action once notified.

You can guide the City by reporting on [illegal dumping](#), [illegal graffiti](#), [unauthorised and illegal accommodation](#), noise, pets and animals, vehicles and parking, trees, garbage and waste and [damaged footpaths](#).

The City also provides online requests including for pesticide use to be limited or avoided in a particular area.

In addition you can provide information on wildlife sightings via your mobile phone to assist the work of the City's urban ecology team.

Representation

Local government in Australia is based on the principle of representative democracy. This means that people elect representatives to their local council to make decisions on their behalf. In NSW, local government elections are held every 4 years.

The Council of the City of Sydney is publicly elected and responsible for providing leadership and vision for the city. It is represented by a Lord Mayor and 9 councillors who are elected for a 4-year term. The Lord Mayor is elected by popular vote.

The role of Council is to:

- represent the community and advocate its viewpoint
- formulate policy and make decisions that will benefit the community as a whole
- oversee the implementation of policy and review the performance of the organisation
- approve the Council budget and key expenditure items.

Members of the public are encouraged to discuss local community concerns with their elected Council representatives.

The kinds of government information held by the City

The various kinds of government information held by the City are described here by category and by function.

Broad information categories

- memos and briefings – decision-making information
- policies
- procedures
- guides
- agendas
- minutes
- reports
- public external communications
- newsletters – internal
- visual information including photos, videos, and maps
- audio
- data
- dashboards and other data representations
- tenders and contracts and associated documents
- internal working papers
- correspondence – internal and external including complaints
- transcripts, statements, testimonies – inspection and investigation supporting information

Information by functions and activities

Information about:

- the elected Council and its deliberations and decisions
- programs and events to help make Sydney a more vibrant, safe, equal and sustainable environment in which to live and work, such as:
- programs that help our local economies grow:

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- visiting entrepreneur program, retail innovation program, commercial creative and business events program, business support grants and festival and events sponsorship program.
- investment in and nurture of Sydney’s cultural life through practical support and funding for our creative communities, for example:
 - delivery of cultural spaces
 - production of major events – Sydney Lunar Festival, Sydney Christmas, Sydney New Year’s Eve and Art & About Sydney
 - festival sponsorships, support for culture and creativity, insights into our rich history, cultural venues such as Customs House and Pine Street Creative Arts as well as a network of our City of Sydney libraries
 - our corporate library.
 - the grants and sponsorship program, funding community, cultural, economic and environmental activities, supporting services and projects that benefit the community and contribute to the life of the city
 - social programs and services, working with our residents, workers and visitors to support the creation of a resilient, socially connected and cohesive community in community centres, unstaffed community venues, education and care services and homelessness services, social policy and programs and coordination of the biannual Street Count.
 - sustainability programs – working with our community to become the most sustainable city in the world; supporting residents, workers, visitors and businesses to take environmental action; advocating for effective environmental policy at all levels of government; current programs drive environmental performance, resilience and action on climate change with businesses and residents to help our community meet our sustainability targets.
- financial and operational planning, analysis and management, including integrated planning and reporting, financial planning and reporting, procurement, and rates
- strategies and programs to help the City of Sydney function effectively, including:
 - communications to support our community and our organisation, including media, marketing, social media, content production, audience insights, design and web, promoting the City of Sydney’s services, people and priorities
 - visions, policies, strategies and technical guidelines for the public domain and urban design strategies that shape our built environment, landscape and future public art, such as:
 - ensuring major renewal projects deliver on Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 Continuing the Vision strategy
 - directing the City of Sydney’s public art program City Art
 - responsible environmental excellence
 - major transformation projects, such as:
 - George Street transformation
 - special projects aligned with complex state government projects
 - projects that contribute to the water savings and emission reduction targets which are in the Environmental Strategy 2021-2025 and Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 Continuing the Vision strategy
 - the implementation of the Green Square placemaking framework and action plan and the delivery of community facilities and public domain projects in the Green Square and

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Ashmore precinct urban renewal areas

- production of the annual Green Report and management of environmental management system
- engagement with the City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Commitment to the community through the reconciliation action plan, engagement support for all 4 pillars of the Eora Journey.
- project management standards
- Resilient Sydney, which is hosted by the City of Sydney on behalf of all 33 councils of metropolitan Sydney, implementing the Resilient Sydney Strategy aligned with the global Resilient Cities Network (formerly 100 Resilient Cities)
- community and stakeholder engagement to involve community members in decisions that affect their lives
- production of City Talks to inspire, inform, educate and engage the community
- evidence, analysis, modelling and forecasting to devise insights and set our strategic direction for social sustainability, cultural and economic development, smart cities and asset management.
- development in the city, including spatial planning, administering the design excellence program through development assessments, urban design, building compliance, environmental health and construction liaison services, transport planning and transport policy advice, such as:
 - transport strategies, actions and projects
 - approval and control of building activity on private land and public spaces, assessment of construction certificates and complying development certificates, hoarding and scaffolding approvals and other temporary structures such as stages and marquees for community events
 - health inspections, environmental health complaints, pest control, construction and building compliance, licensed premises, regulation of food businesses, swimming pools, cooling towers, skin-penetration premises, boarding houses and fire safety
 - planning assessments including major projects and heritage and urban design
 - development of land-use planning strategy, controls and policy.
- city projects and property, including property services, property management, public art, property services, work health and safety, professional services to the capital works program, and community portfolio development and strategy
- day-to-day essential services that keep the city operating smoothly, including
 - management and maintenance of public parks, trees, and aquatic and leisure facilities
 - maintenance and enhancement of civil infrastructure assets
 - compliance with acts, legislated codes, policies and City Council approvals through regular inspections, investigations, community education and enforcement activities
 - keeping our community and streets clean and free of litter and graffiti
 - managing residential waste and recycling services
 - managing the network of parking meters across the local area as well as 2 car parks
 - managing the street safety camera program, security systems and alarm-monitoring systems
 - provision of security resources and patrols, crisis and emergency response management, including planning and response preparedness programs

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- promotion and management of indoor and outdoor venues for activities such as special events, meetings, concerts and filming
- assistance with event planning for community events as well as work-related events
- management of civic functions within Sydney Town Hall.
- responsibility for community and creative spaces, childcare centres, aquatic centres, depots, tennis courts, footways and kiosks
- management and provision of advice on the City of Sydney’s legal and governance activities, including:
 - engagement with businesses and individuals to determine whether they are entitled to vote as non-residents at the City of Sydney local government elections
 - maintenance of the non-residential (voting) register
 - provision of internal audit services
 - provision of legal advice and representation
 - provision of governance, insurance and risk services
- the office of the CEO, executive support, and responsibility for the governance and business processes that support meetings for:
 - council
 - council committees
 - Local Planning Panel
 - Central Sydney Planning Committee
 - tender review group.
- corporate support, including
 - business improvement
 - corporate human resources
 - customer service
 - data and information management services
 - technology and digital services
 - work health and safety

The government information the City makes (or will make) publicly available

The government information that the City makes (or will make) publicly available is:

- mandatory open access information provided there is not an overriding public interest against its disclosure
- proactively disclosed information
- informally released information
- formally accessed information.

Mandatory open access information

A range of information about the City and its operations is available on the City's register of [open access information](#).

Proactive release of information

Under the [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act](#) (GIPA Act) agencies should have a proactive program to release government information, which should be reviewed each year. The City's website contains a significant amount of information that the City publishes proactively.

Each annual report lists a large amount of this information in the section reporting on the City's compliance with the GIPA Act. Our most recent review is detailed in the [statutory returns annual report](#).

In recent years, our program to proactively release information has included these 4 areas:

- providing information that's not legally required to be provided, through extensive publication on the City's [website](#)
- maintaining and promoting to employees a practice of openness and accountability in relation to information and decision making
- identifying information that is requested often that can be made available by self-service arrangements
- planning and starting open data initiatives.

Find a DA, Archives & History Resources Catalogue

[Find a DA](#) provides information about applications for development that were lodged after 8 November 2004 and footway usage applications (FA) from 1 January 2010. It includes information such as consent modifications, decision reviews, plans, submissions and consultant reports.

The [Archives & History Resources Catalogue](#) contains information about collections going back to 1842 as well as a wealth of digitised information (documents, photographs, maps, plans, data) from those collections. Some of our most popular collections include:

- Sands postal directories
- development and building application files and related records
- maps in the historical atlas
- special collections of acquired photographs
- assessment books
- First Nations Collection

The catalogue also includes development and building records such as:

- inspection, planning and survey cards
- proposed and approved building plans
- reports, such as statements of environmental effects
- certificates for construction or for complying development
- private certifier approved development applications
- council approved building and development applications, including notices of determination
- supporting documents.

Open data

The City supports providing data that enables reuse by the public and the private sector in apps and for research. [The Data Hub](#) serves as an important part of the City's proactive disclosure program. As of December 2022 it held 122 open data sets and 57 other open data products including interactive maps and apps, dashboards, data stories and documents.

We identify potential data for publication by communicating with business units and system owners and exploring possibilities with them.

There are many government-based open data initiatives in Australia, including the [federal government open data portal](#) and the [NSW Government portal](#).

How to access other information the City holds

Under the act there is an underlying rationale to encourage greater accessibility to government information and transparency of council decision making for members of the public.

Information that is not published on the City's websites may be requested through an information access (informal) request (no application fee) or a section 41 (formal) access application (application fee will apply plus hourly processing charges – sometimes exemptions and discounts apply).

Information access (informal) requests

We endeavour wherever possible and appropriate to deal with requests for information through information access (informal) requests. We encourage you to seek information first by searching the City's website, and then through an information access request (which does not usually require the payment of charges). Not all applications can be treated informally but the vast majority can be and there is usually a less than 10 working day turnaround. More details about information access requests can be found on the City's website at [Request City records](#).

Section 41 (formal) access applications

Section 41 access applications are another way to seek information. You probably will not need to use this method and we recommend you ring 9265 9066 to discuss whether or not the information you are seeking needs an access application.

It may be necessary to submit a section 41 access application under the [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act \(GIPA Act\)](#) if the information you are seeking:

- is of a sensitive nature
- contains personal, confidential or commercially sensitive information about a third party
- would involve a considerable amount of time and resources to assemble
- is of uncommon complexity

Access applications can take up to 20 working days to process, or longer if, for example, third parties need to be consulted. Access applications require an application fee of \$30 and we charge \$30 per hour in line with the [GIPA Act](#) (discounts can apply). Decisions on access applications have review rights for applicants and third parties.

If you do need to make an access application the requirements are listed in section 41 of the GIPA Act.

Where access applications under the [GIPA Act](#) are made, we will apply application, processing and advance deposit charges as specified in the Act – see the City's [Revenue Policy Fees and Charges page 110](#).

Public interest test

When a person makes an access application under the [GIPA Act](#), we must decide whether there are any public interest considerations against disclosing the information. If so, we need to determine the weight of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosing the information and where the balance between those interests lies.

We must refuse access if the public interests against disclosure outweigh those in favour of disclosure. This balancing of considerations for and against disclosure is called the public interest test.

Consultation

When a person requests information from us, that information often contains details about other individuals, businesses or agencies. We may need to consult with those third parties before deciding whether or not to release the information to the applicant.

Consulting with third parties is important in balancing information access rights with the rights of individuals to protect and control the privacy of information about themselves.

More details about s.41 access applications can be found on the City's website at [Request City records](#).

Review applications

The GIPA Act provides a number of avenues for review of decisions made about section 41 access applications. The types of decision that are reviewable are listed in section 80 of the Act.

An internal review will be conducted by a staff member not less senior than the person who made the original decision. It costs \$40 to make an internal review application. Applications can be made here (the internal review link appears on the first page after entering your contact details).

Applications for external review can be made to the Information and Privacy Commission and to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

How the City makes (or will make) government information publicly available

The manner in which Council makes (or will make) government information publicly available is: on its websites, by social media, in its hard copy publications, and in response to requests, which are met by provision of digital copies or by inspection on City premises.

City websites

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>

<https://eplanning.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Pages/XC.track/SearchApplication.aspx>

<https://www.sydneybarani.com.au/> <https://cityofsydney.smartygrants.com.au/>

<https://data.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/> <https://www.cityartsydney.com.au/>

<https://www.artandabout.com.au/> <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>

<https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/> <https://www.sydneytownhall.com.au/>

<https://archives.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>

Social media channels

<https://www.facebook.com/cityofsydney/>

<https://www.instagram.com/cityofsydney>

<https://twitter.com/cityofsydney>

<https://au.linkedin.com/company/cityofsydney>

<https://www.youtube.com/cityofsydney>

The kinds of government information the City makes available free of charge and for a fee

Information available free of charge

The kinds of information the City makes available free of charge are:

- information made available proactively on the City’s websites or reached via the websites (for example [City of Sydney website](#), [Find a DA](#), [Archives & History Resources Catalogue](#), [open data](#)),
- [mandatory open access information](#)
- information provided as a result of information access (informal) requests, either by digital copy or by inspection on City premises.

Information provided for a fee

The City charges for the digitisation of hard copy files, and charges an application fee and an hourly rate for the processing of section 41 access (formal) applications other than applications for the personal information of the applicant: see the City’s [Revenue Policy Fees and Charges page 110](#).

The City charges for information provided in particular formats, such as certificates, as part of its regulatory functions. The fees for providing the information are set by legislation or Ministerial decree and include:

- certificates (and copies) under s.10.7(2) and (5) – *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*
- certificates under s.88G – *Conveyancing Act 1919*
- certificates under s121zp/735a – *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*
- certificates under s.603 – *Local Government Act 1993*
- copies of existing Building Information Certificates

The Information and Privacy Commission

The Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) oversees the Government Information (Public Access) Act.

The commission provides information about the right to access information and can be contacted at:

Level 15, McKell Building
2-24 Rawson Place
Haymarket NSW 2000

or

GPO Box 7011
Sydney NSW 2001 or
1800 472 679

or

ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au

| Action | Date |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Last review | November 2022 |
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