

Freedom of Information Statement

2022-2023

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

This Freedom of Information Statement is published by the District Council of Grant (Council) in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (FOI Act).

Subject to certain restrictions, the FOI Act gives members of the public a legally enforceable right to access information held by South Australian (Local) Government agencies such as Councils. The purpose of this statement is to assist members of the public to identify the functions and decision making processes of Council, detail the type of information held by Council and advise how it can be accessed by the public.

An updated Information Statement will be published on the Council's website each financial year. This statement was released on 1 July 2023.

1. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF COUNCIL

1.1 Full Council and provisions for meeting procedures

The Council consists of the Mayor and 9 Elected Members who represent residents and ratepayers in three wards: Port MacDonnell Ward (1 member), Central Ward (7 members) and Tarpeena Ward (1 member). "Council" is the body corporate consisting of elected members as constituted under the *Local Government Act 1999* (LG Act). Council is established to provide for the government and management of its area at the local level and, in particular:

- a) to act as a representative, informed and responsible decision-makers in the interest of its community; and
- b) to provide and co-ordinate various public services and facilities and to develop its community and resource in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner, and
- c) to encourage and develop initiatives within its community for improving the quality of life of the community; and
- d) to represent the interests of its community to the wider community; and
- e) to exercise, perform and discharge the powers, functions and duties of local government under the LG Act and other acts in relation to the area for which it is constituted [s.6 of the LG Act].

Ordinary meetings of Council are once per month, on the third Monday at 5.30 pm at the Council Chambers, 324 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier. In the event that such Monday is a public holiday, the meeting is deferred to the Wednesday following the public holiday. All meetings are open to the public, with the exception of any matters subject to an order of confidentiality [s.90 of the LG Act]. Notices of all meetings of Council and its Committees are available on the website and from Council's Principal Office.

One of the main opportunities for the community to gain information about the business of Council is its agendas and associated reports prepared for Council and Committee meetings. Agendas and supporting documentation, are placed on public display no less than three days prior to those meetings. Minutes are placed on display within five days of meetings. These documents are also available on the District Council of Grant website at: www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

1.2 Council Committees

Committees streamline Council business and assist in the performance of its functions. The membership of Committees and their Terms of Reference are determined by the Council.

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

Committees meet at intervals determined in their Terms of Reference (available on Council's website and at Council Offices) and make recommendations to Council. Meetings of Committees are open to the public with the exception of any matters subject to an order of confidentiality [s.90 of the LG Act] and are publicly notified in the same way as Council meetings.

Part 2 of the LG Act and the *Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations* prescribe the way meetings of a Council and its Committees are to be conducted.

1.2.1 Section 41 Committees

Section 41 of the LG Act empowers a Council to establish committees

- To assist the Council in the performance of its functions
- To enquire into and report to the Council on matters within the ambit of the Council's responsibilities
- To provide advice to the Council
- To exercise, perform or discharge delegated powers, functions or duties.

The following Committees have been formed by Council under Section 41 of the LG Act.

1.2.1.1 District Council of Grant Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit & Risk Committee holds a minimum of four meetings throughout the year at appropriate times in the reporting and audit cycle or as otherwise required.

1.2.1.2 Mount Gambier and District Saleyards Strategy Committee

The Saleyards Committee meets at least twice, and up to four times a year at times and places determined by the Committee, taking into account the availability and convenience of Members of the Committee.

1.2.1.3 Mount Gambier Regional Airport Security Committee

The Airport Committee meets at least twice a year at times and places determined by the Committee, taking into account the availability and convenience of Members of the Committee.

1.2.1.4 CEO Recruitment Performance and Remuneration Review Committee

The CEO Committee meets at least twice per year, but strives for quarterly meetings, on such dates and at such times as the Committee determines.

1.2.2 Regional Assessment Panel (RAP)

In order to facilitate the assessment of applications made to the Council, Council is a party to the Regional Assessment Panel (RAP), which consists of:

- District Council of Grant,
- Wattle Range Council,
- City of Mount Gambier, and
- District Council of Robe.

The RAP replaces the District Council of Grant Council Assessment Panel (CAP) as the relevant authority to exercise or perform its powers and functions in accordance with the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

The RAP is scheduled to meet on the third Wednesday of each month subject to there being business to consider. Meetings commence at 5.00pm at the City of Mount Gambier.

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

1.2.3 District Council of Grant Building Fire Safety Committee (BFSC)

Council has established the District Council of Grant Building Fire Safety Committee (BFSC) as the Appropriate Authority pursuant to section 157(16) of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*. The BFSC are charged with responsibility for all matters which are of a building fire safety nature.

The BFSC meet a minimum of three (3) times in each calendar year and may hold a special meeting at any other time at the determination of the Presiding Member or at the written request of at least two other BFSC Members.

1.3 Delegations

The Chief Executive Officer has delegated authority from Council to make decisions on a number of specified administrative and policy matters. The Chief Executive Officer may sub-delegate such authority to an employee or a Committee. Council's Delegations Register reflects the delegated authority from the Council to the CEO (and subsequently any further sub-delegations). The Delegations Register is reviewed by Council once within the first 12 months following a periodic election (pursuant to s44(6a) of the LG Act) and is available to be viewed by the public at the Council offices during ordinary working hours.

1.4 Functions of Council

The functions of Council, set out in s7 of the LG Act, include:

- a) to plan at the local and regional level for the development and future requirements of its area;
- b) to provide services and facilities that benefit its area, its ratepayers and residents, and visitors to its area;
- ba) to determine the appropriate financial contribution to be made by ratepayers to the resources of the council;
- c) to provide for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups within its community;
- d) to take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards;
- e) to manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in an ecologically sustainable manner, and to improve amenity;
- f) to provide infrastructure for its community and for development within its area (including infrastructure that helps to protect any part of the local or broader community from any hazard or other event, or that assists in the management of any area);
- g) to promote its area and to provide an attractive climate and locations for the development of business, commerce, industry and tourism;
- h) to establish or support organisations or programs that benefit people in its area or local government generally;
- i) to manage and, if appropriate, develop, public areas vested in, or occupied by, the Council;
- j) to manage, improve and develop resources available to the Council;
- k) to undertake other functions and activities conferred by or under the Act.

1.5 Services for the Community

Council is required by legislation to:

- Determine policies to be applied by the Council
- Develop and adopt Strategic Management Plans
- Prepare and adopt annual business plans and budgets
- Establish an Audit Committee
- Develop appropriate policies, practices and processes of internal control
- Set performance objectives

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

- Establish policies and processes for dealing with complaints, requests for service, and internal review of Council decisions
- Determine the type, range and scope of projects to be undertaken by the Council
- Deliver planning and development, dog management, fire prevention and certain public health services
- Provide the necessary administrative services to support Council's functions

Other services and activities are provided through the decision making processes of Council in response to local needs, interests and aspirations of individuals and groups within the community to ensure that Council resources are used equitably.

Some core services provided by Council include:

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| • Bicycle Tracks/Walking Paths | • Parks, Reserves and Gardens |
| • Boat Ramps | • Playground Equipment |
| • Car Parks | • Public Cemeteries |
| • Community Halls and Centres | • Public Libraries |
| • Development Control | • Public Toilets |
| • (Building/Planning/Land use) | • Quarries |
| • Dog Control | • Recreational/Sporting Facilities |
| • Effluent Disposal – CWM Schemes | • Roads/Footpaths/Kerbing |
| • Environmental Health Matters | • Roadside/Street tree planting |
| • Foreshore Facilities | • Stock Saleyards |
| • Impounding of Livestock | • Street Lighting |
| • Litter Bins | • Stormwater Drainage |
| • Mount Gambier Airport | • Traffic Control Devices |
| • Parking Controls | • Waste Management |

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public have a number of opportunities to express their views on particular issues before Council. These include:

Deputations – with the permission of the Mayor or Presiding Member of a Committee, a member of the public can address Council or a Committee personally or on behalf of a group of residents on any item that is relevant to the Council or Committee.

Presentations to Council – with prior invitation from the Mayor, a group or organisation representative can address the Council on any issues relevant to Council.

Petitions – written petitions may be addressed to the Council on any issues relevant to Council, noting that Council may not be the appropriate authority to make a determination on all issues, however may elect to assume an advocacy role.

Council Members – members of the public can contact Members of Council to discuss any issue relevant to Council. Contact details for all Members are available on Council's website.

Written Requests – members of the public can write to the Council on any Council policy, activity or service.

Website and Facebook

Council has a website www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au which provides an opportunity for comment and feedback.

Our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/GrantDistCouncil/> provides another option to the community for information and feedback.

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

Community Consultation

Council is committed to open, honest, accountable and responsible decision making. Council's Community Engagement Charter and Public Consultation Policy facilitates effective communication between Council and the community, encouraging community involvement and partnerships in planning and decision making. The policy sets out the steps Council will take in relation to public consultation and ensures that the most cost effective methods of informing and involving the community, which are appropriate for specific circumstances and consultation topics, are used. The policy is available via Council's website.

3. ACCESS TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

3.1 Documents held by Council

Most information and documentation held by Council is available for public viewing and is readily available without recourse to the FOI Act and we invite you to discuss your information needs with us.

Records System

Council operates an electronic records and document management system for the effective management of Council's records.

Land and Property Information System

Council's Land and Property Information system contains property related information (valuation, rates, ownership details) on each property in the Council area.

3.2 Policy Documents Available for Inspection

At the time of publishing this statement, the following documents can be accessed from Council's website and are available for public inspection at the Council Offices during ordinary business hours. Any new policy adopted by Council after publication of this statement will be similarly available.

• Access to Information by Elected Members Policy	• Access to Properties Policy
• Accounting Policy – Mount Gambier Saleyards and Mount Gambier Regional Airport	• Annual Business Plan and Budget Policy
• Asset Management & Accounting Policy	• Australia Day Policy
• Behavioural Management Policy (Elected Members)	• Behavioural Standards for Council Members
• Boat Ramp Policy	• Bonding of Infrastructure Development Policy
• Building and Swimming Pool Inspection Policy	• Business Activity on Council Land Policy
• Caretaker Policy	• Cash Handling Policy
• Cemetery Policy	• Code of Practice for Access to Council and Committee Meetings and Associated Documents
• Code of Practice for Meeting Procedures	• Collection of Firewood Policy
• Community Funding and Support Policy	• Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) Policy
• Complaint Handling Procedure	• Contractor Management Policy

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

• Council Use of Fixed and Mobile Security Cameras Policy	• Customer Charter – Sewerage & CWMS Services
• Customer Service Charter	• Customer Service, Complaints and Request for Service Policy
• Debt Management Policy	• Design, Construction and Development of Infrastructure Assets Policy
• Development Applications – Refund of Fees Policy	• Development Delegations Policy
• Disaster Relief Donations Policy	• Disposal of Land and Other Assets Policy
• Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy	• Disposal of Land and Other Assets Policy
• Drafting and Livestock Handling Policy	• Elected Member – Recognition of Service Policy
• Elected Members Allowances and Support Policy	• Elected Members Training and Development Policy
• Electronic Use Policy	• Emergency Management Policy
• Enforcement Policy	• External Grant Funding Policy
• Flag Flying Policy	• Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
• Free Camping Policy	• Guidelines for the Control of Election Signs
• Hardship Policy for Residential Customers – CWMS	• Hire/Use of Council Facilities
• Infrastructure on Road Reserves Policy	• Internal Financial Controls Policy
• Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy & Procedure	• Land Division Open Space Policy
• Land Division Procedure for Developers	• Land Management Agreement Policy
• Leases and Licenses Policy	• Loans to Community Groups Policy
• Media Communication and Social Media	• Motor Vehicle Policy – Passenger Fleet
• Non-Compliant Tagging Policy	• Order Making Policy
• Plaques and Memorials Policy	• Privacy Policy
• Private/Direct Sale Livestock Policy	• Private Tourist Accommodation Policy
• Private Tourist Accommodation Procedure	• Private Works Policy
• Procurement Policy	• Protocols for Council Meetings & Major Events/Functions
• Prudential Management Policy	• Public Consultation Policy
• Public Interest Disclosure Policy & Procedure	• Purchase Card Policy
• Rate Rebate Policy	• Rating Policy
• Recording of Meetings Policy	• Records Management Policy
• Register of Interests Policy	• Request for Service Procedure
• Risk Management Policy	• Road Rent Agreements Policy
• Roadside Declared Plants Policy	• Rural Property Addressing Policy

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

• Mount Gambier & District Saleyards – Selling Agents Licences Policy	• Selection of Road Names Policy
• Source Records Policy	• State Planning Commission – Complaints Handling Procedure for Assessment Panels
• Stock on Roads Policy	• Suspect Livestock Policy
• Temporary Living Premises Policy	• Tourism Signage Policy
• Township Burning Permit Policy	• Treasury Management Policy
• Tree Management Policy	• Unreasonable Customer Conduct Policy
• Visibility at Corners Policy	• Waste Management Policy
• Work Health Safety Return to Work Policy	• Wood Products Encouragement Policy

3.3 Other Council Documents

Other documents which can be accessed on Council's website include:

• Airport Master Plan	• Animal Management Plan
• Annual Business Plan	• Annual Financial Statements
• Annual Reports	• Buildings Asset Management Plan
• Communication Framework	• Conflict of Interest Register
• Council By-laws	• Council & Committee Agendas
• Council & Committee Minutes	• CWMS Asset Management Plan
• DCG Disability Inclusion and Access Plan	• Delegations Register
• Economic Development Framework	• Fees and Charges Schedule
• Fleet Asset Management Plan	• Gift Register
• Greater Mount Gambier Master Plan	• ICT Equipment Asset Management Plan
• Industrial Land Review and Master Plan	• Little Blue Risk Management Plan
• Long Term Financial Plan	• Open Space Asset Management Plan
• Port MacDonnell Signage Strategy	• Port MacDonnell Urban Design Framework and Master Plan
• Public Register	• Public Road Register
• Rating Information	• Regional Public Health & Well-being Plan
• Register of Allowances and Benefits	• Register of By-Laws
• Register of Employees' Salaries, Wages and Benefits	• Register of Interests
• River & Coastal Communities Urban Design Framework and Masterplan	• Rural Living and Township Zones Boundaries Review and Master Plan
• Saleyards Master Plan	• Stormwater Asset Management Plan
• Strategic Asset Management Plan	• Strategic Management Plan
• Tarpeena Community Plan	• Transport Asset Management Plan

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terms of Reference for various Committees	
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The following documents are available for public inspection (and purchase) from Council's offices.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development Application Register
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking Control Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register of Elected Members – Allowances and Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voters Roll (not available for purchase)	

3.4 Other Information Requests

Requests for other information not publicly available above will be considered in accordance with the FOI Act. Under this legislation, applicants seeking access to documents held by Council need to provide sufficient information to enable the correct documents to be identified and must complete the required application form and lodge it at the Council Offices.

Applications must be in writing and must specify that it is made under Section 13 of the FOI Act.

If documents relate to the applicant's personal affairs, proof of identity may be requested. Requests will be dealt with as soon as practicable (and in any case, within 30 days) after receipt. If documents are being sought on behalf of another person relating to their personal affairs, Council may ask for a consent form signed by that person.

Forms of access may include inspection or copies (subject to copyright laws) of documents, hearing and/or viewing of audio and/or video tapes, transcripts of recorded documents, transcripts of words recorded in shorthand or encoded form, or the reproduction of documents from digitised information.

Council, on receiving a FOI application, may assist the applicant to direct the application to another agency or transfer the application to another agency if appropriate.

If Council refuses access to a document, the District Council of Grant must issue a certificate stating why the document is a restricted document.

Retrieving the requested information involves considerable staff time. It is important to specify what is required as clearly as possible so staff can assist quickly and efficiently. Charges may apply to recover staff time and resources required to process applications.

All general enquiries on FOI Act issues should be directed to the Freedom of Information Officer.

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

4. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPLICATION FEES AND PROCESSING CHARGES

Approved application fees are set in the *FOI (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2003*. A cheque/money order/cash for the appropriate amount must be forwarded to Council with the FOI Application. Processing charges may also apply for dealing with the application. These are set in the Freedom of Information Regulations and may include some free time when the request relates to the personal affairs of the applicant.

Schedule	Fees and Charges as at 1 July 2022
On application for access to an agency's documents (section 13(c))	\$39.00
For dealing with an application for access to an agency's documents and in respect of the giving of access to the document (section 19(1)(b) and (c))— (a) In the case of a document that contains information concerning the personal affairs of the applicant— (i) for up to the first 2 hours spent by the agency in dealing with the application and giving access no charge (ii) for each subsequent 15 minutes so spent by the agency	No charge \$14.70
Where access is to be given in the form of a photocopy of the document (per page)	25 cents
Where access is to be given in the form of a written transcript of words recorded or contained in the document (per page)	\$8.70
Where access is to be given in the form of a copy of a photograph, x-ray, video tape, computer tape or computer disk the actual cost incurred by the agency in producing the copy	The actual cost incurred by the agency in producing the copy
Postage or delivery charges	The actual cost incurred by the agency
An application for review by an agency of a determination made by the agency under Part 3 of the Act	\$39.00

Fees may be waived for disadvantaged persons, as set in the Freedom of Information Regulations i.e. No fee is required for current concession holders or if payment of the fee would cause financial hardship. At all times Council retains a discretion to waive, reduce or remit a fee for any reason it thinks fit.

If, in the Council's opinion, the cost of dealing with an application is likely to exceed the application fee, an advance deposit may be requested. The request will be accompanied by a notice that sets out the basis on which the amount of the deposit has been calculated. The Freedom of Information Officer will endeavour to work with the applicant to define the scope of the request and the costs involved.

Freedom of Information Requests should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Officer
District Council of Grant
PO Box 724
MOUNT GAMBIER SA 5290

An FOI application form is available on Council's website:
<https://www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au/council/policies,-by-laws-and-documents/foi>

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF GRANT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2022-2023

5. AMENDMENT TO COUNCIL RECORDS

Under the FOI Act, a person may request a correction to any information about themselves that is incomplete, incorrect, misleading or out of date. To gain access to these Council records, a person must complete and lodge with Council an application form as indicated above outlining the records that he/she wishes to inspect.

If it is found that these require amendment, details of the necessary changes are to be lodged with Council's Freedom of Information Officer. Where there is a significant correction of personal records and the mistakes were not the applicant's, any fees and charges paid for the original application may be refunded, at Council's discretion.

6. APPLICATIONS

The District Council of Grant processed four (4) Freedom of Information applications during 2022/2023 (compared to two (2) in 2021/2022).

One (1) applicant was granted full access to the documents that were requested, one (1) applicant was granted partial access to the documents that were requested. Two (2) applicants were refused access to the documents that were requested. Of the two (2) determinations that were made to refuse access, one (1) was due to the documents requested being exempt documents under the FOI Act, and one (1) was due to the documents being publicly available elsewhere.

Authorised by:



Darryl Whicker
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
1 July 2023