

Agency information

About us

Rous is an organisation of experts and advisors supplying the Northern Rivers with water, weed biosecurity, and rural flood mitigation. Rous is a county council as constituted under the Local Government Act 1993. County councils are different to local councils because they're set up to provide specific functions to local councils.

Rous County Council has three main functions:

1. Water supply

Rous sources, stores, treats and supplies water to the Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley councils. These councils then on-sell this water to their communities. Rous is proud to provide high-quality drinking water to approximately 110,000 people in the region.

2. Weed biosecurity

Rous protects the region's biodiversity by managing and eradicating high-risk weed species. We work closely with communities and councils in Ballina, Byron, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Kyogle and Tweed Shire regions.

3. Rural flood mitigation

For 65 years, Rous has managed the rural flood mitigation for the Richmond River floodplain. This includes monitoring and managing an 80km network of levees, 750 floodgates, and 180km of drains to reduce inundation and divert flood waters for communities along the Richmond River.

Governance

Membership of the Council is drawn from the councils of Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley. The current representatives of the member councils can be [found here](#).

The day-to-day running of Rous is the responsibility of the General Manager, who, with managers and staff, act on Council's decisions by developing and putting into practice Council policies and resolutions.

The [governance framework](#) outlines the collection of tools that enables and constrains how we act on behalf of Council.

Access to information

A copy of information posted on the Rous website can also be requested in person from Council's administration office, 20 Conway Street, Lismore NSW 2480 between 8:30am to 4:30pm from Monday to Thursday excluding public holidays.

Alternatively, you can request a copy be posted to you by emailing council@rous.nsw.gov.au, telephoning (02) 6623 3800, or by mailing your request to Rous County Council, PO Box 230, Lismore NSW 2480.

Council and public participation in Council policy formulation

Council meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every second month (unless affected by public holidays), commencing at 1.30 pm at Council's administration centre, 20 Conway Street, Lismore. Any variation to Council's meeting timetable is advertised in the local newspaper and displayed on Council's website.

[Council business papers can be found here](#) as well as at Council's administration centre. A business paper is also made available to anyone attending a council meeting.

A range of options exist for public participation in the Council policy development process. In particular, subject to sections 10A and 10B of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), which make provision for the closure of meetings in certain circumstances, members of the public may attend council meetings.

Other opportunities for public participation include but are not limited to the following:

- Public notice of time and place of council meetings is advertised in the local newspaper, The Northern Star, at the beginning of each year.
- Public access is available at the commencement of all council meetings, whereby members of the public may address Council on matters listed in the business paper relevant for the meeting.
- Access is available to inspect documents and correspondence tabled at or submitted to a council meeting, as well as the minutes to all meetings.
- Public exhibition is undertaken and an invitation to make submissions issued on a range of policy documents and proposals.

Council information available to the public

Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) Rous and all other NSW government agencies are required to publish a range of open access information.

This information includes a disclosure log, policy documents, agency information guide and a register of government contracts.

Council generates and retains a range of documents to facilitate its daily operations, including:

- Legal, corporate governance, financial, commercial and administrative documents
- Operational documents
- Human Resources documents
- Information Technology documents
- General Manager documents.

Information can be provided by open access, proactive release, informal request or a formal application. Release of information is subject to whether there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Rous makes available any documents it's required and permitted by law to make available for inspection. Inspection of such documents is free of charge, however an administration charge may apply if copies of these documents are required.

Policies

Full copies of all policies can be downloaded [here](#).

Annual Reports

[The Annual Report](#) is our annual report card providing information on our achievements during the relevant reporting period as well as our financial performance. The report complies with the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and contains important information about various aspects of our business.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

Integrated planning and reporting (IP&R) was introduced in 2012 to improve strategic and operational planning for councils and how they report on their performance.

The [IP&R framework](#) helps Rous identify the priority issues, proposed outcomes, and the strategies to achieve the outcomes. The operational plan section includes detailed estimates of income and expenditure together with Rous' fees and charges.

Disclosure log

A [disclosure log](#) is a record containing details of government information already released under the GIPA Act. A disclosure log is part of the open access information that agencies are required to make publicly available. Details are entered into the disclosure log when an access application has been decided, and any review time limits have expired.

Contracts register

Council maintains a [register of contracts](#) as per the requirements of the GIPA Act. This means Council makes available details of contracts with an estimated value of \$150,000 or more.

How information is available and how to lodge a GIPA application

If you wish to access information that is not publicly available you need to complete a [GIPA application](#) and pay a \$30 assessment fee. The application fee includes the first 20 hours of processing time, and will be refunded in full if the application is denied. The application form is also available at Council reception.

Depending on the type of document requested, information will be supplied to the applicant in either electronic or hardcopy format, or a combination of both.

GIPA applications must be made in writing, accompanied by the \$30 application fee and lodged by post to:

Public Officer

Rous County Council
Administration Centre
PO Box 230
Lismore NSW 2480

If applying by post, payment of the \$30 application fee can be made via EFTPOS, cheque or money order.

Applications may also be lodged in person at the Rous County Council Administration Centre, 20 Conway Street, Lismore, between 8:30am to 4:30pm from Monday to Thursday excluding public holidays.

If applying in person, payment of the \$30 application fee can be made via EFTPOS, credit card, cheque, or money order.

For informal requests for information or to seek amendment of Council's records concerning your personal affairs, contact the Public Officer by telephone on (02) 6623 3800, or by e-mail at: council@rouse.nsw.gov.au. Access to Council's records regarding your personal affairs is free and a GIPA Access Application is not required.

[Click here to download](#) the information sheet: Accessing information held by Council.

Further information regarding the GIPA Act is available from:

Information and Privacy Commission (IPC)

free call telephone: 1800 472 679

email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au

postal address: GPO Box 7011 Sydney NSW 2001

or visit office at Level 17, 201 Elizabeth Street, Sydney 2000

www.ipc.nsw.gov.au