



What does privacy mean for councillors?

Local government (councils) and councillors deal with personal information, or information about people, every day. There are rules around information privacy and they provide a roadmap to help councils and councillors navigate how to keep people's personal information safe and use it respectfully. Here's 6 key points you need to know.



Only collect what you need

The *Information Privacy Act 2009* (IP Act) sets out rules or privacy principles that govern how councils collect, store, use, & disclose personal information. When collecting personal information from the community, only ask what you need to carry out the project or service. Don't collect 'nice to have' information if it isn't necessary.



Privacy principles are far-reaching

They apply to all personal information collected & held by a council with some limited exceptions (eg information that's publicly available). Privacy principles also apply to personal information collected & held by councillors in their role, including social media, text messages, emails & images.



Privacy isn't about keeping information secret

The IP Act is all about protecting & respecting your community's personal information to make sure you don't lose trust. Councillors must ensure that personal information is only used in accordance with the privacy principles & the *Local Government Act 2009*.



Only share what you should

If a council or councillor fails to comply with their privacy obligations, the affected person could potentially be awarded up to \$100,000 in compensation. Misuse of personal information could lead to misconduct, corrupt conduct or criminal charges.



The IP Act has flexibilities

There are times when information needs to be shared to ensure public safety during emergencies like floods, bushfires, cyclones & pandemics. The IP Act has flexibilities for these situations so councils can share the necessary information (eg with emergency services) without breaking the law.



Create a privacy-aware workplace culture

Privacy should be top of mind when developing new projects or policies. Simple tools like a Privacy Impact Assessment can help councils identify & minimise privacy risks.

For more information visit www.oic.qld.gov.au

Or phone the OIC Enquiry Service on (07) 3234 7373 or email enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au