

# 5 quick Privacy tips for local government

The *Information Privacy Act 2009* (IP Act) sets out rules or privacy principles that govern how Queensland government agencies, including local governments, collect, store, use & disclose personal information.

The following tips will help you comply with your privacy obligations as a council.

# 1

## Know what your privacy responsibilities are

Council staff & councillors deal with personal information, or information about people, every day. They have a responsibility to keep people's personal information safe & use it respectfully. Council will likely have a Privacy Officer who can advise on privacy responsibilities. Alternatively, you can contact the Office of the Information Commissioner for information & advice.

# 2

## Know when your privacy obligations apply

The privacy principles are far-reaching. They apply to any personal information contained in a council document. A 'document' includes paper & electronic documents, emails, video footage including CCTV, sound recordings & online content.

# 3

## Publish clear privacy notices & policies

To avoid any confusion among the community and staff, councils should have clear & accessible privacy policies & notices. The privacy principles contain generous flexibilities when it comes to the flow of personal information that's needed for council to do its job. In general, privacy breaches occur when personal information is misused, abused or not adequately safeguarded.

# 4

## Quickly respond to privacy complaints

Responding to a privacy complaint promptly, professionally and respectfully will go a long way to resolving the complaint to both council's and the complainant's satisfaction. Complainants have the right to take their unresolved privacy complaints to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

# 5

## Take care if personal information passes overseas

There are particular privacy vulnerabilities when council-held personal information moves overseas. This can occur with the personal information posted on council websites, blogs, social media sites or when using online software or 'app' services. In general, councils have less privacy risk when they contract online services with reputable service providers that proactively protect the privacy of the information.