



What does RTI mean for councillors?

RTI stands for right to information. Local government (councils) & councillors need to understand & meet certain legal requirements when dealing with information. Here's 7 key points you need to know.



All council information should be released unless there's a good reason not to
The *Right to Information Act 2009* (RTI Act) gives people the right to access information from a local government, including councillors, unless it is contrary to the public interest.



Councillors create records every day & these are subject to the RTI Act
This includes all digital records made in their role as an employee/councillor (eg emails, text messages sent or received, images, chats & posts from social media accounts & direct messages) as well as documents like minutes, agendas & reports.



Councils should push as much information as possible out to the community
The RTI Act requires councils to proactively release information regularly. This helps the community to get information more easily & helps councils to build trusting relationships.



Good recordkeeping is key
Keeping accurate records is a legal requirement. It helps councils comply with RTI laws & provides evidence of decisions & actions. This shows councils are open, transparent & accountable.



People can request information under RTI
If people can't access the information they want by asking the council, they can request it under RTI. This is called a formal RTI application & should only be a last resort. People should be able to access council information informally (eg via the website, publications or just asking for it).



Councils can't prevent access to information because it might embarrass them
Under the RTI Act, councils can't refuse to disclose documents because it might embarrass them or their employees.



Decisions about disclosing information must comply with RTI laws
The RTI Act safeguards the independence of RTI officers. It's an offence to direct them to make a decision they do not believe is correct.

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