

5 quick RTI tips for local government

The *Right to Information Act 2009* (RTI Act) gives people the right to access information from Queensland government agencies, including local government.

It encourages agencies to release as much information as possible out to the community, unless there's a good reason not to, & build trusting relationships.

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

1

Know your agency's RTI Officer

It's important to know who your RTI Officer is so you can ask questions & direct enquiries. If you're unsure, speak to your Records Manager, Governance Officer or Information Management Co-ordinator.

2

Know what documents are subject to RTI

A council 'document' includes paper & electronic records, CCTV images, emails, text messages stored on your work phone, Post-It notes, diary entries, photos & audio recordings. These can all be subject to the RTI Act.

3

Respond promptly to a request from your RTI Officer for any documents you hold

People should be able to access council information informally (eg via the website, publications or just asking for it). If people can't access the information they want by asking council, they can request it under RTI. Council only has a limited time to process a request for information under the RTI Act.

4

Tell your RTI Officer about any searches you have conducted

When replying to a request for information from your agency's RTI Officer, it's helpful to tell them about the searches you have conducted as well as important background or contextual information. This additional information will help the RTI Officer or RTI decision-maker decide whether the requested information is released.

5

Know your record-keeping responsibilities

Creating, keeping & managing accurate records not only makes the RTI process easier, it provides evidence of council's business activities & decisions. It helps councils to be more open, accountable & transparent, & this supports better decision-making. Contact your Records Manager if you have any questions about your record-keeping obligations.