



Freedom of Information Statement 2017-18

Updated 3 July 2017

Access to documents and information about how we exercise our powers and perform our functions

Section 7 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) requires all agencies, other than councils, to publish a set of statements describing their powers and functions, the documents and information they keep and the ways people can view or get copies of them.

In the interests of transparency, the City of Melbourne has compiled a Section 7 Freedom of Information Statement where you will find information about:

- the functions and decision-making powers of the City of Melbourne
- how we consult with the public
- the types of documents we have
- the information and documents which have been prepared for publication or inspection and notice of where they can be inspected or obtained
- the literature available by subscription or on free mailing lists
- who you can apply to for documents and how an application can be made
- the boards and committees which have been established to advise the Council and whose minutes are available to the public
- the libraries we run.

If you have any questions about this document you can call a member of the Council Business team on 03 9658 9761. Or if you have an enquiry for a particular branch you can call 03 9658 9658 and the customer service staff will help you.

1. Our functions and decision-making powers

Melbourne City Council governs the municipality of Melbourne. Our elected council consists of a lord mayor, a deputy lord mayor and nine councillors. The administration is made up of a chief executive, five directors and more than 1,400 staff.

Our functions are prescribed by the *Local Government Act 1989*. We must:

- plan and provide services, facilities and infrastructure for the local community
- strategically plan and regulate land use in the municipality
- raise revenue so that we can perform our functions
- make and enforce local laws
- discharge duties we have under other acts, such as the *Food Act 1984*, the *Building Act 1993* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

Many of our powers and functions are assigned to us by other acts of parliament. We also enforce local laws which affect our residents, businesses and visitors to the city. We have most of them listed them below.

Acts

- *Building Act 1993*
- *Carlton (Recreation Ground) Act 1966*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *City of Melbourne Act 2001*
- *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*
- *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Emergency Management Act 1986*
- *Environment Protection Act 1970*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*
- *Health Records Act 2001*
- *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994*
- *Infringements Act 2006*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Melbourne Lands (Yarra River North Bank) Act 1997*
- *Melbourne (Flinders-street) Land Act 1958*
- *North Melbourne Lands Act 1966*
- *North Melbourne Lands Act 1996*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Public Records Act 1973*
- *Queen Victoria Market Lands Act 1996*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Sex Work Act 1994*
- *Shrine of Remembrance Act 1978*
- *South Melbourne Land Act 1986*
- *Subdivision Act 1988*
- *Summary Offences Act 1966*
- *Tobacco Act 1987*
- *Valuation of Land Act 1960*

Local Laws

- *Activities Local Law 2009*
- *Conduct of Meetings Local Law 2010*
- *Environment Local Law 2009*

To exercise these powers we have organised the administration into these functional groups:

- animal management
- arts and cultural programs
- business and trade development
- capital works and maintenance of parks and gardens, roads, pedestrian ways, and public spaces of the city
- community health services
- environment and water management
- financial planning, budgets, valuations, rates and credit control
- food safety and regulation of food premises
- international relations
- IT infrastructure
- land transfers and subdivisions
- library services
- marketing of the city and coordination of events
- maintenance of council-owned facilities, property and other assets
- management of parks, gardens and sporting facilities and services
- public safety
- recycling and waste management
- regulation of parking and traffic
- regulation of parking, filming, trading and other activities in the streets
- services for children, youth, aged people and people with disabilities
- social planning and housing
- tourism
- urban planning and building regulation.

We have attached our organisational chart (last page of this document) which shows how we are set up to perform these functions. Each branch is responsible for planning and implementing services for the municipality.

2. Consultation with the public

Our plans, services and policies serve you, so we need to consult with you about the best ways to do that. We run public consultations on any major strategy or plan which affects the public spaces of the city or the wellbeing of residents, businesses or visitors.

We advertise a period of consultation in newspapers, local community publications and on our website. We will tell you in the advertisement how you can get a copy of the document, how you can respond to it and about any public meeting held to discuss it.

The current committees of the Council are the Future Melbourne Committee (which meets two times per month) and the Inner Melbourne Action Plan Implementation Committee (quarterly meetings).

For more information about Council's special committees, please visit the committees and meetings¹ page on our website.

You may also make a request to address a committee meeting (three minute time limit) or submit correspondence in relation to any item listed on a Council or committee meeting agenda. No opportunity is provided for submitters to be heard at Council meetings.

If submitting a written submission, the documents must be received no later than noon on the day of the committee or Council meeting. They are treated as public documents, so please consider this if you are including any personal information.

Members of the public may ask questions at ordinary committee meetings. A 15 minute period shall be provided for questions at the beginning and end of the meeting. Questions should not be greater than 90 seconds in duration.

3. The types of documents we hold

The branches that provide services and perform functions keep documents associated with their work. The documents fall into these broad categories:

- policies, guidelines, manuals and research
- project and service plans
- records associated with capital works, engineering and the road network
- grant application, tenders and tender evaluation material
- service agreements, contracts, leases and licences
- records of work associated with public events and cultural programs
- records of maintenance of parks and gardens, public facilities, street features and amenities
- records of the administration and enforcement of local laws and acts
- leases, permits and notices of building and occupancy
- records of land transfers, subdivisions and the history of use of land, roads and lanes.

¹ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/Pages/committees-meetings.aspx>

4. Information and documents we have prepared for publication or inspection

We compile registers of information which is particularly relevant to our responsibilities as a local government and a public sector organisation. Most of these registers can be viewed on the Registers for Inspection² page which is available on the City of Melbourne website.

5. Publications and literature available online, by subscription or free mailing lists

We publish a number of newsletters, reports and handbooks for residents, businesses and visitors to the city. You can download them as a pdf document or call us for a copy. In some cases, these publications are also kept at the public libraries.

Council's integrated planning framework

- Future Melbourne is the community of Melbourne's long-term plan for the future direction of all aspects of city life.
- The Council Plan 2017-21 outlines the work Council plans to deliver over the next four years.
- The Annual Plan and Budget documents what we will do and how we will fund our activities over the financial year.
- The Annual Report outlines how the City of Melbourne performed during the financial year.

Strategies

For a list of strategies please refer to our website at [plans and publications](#).³

Accessible Melbourne Publications

- Accessing Melbourne is a guide to getting around the city for people who are less mobile. It gives information on events, attractions, shopping, eating out, accommodation and getting around in the CBD.
- Mobility Maps are produced annually and provide information about services and facilities in the city, such as accessible toilets, public TTY phones, disability designated car parking, accessible pathways and taxi ranks.
- The Walking and Jogging Tracks booklet outlines a number of tracks in the city.
- The Melbourne TravelSmart Map provides a convenient and comprehensive guide to walking, cycling and public transport routes and facilities in the City of Melbourne.
- The Melbourne Docklands Precinct Mobility Map contains information about access and facilities available in Docklands for people with limited mobility.
- The Active City Sports and Recreation Access Guide, provides key access information for 34 sports and recreation venues within the municipality for people with mobility, vision and hearing impairments.

² <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/governance-transparency/council-information/registers-inspection/Pages/default.aspx>

³ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Pages/Plans-and-publications.aspx>

Community Interest Publications

- The Community Information directory can be used to access more than 80,000 health, welfare and community services.
- The Helping Out booklet provides a list of free and cheap support services available from more than 70 organisations.
- City Eating is a guide to about 88 eateries in the CBD. It contains information on venue, price range and opening hours, and looks at ease of access.
- The City of Melbourne – Insider Guide for International Students was created to assist international students to settle into the Melbourne way of life.

Aged Care Publications

- The Aged and Disability Services brochure is available in a number of languages and contains information on the services provided by the City of Melbourne.
- The Lifelong Melbourne 2006-2016 plan caters for the interests and needs of city residents aged over 55.
- Lifelong Melbourne: Ensuring Our Place is a plan for residential and home-package aged care within the City of Melbourne.

Community Health and Safety Publications

- The CBD Homelessness Health Access Protocol is a good practice guide to improving health service access for people experiencing homelessness in Melbourne's CBD.
- How Prepared Are You In An Emergency? was developed to assist people with a disability, as well as their friends and family, to formulate a personal emergency plan.
- There are a number of Community Safety Fact Sheets available which address issues such as safety in the city, drug use, managing alcohol and swimming pool safety.
- The CBD Safety Plan establishes a framework for a coordinated response for the safety of people within the CBD.

Newsletters

- Melbourne magazine is produced every six weeks for residents, ratepayers and businesses. It provides information on a wide range of topics and issues affecting the city.
- Out and About is a quarterly activity guide and newsletter that promotes City of Melbourne owned/based services and activities for seniors.
- Waterfront City Marina is a monthly newsletter providing updates on the Marina and Melbourne Docklands, including exclusive offers and deals for boating visitors to make the most out of their next visit to Waterfront City Marina.
- Table Talk newsletter is a quarterly newsletter for hospitality businesses in the City of Melbourne.
- Melbourne magazine is a monthly newsletter delivered to every resident and business.

eNewsletters

The City of Melbourne also has a number of eNewsletters which you can subscribe to:

- What's On is a weekly email update which gives you insider tips on what's hot and what's happening in the city.
- The Green Leaflet is a monthly eNewsletter on all things environment and sustainable.
- Check it Out! is a monthly eNewsletter created by the Melbourne Library Service (MLS) which outlines their current news, events and activities.
- Multicultural Hub is a monthly eNewsletter with news and activities at the Hub.
- Arts House is a regular eNewsletter to promote two yearly programs featuring contemporary art performances, exhibitions, installations and cultural events.
- Strengthening Community Organisations is an eNewsletter which keeps organisations informed of the programs and initiatives run by Council, other levels of government and external organisations.
- Melbourne Conversations is an eNewsletter which promotes a series of regular, free discussions exploring issues and topics that make Melbourne and Melburnians tick.
- The Grand Organ eNewsletter outlines the upcoming concerts for the southern hemisphere's largest grand romantic organ in the Melbourne Town Hall.

The City of Melbourne also has a number of technical notes available on the design standards used in the City of Melbourne's public domain. The standards include typical features of streets, parks, gardens and other public spaces, including paving, kerbs and channels, ramps and crossings, tree pits, lighting, and furniture. Copies of these standards are available through the website under "About Council" and "Plans and publications".

6. Freedom of information applications

If the documents you want cannot be got by any of these means, then the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives you a right of access to seek access to the documents that we hold.

You can make a request or you can authorise another person to make a request on your behalf (i.e. a solicitor). If you want someone to make the request on your behalf, we will not process the request unless we receive your written authorisation.

Similarly, if the documents are about your personal affairs, please provide us with evidence of your identity (i.e. copy of your driver's licence).

The term 'document' is broad and covers written documents, whether printed or in electronic form, the contents of files, maps, film, microfiche, photographs and audio and video recordings.

To make an application you need to email or write to us with a description of the documents you are seeking. Your description gives us the only means to identify documents, so try to be as specific as you can. You are very welcome to call us for help with your description.

Just to give you an idea of what we mean, try to give us a time period and state the type of document you want. For example, 'correspondence between X and Y from January to March 2005'. Avoid phrases like 'all documents in relation to', for example.

To help you with your description we have listed some of the types of documents in Council's possession. Please note that some of them can be provided on request and you won't need to apply under the Act:

- policies, guidelines, manuals and research
- project and service plans
- records associated with capital works, engineering and the road network
- grant application, tenders and tender evaluation material
- service agreements, contracts, leases and licences
- records of work associated with public events and cultural programs
- records of maintenance of parks and gardens, public facilities, street features and amenities
- records of the administration and enforcement of local laws and acts
- leases, permits and notices of building and occupancy
- records of land transfers, subdivisions and the history of use of land, roads and lanes.

The FOI application fee (set by the Act) is increased annually in accordance with the *Monetary Units Act 2004*. The current application fee is listed on the City of Melbourne's Freedom of Information Application Form. You will need to provide the application fee before we can commence processing your application. Please make cheques or money orders payable to the City of Melbourne. Alternatively, you can pay the application fee at the Front Desk of the Town Hall Administration Building, 90-120 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

If you are suffering from hardship, you may qualify to have the application fee waived. Please state in your application if you would like us to consider your claim for hardship and provide any evidence in support of your claim (i.e. a copy of your Healthcare or Pension card).

Finally, make sure you include your own address and other contact details in your written application. Providing an email address or contact telephone number will make the process faster if we need to consult with you.

Access charges relate to the costs incurred in granting access to the documents that you have requested. These costs may or may not apply depending on the nature of your request. FOI access charges are exempt from GST. Charges are calculated in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Access Charges) Regulations 2014. The access charges may include, but not be limited to, the cost for searching for documents, providing photocopies or inspection supervision.

For details relating to FOI access charges, please refer to [freedom of information](#)⁴

If you have any questions about the process please call a member of the Council Business team on 03 9658 9761 or email foi@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Please address your request to:

Manager Governance & Legal

City of Melbourne

GPO Box 1603

Melbourne Victoria 3001

⁴ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/governance-transparency/council-information/Pages/freedom-of-information.aspx>

7. Advisory committees

We have also set up the following committees to advise the Council:

- Submissions (Section 223) Committee
- Inner Melbourne Action Plan Implementation Committee
- City of Melbourne Parks and Gardens Reference Group
- North Melbourne Recreation Reserve Landscape Advisory Committee.

For more information please call 03 9658 9658.

8. Public libraries

City of Melbourne's Melbourne Library Service (MLS) operates out of four locations; City Library, North Melbourne Library, East Melbourne Library and Boyd (our Southbank Library). The libraries offer a wide range of facilities, services and resources, including books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, journals and newspapers in a range of languages as well as electronic publications. Library membership is free and open to anyone. Notices of the meetings of the council and its committees are also posted there.

City Library

The library is located in the CAE building, at 253 Flinders Lane in the city. You can phone them on 9658 9500. Operating hours are:

Monday to Thursday 8am to 8pm

Friday 8am to 6pm

Saturday 10am to 5pm

Sunday Noon to 5pm

East Melbourne Library and Community Centre

East Melbourne Library and Community Centre is at 122 George Street, East Melbourne. You can phone them on 9658 9600. Operating hours are:

Monday, Wed and Thurs 10am to 6pm

Tuesday 1pm to 8pm

Friday 1pm to 6pm

Saturday 10am to 4pm

Sunday 2pm to 5pm

Docklands Hub Library Access Point

The Library Access Point is a conduit between Docklands and the Melbourne Library Service. Residents, workers and visitors can register as library members as well as collect and return of books from the collections in the City, East Melbourne and North Melbourne Libraries. An after-hours returns chute is located outside the Hub entrance.

The access point is at the Docklands Hub, 80 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands. You can phone them on 8622 4822. Operating hours are 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. The Hub is usually closed for a number of days over the Christmas-New Year period.

North Melbourne Library

The library is at 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne. You can phone 9658 9700 for more information. Operating hours are:

Monday to Wed 10am to 7pm

Thursday 10am to 6pm

Friday 1pm to 6pm

Saturday 10am to 4pm

Sunday 2pm to 5pm

Southbank Library at Boyd

The library is located at 207 City Road, Southbank. You can phone 9658 8300 for more information. Operating hours are:

Monday to Thurs 10am to 7pm

Friday 1pm to 6pm

Saturday 10am to 4pm

Sunday 2pm to 5pm

The Library at The Dock

The Library at The Dock is located at 107 Victoria Harbour Promenade, Docklands Vic 3008. You can phone 03 9658 9998 for more information. Operating hours are:

Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm

Saturday 10am to 5pm

Sunday 12pm to 5pm

Please check [libraries](#)⁵ for information about opening hours on public holidays.

⁵ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/libraries/Pages/libraries.aspx>