



Freedom of Information Statement

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1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This Information Statement is published by the Shire of Quairading (Shire) in accordance with the requirements of Part 5 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (the FOI Act).

The operations of local government in Western Australia are governed by the *Local Government Act 1995* (the LG Act), the various Local Government Regulations, and any other legislation that provides powers and responsibilities to local governments.

1.1 Legislation

Principal legislation that the Shire operates under includes –

- a. *Local Government Act 1995*;
- b. *Public Health Act 2016*;
- c. *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911*;
- d. *Planning and Development Act 2005*;
- e. *Bush Fires Act 1954*;
- f. *Cat Act 2011*;
- g. *Dog Act 1976*.
- h. *Cemeteries Act 1986*
- i. *Workplace Health & Safety Act 2020*
- j. *Emergency Management Act 2005*
- k. *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007*

There is a wide range of other legislation that provides powers and authorities that imposes duties and obligations upon the Shire.

Each Act of Parliament generally has one or more related Regulations which also impact on the Shire.

Confirmation of current Acts and Regulations by referring to the Department of Justice Parliamentary Council's Office website at legislation.wa.gov.au is recommended.

1.2 Local Laws

The powers of local government to provide services and facilities and make local laws are derived from legislation passed in State Parliament. Many of the enabling and principal legislation for the Council is the *Local Government Act 1995*.

As at January 2023, the Shire's local laws are –

- a. *Bush Fire Brigade local Law 2023*
- b. *Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation Undertakings relating to Animals, Environment and Nuisance Local Law 2017*
- c. *Extractive Industries Local Law 2011*
- d. *Activities in Thoroughfares and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law 2016*
- e. *Cemetery Local Law 2016*
- f. *Local Government Property Local Law 2016*
- g. *Pest Plants Local Law 2016*
- h. *Pest Plants Amendment to Local Law 2018*
- i. *Animals, Environment and Nuisance Local Law 2017*
- j. *Animals, Environment and Nuisance Amendment Local Law 2019*
- k. *Dogs Local Law 2017*
- l. *Health Local Law 2016*
- m. *Local Government Property Local Law 2016*

These current local laws of the Shire of Quairading can be accessed via our website.

1.3 Policies of the Local Government

In order to provide guidance for the Officers of the local government, the Council adopts policies that define the structure under which the local government operates.

Policies of the local government are available for public perusal on request at the Shire office and on the Shire website.

2 STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN 2021 – 2031

2.1 Our Vision

“Our Shire is a place of welcome for all, where we work together, with thriving industry creating jobs, a bright future for our young people, and a bustling town in a beautiful and productive rural setting.”

2.2 Strategic Priorities

Council’s Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031 comprises five (5) priorities for our community and is underpinned by actions taken to ensure an effective and sustainable Council.

1. COMMUNITY
1.1 Work collaboratively with local and regional service providers to engage the community as active citizens.
1.2 Provide social and cultural activities for all members of the community.
1.3 Advocate for the provision of quality health services, health facilities and programs in the Shire.
1.4 Support local volunteer organisations through initiatives that reduce volunteer fatigue and strengthen their resilience.
1.5 Support emergency services planning, risk mitigation, response and recovery.
2. ECONOMY
2.1 Promote the Economic and Business Growth Strategy for current businesses and the sustainable attraction of new industry (Small Business Friendly Local Government and Action Plan).
2.2 Build upon our “Take a Closer Look” brand with the development of an internal marketing strategy focusing on our community, events and facilities to increase our permanent and transient population.
2.3 Shire engages stakeholders and partners to help capture local economic development initiatives.
2.4 Encourage local workforce participation.

3. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Safe, efficient and well maintained road and footpath infrastructure.

3.2 Parks, gardens and social spaces are safe and encourage active, engaged and healthy lifestyles.

3.3 Improvements to building infrastructure including our sport and recreation facilities, residential and service delivery facilities following considered cost benefit analysis models and venue management plans.

4. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Maintain a high standard of environmental health services.

4.2 Conservation of our natural environment.

4.3 Demonstrate sustainable practices of water, energy and waste management.

5. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

5.1 Shire communication is consistent, engaging and responsive.

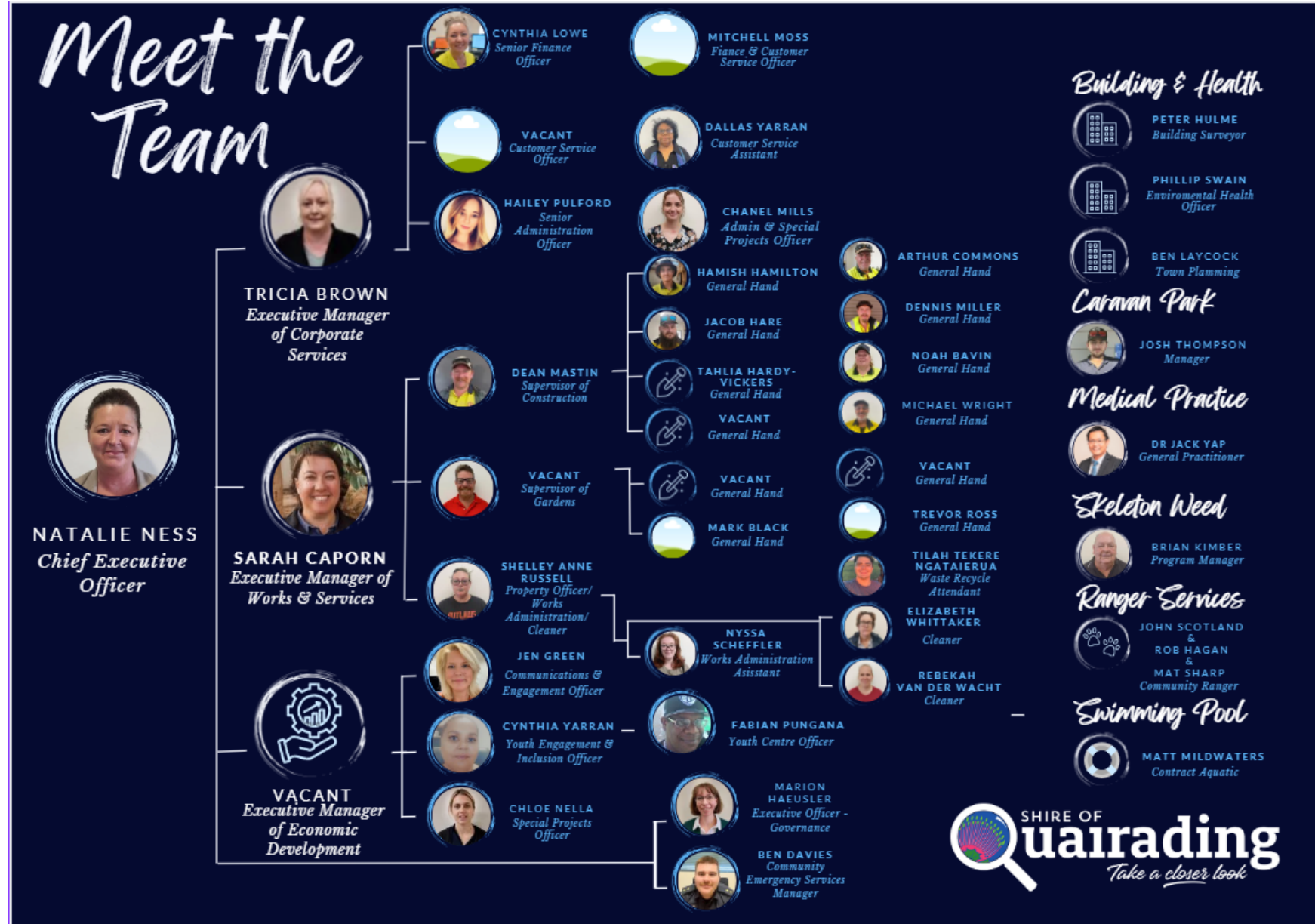
5.2 Forward planning and implementation of plans to determine Strategic Plan and service levels.

5.3 Provide informed and transparent decision-making that, meets our legal obligations, and the needs of our diverse community.

5.4 Implement systems and processes that meet legislative and audit obligations.

3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.1 Organisational Chart



3.2 The Council and Councillors

The policy-making or legislative powers of the Shire rest with the Elected Members of the Council. Council is the governing body of the local government and is made up of seven Elected Members (Councillors). The role of the Council is defined in the *Local Government Act 1995*:

- To direct and control the local government's affairs; and
- To be responsible for the performance of the local government's functions.

Generally, Councillors do not have an authority to act or make decisions as individuals. They are members of an elected body that makes decisions on behalf of the local government through a formal meeting process.

The role of each Councillor is to:

- Represent the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district;
- Provide leadership and guidance to the community in the district;
- Facilitate communication between the community and the Council;
- Participate in the local government's decision-making processes at Council meetings; and
- Perform such other functions as are given to a Councillor by the *Local Government Act 1995* or any other written law.

Your elected Councillors are ratepayers or residents who have volunteered to work for the community and provide an avenue for public participation and input on important decisions that affect the way you live.

Local Government Elections take place every second year on the third Saturday in October, with four and three Councillors retiring at alternate elections. Retiring Council members are eligible for re-election. After each election, Councillors elect a Shire President and Deputy Shire President amongst themselves for the next two-year term.

The Council meets on the fourth Thursday each month except December which is the second Thursday, and January which is when Council is in recess.

More information relating to your Elected Members and schedule of meetings is published on the Shire of Quairading website at www.quairading.wa.gov.au.

3.3 Decision-making Functions

Matters requiring a decision that are brought before Council have an associated recommendation which has been prepared by the responsible Shire Officer who is employed by the Shire of Quairading. The recommendations are generally based on –

- Legislation;
- Legal responsibilities;
- Adopted documents outlining strategic direction, policy etc.; and
- Professional opinions.

Council may modify, reject, or adopt new resolutions after it considers the recommendations of the Officer.

A range of policies have been developed by the Shire that guide and direct actions now and into the future.

For many operational and day-to-day matters, Council has delegated decision-making authority to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). These delegations are reviewed and approved by Council on an annual basis. The CEO may further delegate certain decision-making duties to Shire Officers in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*.

In performing the roles as decision-makers, elected members, the CEO and Shire Officers are required to make decisions that have an impact on the daily lives of the community. These decisions might be about things like economic development, the provision of footpaths, control of animals, refuse collection, cultural events, planning matters, recreation facilities and control of environmental health issues. The Shire strives to achieve a balanced and fair approach to decision-making to protect and develop the amenities of the Shire, preserve heritage, encourage economic growth and provide clarity to residents and businesses in the area.

3.4 Management

The operations of the Shire are managed by the CEO who is supported by an Executive Management Team.

The role of CEO is to act as a conduit between Council and the Administration of the Shire, and to carry ultimate responsibility for the efficient and effective utilisation of the resources available to the Shire. The CEO and staff report to Council at monthly meetings with recommendations that Council can accept, reject, or substitute with an amended resolution.

The Executive Management Team consists of Executive Managers who assist the CEO in managing the Shire's four Core Units.

Office of the CEO Chief Executive Officer	Corporate Services Executive Manager Corporate Services	Community & Economic Development Executive Manager Community Development	Works & Services Executive Manager Works & Services
Economic Development	Rates	Integrated Strategic Planning	Project Management
Governance	Information Technology	Community Development	Construction and Maintenance
Strategy	Customer Services	Economic Development	Parks & Gardens
Corporate Communications	Facilities Management	Project Management	Fleet & Waste Services
Elected Member Support	Asset Management	Youth Development	Works Administration
Special Projects	Financial Management	Corporate Communications	Waste Facility
Human Resources	Town Planning	Event Management	
Public Relations		Tourism	
Statutory & Strategic Planning			
Business & Tourism Services			
Health & Building Services			
Ranger Services			
Emergency Services			

Public Participation

The Shire recognises that the community is an important resource when informing decision-making, and that community input is essential to assist the Shire in choosing a path that caters for the current and future needs and expectations of the community.

3.5 Public Notices & Advertising

The *Local Government Act 1995* and other legislation may require the Shire to provide notice of its intention to take a particular course of action or decision. The Shire may also advertise certain proposed courses of action or decisions in order to provide the community with an opportunity to make submissions. These notices and advertisements generally appear within *The West Australian* or other local newspapers/bulletins within the district. Notices are also placed on the Shire of Quairading website and social media pages.

To facilitate public participation and awareness of Council meetings, the Shire advertises the dates, times and places of meetings that are open to members of the public. The advertisements are placed on Council's website.

3.6 Council Meetings

The participation of the public in Council meetings is achieved through three avenues –

a. Meetings generally open to the public

The *Local Government Act 1995* provides that all Council meetings are to be open to the public. The only exception to this rule is when the Council decides that certain parts of the meeting should be closed to the public (e.g., where the meeting is dealing with the personal affairs of any person). The grounds on which a meeting can be closed to the public are limited by law and are specifically set out in the Act.

b. Public Question Time

The *Local Government Act 1995* and the associated *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* provide for a minimum period of fifteen minutes being set aside at the commencement of any Council meeting to allow the public the opportunity of asking questions and receiving responses.

c. Deputations and Presentations

Public participation in Council meetings can be achieved in a more formalised process which relates to the Shire receiving petitions and/or deputations.

3.7 Council Agendas & Minutes

Agendas

Agendas relating to any Council meetings are made available for public inspection at the Shire office and on Council's website and at the same time that they are issued to members of Council, which is on the Friday prior to the Thursday's Council meeting.

In certain circumstances, members of the public are not entitled to inspect Notice Papers or Agendas which in the CEO's opinion, relate to a meeting or part of a meeting which is likely to be closed to members of the public in accordance with *Section 5.23(2) of the Local Government Act 1995*.

Minutes

Council Meeting Minutes are available for inspection on the Shire Website within 14 business days after the meeting.

Confirmed Council Minutes are available on the Shire's website.

3.8 Current Shire Committees

Council may appoint committees to share in the decision-making workload as well as to utilise expertise effectively. Committees include Council Members, staff from the local government and some committees can also include members of the public.

Management Committees of Council (Not open to the public)

Audit & Risk Committee

Legislative Committees

Bushfire Advisory Committee (BFAC)

Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)

Advisory Groups

Ageing in Place Working Group

Medical Executive Advisory Committee

Quairading District Sport & Recreation Council

Quairading Tourism Working Group

Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee (RAP)

3.9 Annual Elector's Meeting

The *Local Government Act 1995* also obligates the Shire to hold an Annual Meeting of Electors within 56 days of the Shire of Quairading acceptance of the Annual Report for the previous financial year.

The Annual Electors' Meeting provides Electors with an opportunity to discuss the contents of the Annual Report and then any other general business as permitted by the Presiding Member. The meeting is ordinarily held in February of each year, and the Annual Electors Meeting is published in the Banksia Bulletin, Passion Sheet and on the Shire website and social media pages.

3.10 Other Avenues for Public Participation

There are a number of other ways to contribute, including –

a. Community consultation

The community may be asked to comment and have their say on particular issues. Some of these are statutory consultation requirements such as local laws review, strategic community plan consultation, development approvals etc. There are also many occasions where community consultation is not required, but sought in order to obtain a wide consensus of opinion and could include matters such as recreation facilities, future planning etc. Community consultation is in accordance with Councils Community Engagement Policy and Community Engagement Action Plan.

b. Petitions

A petition is where there is a formal written request, signed by members of the community, appealing to the Council in respect to a particular issue. The subject of the petition must be something that the Council has the authority to deal with, or on which the Council has a decision-making role.

c. Written requests

A member of the public can write to the Shire on any policy, activity or service of the Shire. A response will be provided in accordance with the Shire Customer Service Charter and Communication Policy.

4 Publications

Where the Shire is required or has decided to make certain documents available to the public, then those documents will be available in their most recent format at the Shire of Quairading Website <http://www.quairading.wa.gov.au>.

Please contact the Shire on 9645 2400 if you require an alternative arrangement with regards to published documents.

4.1 Publications Available

Document Description	Inspection Only	Website	Purchase
Agendas & Confirmed Minutes (excluding sections closed to the public)		✓	
Unconfirmed Minutes		✓	
Annual Budgets		✓	
Annual Reports		✓	
Code of Conduct		✓	
Corporate Business Plan		✓	
Council Policies		✓	
Local Planning Scheme No.3		✓	
Disability Access and Inclusion Plan		✓	
Reconciliation Action Plan		✓	
Fees and Charges		✓	
Freedom of Information Statement		✓	
Local Laws		✓	
News & Events – Media Released		✓	
Register – Tender		✓	
Register of Financial Interest		✓	
Registers – Gifts & Travel		✓	
Strategic Community Plan		✓	
Electoral Roll			✓

Requests for information of a general nature may be made in writing to the CEO.

Requests for information that is not otherwise listed as available in this statement will be considered in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

Documents which may be available under FOI provisions

The *Freedom of Information Act 1992* gives the general public a right to access documents held by the Shire of Quairading subject to limitations listed below.

The access provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* do not apply to documents that:

- a. Are available for purchase by the public or free distribution to the public;
- b. Are available of inspection under Part 5 of the *FOI Act* (i.e. information statements and internal manuals) or under another enactment.
- c. Can be inspected in the State archives.
- d. Are publicly available library material held by agencies for reference purposes.
- e. Are made or acquired by an art gallery, museum or library and preserved for public reference or exhibition purposes

The Shire holds its general documents in an electronic format. Nearly all current accounting records excluding creditor invoices, are held on staff computers and are backed up on a daily basis.

The *Freedom of Information Act 1992* also provides that certain documents or information is exempt. The exemptions in the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* protect some documents from disclosure because their release would have an adverse effect on the private and business interests of individuals or would hinder the proper functioning of government.

Sometimes access to only part of a document will be provided if it contains information considered to be exempt.

4.2 Personal information

An application can be made to the Executive Manager Corporate Services (EMCS) or the CEO to correct or amend any documents containing an individual's personal information.

The application must be in writing, providing details and if necessary, documentation to support claims that the information the applicant seeks to have amended is inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date, or misleading.

The Shire will inform the applicant of its decision and the reasons and will advise the applicant of the right of review should they be dissatisfied with the Shire's decision.

No fees or charges apply for personal information or amendment of personal information about yourself.

4.3 Reasons for Refusal of Access

The most frequent reasons for refusal to provide access to information are:

a. Personal Information

Information that would reveal personal information about an individual (e.g., their name, contact details, signature etc.) may be exempt under Schedule 1 Clause 3 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

The Glossary, Schedule 2 of the *FOI Act* states that:

“Personal information means information or an opinion, whether true or not, and whether recorded on a material form or not, about an individual, whether living or dead –

- whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion;
or

- who can be identified by reference to an identification number or other identifying particular such as a fingerprint, retina print or body sample.”

b. Commercial Information

Information that would reveal trade secrets, information of a commercial value (e.g., documents containing technical designs that, if released, would harm the company) or the financial affairs of a person (e.g., debts owed to the Shire) may be exempt under Schedule 1 Clause 4 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

c. Deliberative Process

Information that would reveal a decision made during a deliberative process closed to the public (e.g., confidential Council Meeting) may be exempt under Schedule 1 Clause 6 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

d. Legal Professional Privilege

Information that would reveal legal advice may be exempt under Schedule 1 Clause 7 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

5 FOI PROCESSES

5.1 Freedom of Information Applications

It is the aim of the Shire to make information available promptly and at the least possible cost and whenever possible documents will be provided outside the Freedom of Information process.

If information is not routinely available, the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* provides the right to apply for documents held by the Shire and to enable the public to ensure that personal information in documents is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.

Access applications have to:

- Be in writing;
- Give sufficient information so that the required documents can be easily identified;
- Provide an Australian address to which any notices can be sent; and
- Be lodged at the Shire of Quairading's Administration Centre with the appropriate application fee.

Application and enquiries should be addressed to Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer by using the following: -

By telephone: (08) 9645 2400;

By post: Att: FOI Officer

PO Box 38

QUAIRADING WA 6383

By email: shire@quairading.wa.gov.au

or in person at 10 Jennaberring Road

QUAIRADING WA 6383.

5.2 Notice of Decision

Applicants will be given a written "Notice of Decision" within 45 days by the decision-maker, of the Shire of Quairading.

As soon as possible but in any case, within 45 days you will be provided with a notice of decision which will include details such as:

- The date which the decision was made;
- The name and the designation of the Officer who made the decision;
- If the document is an exempt document the reasons for classifying the matter exempt; or the fact that access is given to an edited document; and
- Information on the right to review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

5.3 Fees & Charges

A scale of fees and charges is set under the *Freedom of Information Regulations 1993*. Apart from the application fee for non-personal information, all charges are discretionary, meaning that it is left to the Shire's discretion whether a charge will apply or not. Straightforward applications usually incur only the application fee. The charges are as follows:

Application Fee non-personal information	\$30.00
Charge for time dealing with the application (per hour or pro rata)	\$30.00
Archive research of Council records (per half hour or pro rata)	\$30.00
Access time supervised by staff (per hour or pro rata)	\$30.00
Charge for photocopying - staff time (per hour or pro rata)	\$30.00
Charge for photocopying - per copy	\$0.20
Charge for transcribing from tape, film or computer (per hour or pro rata)	\$30.00
Charge for duplicating a tape, file or computer information	At Cost
Charge for delivery, packaging and postage	At Cost
Deposits	
Advanced deposit may be required of the estimated charges	25%
Further advance deposit may be required to meet the charges for dealing with the application	75%

*As per Freedom of Information Regulations 1993 Schedule 1 on 27 Jul 2019

An estimate of charges will be provided if the cost is expected to exceed \$25.00.

5.4 Access Arrangements

Access to documents can be granted by way of inspection, a copy of a document, a copy of an audio or video tape, a computer disk, a transcript of a recorded, shorthand or encoded document from which words can be reproduced.

5.5 Appeals for review

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision of the Shire Freedom of Information Officer are entitled to ask for an internal review by the Shire of Quairading. Application should be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of decision. You should be notified of the outcome of the review within 15 days.

Internal Review by the Shire

If you are not satisfied with this decision, you have the right to apply for an internal review.

An application for internal review must be lodged with this agency within 30 days after being given this notice of decision, and must be:

- In writing;
- Provide particulars of the decision to be reviewed; and
- Provide an address in Australia.

The Shire is required to provide you with a notice of its internal review decision within 15 days of you lodging your application for review.

There is no lodgement fee for an application for internal review and there are no charges for dealing with an internal review request.

External Review by the Information Commissioner

If you are not satisfied with a decision, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner seeking external review of the decision. You are required to lodge your complaint with the Office of the Information Commissioner's within 60 days of receiving notice.

A complaint to the Information Commissioner must:

- Be in writing;
- Have attached a copy of this decision; and
- Give an address in Australia.

There is no charge for lodging a complaint with the Office of the Information Commissioner.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at the following: -

The Office of the Information Commissioner

Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
PERTH WA 6000

Telephone: (08) 6551 7888

Free call (WA country landline callers only) 1800 621 244

Fax: (08) 6551-7889

Email: info@foi.wa.gov.au

Website: <https://www.oic.wa.gov.au/en-au/>