

Councillor Correspondence

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1. Purpose

The objective of this policy is to ensure that Councillor correspondence is managed appropriately in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Public Records Act 1973* and Council's information management systems.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillor correspondence including Australia Post mail, emails and mail delivered over the counter to reception at either the Tallangatta or Corryong Offices.

3. Objectives

Council regularly receives correspondence from the community, third parties and government entities, which may be at times addressed to Councillors. This policy identifies the process in which correspondence is consistently handled to ensure the privacy and protection of both the Councillors and the senders of correspondence.

4. Policy Details

4.1. General Correspondence

All correspondence addressed to Councillors (including the Mayor), is forwarded unopened to the Executive Assistant to the CEO. Mail, which is identifiable as personal, private or confidential is left sealed and handled in accordance with the section 4.2 of the policy. All other mail will be opened and:

- If upon opening the mail it is found to be personal, private or confidential, the item will be resealed and handled in accordance with the guidelines for such mail as outlined in the following section. It shall be noted on the envelope that the item has been inadvertently opened.
- Mail addressed to the Mayor is forwarded to the CEO. The CEO will forward the correspondence (as appropriate) and discuss with the Mayor (with the exception of invitations to events which the Executive Assistant to the CEO will discuss with the Mayor).
- A copy of mail addressed specifically to Councillors is referred to the Responsible Officer for a response to be prepared. Once finalised, a copy of the response together with the original correspondence is provided to all Councillors (including the Mayor).
- The original correspondence is forwarded by the Executive Assistant to the CEO for recording in Council's information management systems.

Correspondence that is not required to be recorded in Council's information management systems is to be circulated by the Executive Assistant to the CEO to Councillors via their trays located at the Tallangatta office.

The Executive Assistant to the CEO will dispose of any unsolicited advertising material mail accordingly.

4.2. Personal, Private and Confidential Correspondence

Any personal, private or confidential correspondence addressed to Councillors (including the Mayor) is to be delivered to the Executive Assistant to the CEO unopened **and the envelope date stamped**.

The Executive Assistant to the CEO will contact the Councillor to whom the correspondence is addressed to advise that the correspondence has been received. The Councillor will arrange with the Executive Assistant to the CEO a suitable time for visiting the office to open the correspondence.

The Executive Assistant to the CEO will arrange for the envelope to be retained unopened in a secure confidential file until the Councillor is able to visit the office to open the correspondence.

Once the Councillor has opened and read the correspondence the Councillor will determine whether a copy of the correspondence is to be recorded in Council's information management systems. If the correspondence is to be recorded in Council's information management systems the Councillor is to advise the Executive Assistant to the CEO who will arrange for this to take place.

The Executive Assistant to the CEO will maintain a register which records the date the personal, private or confidential correspondence is received, the Councillor to whom it is addressed, any specific details that might identify the envelope (eg. Organisation name/sender), the date the Councillor was notified of the receipt of the correspondence, the date the Councillor opened the correspondence and the action taken upon opening the correspondence (for example Datascape reference number, details of response sent).

During periods when the Executive Assistant to the CEO is not available the Executive Assistant to the CEO's functions in relation to Councillor Correspondence will be carried out by the Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

5. Responsibilities

Responsibility	Role/Position
Councillors will abide by the processes within the policy when receiving correspondence in their capacity as a Councillor.	Councillors
The Chief Executive Officer will assist Councillors with implementing this policy through guidance and advice, as well as action Mayor correspondence as per section 4.1 of the policy.	Chief Executive Officer
The Executive Assistant to the CEO will follow processes as per sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the policy.	Executive Assistant to the CEO
The Director Corporate and Organisational Development act as the contingency for follow processes as per section 4.1 and 4.1 of the policy, in the absence of the Executive Assistant to the CEO.	Director Corporate and Organisational Development
The Customer Service team will follow the process of the initial receipt of correspondence addressed to Councillors as per section 4.1 and 4.2 of the policy.	Customer Service Team

6. Deployment

The Executive Assistant to the CEO is responsible for ensuring this policy is deployed as written.

7. Human Rights Charter Compatibility

The policy gives regard to relevant legislation, principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, community values and Council's resource capacity. It is considered that this policy supports the rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006).

8. Relevant Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant legislative requirements and Council policies.

Relevant legislation includes:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Public Records Act 1973*

Relevant Council policies includes:

- *Councillor Gift Policy*

9. Results

The deployment of this policy and the results achieved will be reviewed annually.



Authorised by: _____
Juliana Phelps
 Chief Executive Officer