

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

Corporate
GOVERNANCE



February 2005

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Governance is about being informative about what Council does and how it does it. Council needs to achieve required results, be accountable for its performance, needs to function effectively and in doing so needs to be transparent with its customers both external and internal.

Good governance means that the structures, activities, and operations of the organisation are conducted in accordance with the principles of legal compliance, probity, transparency, accountability, and respect for people within the organisation and for other stakeholders. Sound ethical principles such as honesty, fairness and respect should be followed at all times.

Council has in place strategies, codes and policies that exhibit these principles and this manual brings those components together to be used as a reference tool for those wishing to examine our openness more fully.

Allan Burgess
GENERAL MANAGER

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Corporate Strategic Plan was originally developed in 2001 following extensive consultation with both external and internal stakeholders. An external consultant facilitated the consultation. The Plan was revised during 2004 with the draft being placed on public exhibition and submissions invited.

The adopted Corporate Strategic Plan encompasses seven (7) goals:-

- To facilitate Sustainable Economic Development in the Shire
- To build civic pride and foster effective social and community relations
- To ensure that Kempsey town is a viable and vibrant economic hub
- To adequately plan and fund the Shires infrastructure needs
- To position Kempsey Shire in the region to actively participate in regional activities
- To position Kempsey Shire to reap the benefits of its attributes
- To provide value for money services in the Kempsey Shire

These goals are supported by measures, performance indicators and strategies. The performance indicators are measured through community surveys and the collection of data.

Copies of the Corporate Strategic Plan are available from the Civic Centre or on Council's web site www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

VISION STATEMENT

Council's Vision is:-

"That beauty of the natural environment and the country and coastal lifestyles are both preserved and enhanced by an economy of high productivity and employment".

VALUES

Everyone has individual values that they believe in; the principles that they aspire to and live their lives by. Organisations also have values, but often they are not expressed clearly or shared with their customers.

In May 2004, Council adopted a set of five values that form the basis of all dealings with our customers. They determine how Council operates, and help us, as an organization, to become results driven. Also, they provide councillor, management and staff with a shared vision that binds us together as a group, rather than as individuals. Our Values are:-

Trust

We earn trust by being honest, respecting differences and by encouraging open communication

Co-operation

We achieve the best for our community through effective teamwork

Service

We value our community by providing quality professional service to all

Innovation

We encourage creative and visionary thinking to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Pride

We take pride in Kempsey Shire Council's contribution to our community

It is through these shared Values that we will be able to improve our service to you.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Council's Code of Conduct is set out in Policy **C24.8**

Kempsey Shire Council is committed to maintaining a reputation for fair dealing and high standards of ethical behaviour.

The Code of Conduct applies equally to everyone – Councillors, staff and delegates on committees of Council. The Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour that are important if we are to pursue a reputation of always acting in the best interests of our Community.

Our community is entitled to expect that the business of Council will be conducted with efficiency, impartiality and integrity and that our duty to the public will always have absolute priority over our private interests.

Our Code of Conduct reflects our determination to attract the highest level of confidence from our community.

The Code of Conduct outlines procedures and responsibilities in respect of:-

- Staff
- Councillors
- Business Ethics
- Conflicts of Interest
- Use of information
- The receipt of gifts and benefits
- Use of Council resources and equipment
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Equitable treatment
- Discrimination and harassment
- Outside employment or business by staff
- Public comment about Council matters

- Interaction between Councillors and Council staff
- Councillor access to Council buildings
- Corruption, misadministration, serious and substantial wastage
- Improper and undue influence
- Breaches of the Code
- Councillor misbehaviour
- Role of the General Manager in relation to the Code of Conduct
- Role of the Mayor in relation to the Code of Conduct

Additional policies that form part of Council's Code of Conduct are:-

- Statement of Business Ethics – Policy 24.18
- Staff - Provision of Mobile Phone – Policy 7.33
- Staff – Use of Email – Policy 7.38
- Staff – Use of the Internet – Policy 7.39
- Staff – Private use of Council Equipment – Policy 7.70
- Councillors and Staff – Interaction and Provision of Information to – Policy 24.1
- Internal reporting of Corruption, Misadministration and Serious and Substantial waste – Policy 24.5
- Gifts and Benefits – Policy 24.7
- Conflict of Interest – Policy 24.9
- Reporting Breaches of the Council Code of Conduct – Policy 24.10
- Sponsorship – Policy 24.11
- Anti Harassment and Anti Bullying – Policy 7.59
- Fair Treatment – Policy 7.60

All of the policies relating to the Code of Conduct can be inspected at the Civic Centre or viewed on Council web site www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

CLARITY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN ELECTED MEMBERS AND STAFF

Based on the provisions in the Local Government Act, Councillors and staff have distinctly different roles to play in Council.

The Council is responsible for the strategic direction, for determining the policy framework of Council, for monitoring management's performance and for monitoring financial performance and reporting. The Council also has a statutory role as the consent authority, under both the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Local Government Act, for applications for development consent and local approvals.

The General Manager, with the senior officers of Council, is responsible for the effective management of the organisation, for the carrying out of Council's policies and strategic objectives and for ensuring Council is provided with accurate and clear information in a timely manner to promote effective decision making.

However, the distinction between these two roles may be unclear. There often needs to be personal interaction between Councillors and senior officers, particularly regarding access to

and provision of information, to effectively integrate policy making and service delivery. This has created the need for guidelines that help Councillors and staff to understand fully their respective roles and how they should operate, in order to perform their job effectively.

Formalising procedures to specify how these rights should be exercised should be done without trying to restrict a Councillor's legal right to access staff and information. It is not intended to limit any statutory and common law rights Councillors have to access information. However, Councillors should avoid any perceptions of wrongdoing when exercising their rights as an elected representative, particularly the appearance of trying to improperly influence staff.

Council only employs the General Manager and it is the performance of the General Manager that it monitors. All other staff are employed by the General Manager and it is his responsibility to monitor their performance. Council cannot direct any staff member other than the General Manager.

The interaction and provision of information to Councillors and staff is covered by Policy 24.1 This policy is available at the Civic Centre or on Council's website www.Kempsey.nsw.gov.au and covers:-

- Inappropriate interactions
- Statutory Provision for Councillors and staff
- Operating Relationship Between the Mayor and the General Manager
- Interaction Between Councillors and Council staff
- Access to Council Records by Councillors
- Access to Council Offices
- Media Policy
- Breaches of the Policy
- Implementation Plan

DECISION MAKING AND MANAGEMENT

Kempsey Shire Council comprises nine (9) Councillors who are popularly elected for a four (4) year term. The Councillors are the governing body of the corporation and they have the responsibility of directing and controlling the affairs for the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

The Mayor is elected by the Councillors for a twelve (12) month term and;

- Exercises in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the Council between meetings of the Council (for example, urgent demolition order, authority to financially assist the community by the allocation of resources during natural disasters, commencement of urgent legal action);
- Exercises such other functions of the Council as the Council determines (for example, determining the appropriateness of holding a special event such as a fun run, approval of the General Manger's annual leave);
- Presides at meetings of the Council; and
- Carries out the civic and ceremonial functions of the Mayoral office;

Decisions of Council are made by resolution at a Council meeting. Ordinary meetings of Council are held on the second Tuesday of each month and commence at 9.00am. Committee meetings are also held. Committees can be comprised entirely of Councillors or can comprise a mix of Councillors, staff and members of the public. Where Committees have delegated authority their decisions are final and they do not have to come to Council for confirmation. Where committees do not have delegated authority they make recommendations to Council or the appropriate director.

Public notice is given of Council meetings and of Committee meetings where all members of the Committee are Councillors. Members of the public are invited to be in attendance except during discussion of confidential items as defined under Section 10A of the Local Government Act 1993.

The conduct of meetings is governed by Council's Code of Meeting Practice which can be viewed on our website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au The Code incorporates provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the Local Government (meetings) Regulation 1999 and Council Policy. Members of the public can receive permission to address Councillors at the Ordinary meeting of Council on an item that is on the agenda for that meeting.

A Councillor or a member of a Council Committee who has a pecuniary interest in any matter with which the Council is concerned and who is present at a meeting of the Council or committee at which the matter is being considered must disclose the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable. The Councillor or the member of a Council Committee must also disclose the nature of that interest and not take part in discussion of the matter and must leave the meeting room and not vote on any question relating to the matter.

The Council meeting agenda business is generated through Mayoral Minutes, reports from Councillors (where they have been a delegate on behalf of Council), notices of motion submitted by Councillors and staff reports.

Councillors represent all constituents of the Shire and are available by appointment to discuss issues or can be contacted by telephone as listed below.

MAYOR

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Clr Janet Hayes | Phone/Fax | 65623531 |
| | Mobile | 0418289151 |

DEPUTY MAYOR

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Clr Brian Sowter | Phone/Fax | 65625122 |
| Clr John Bowell | Phone | 65625122 |
| | Fax | 65623670 |
| | Mobile | 0438625122 |
| Clr Betty Green | Phone | 65628938 |
| | Mobile | 0427419302 |
| Clr Jim Gribbin | Phone | 65666907 |
| Clr Terry Hunt | Phone | 65617157 |

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Fax | 65617211 |
| Clr Bob McWilliam | Phone/Fax Mobile | 65665465 0402134040 |
| Clr Dean Saul | Phone Fax Mobile | 65674682 65674032 0419639943 |
| Clr Ellis Walker | Phone Fax Mobile | 65622119 65624110 040233005 |

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

A Councillor and a designated person must prepare and submit written returns of interests in accordance with Section 449 of the Local Government Act 1993 and must disclose pecuniary interests in accordance with Section 451 of the Act.

A designated person is:-

- The General Manager
- Other senior staff of the Council
- A person (other than a member of the senior staff of the Council) who is a member of staff of the Council or a delegate of the Council and who holds a position identified by the Council as the position of a designated person because it involves the exercise of functions under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act (such as regulatory functions or contractual functions) that, in their exercise, could give rise to a conflict between the person's duty as a member of staff or delegate and the person's private interest
- A person (other than a member of the senior staff of the Council) who is a member of a committee of the Council identified by the Council as a committee whose members are designated persons because the functions of the committee involve the exercise of the Council's functions under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act (such as regulatory functions or contractual functions) that, in their exercise, could give rise to a conflict between the member's duty as a member of the committee and the member's private interest.

The Return requires information relating to:-

- ✓ Interests in Real Property
- ✓ Sources of Income
- ✓ Gifts Received
- ✓ Contributions made to Travel
- ✓ Interests and Positions in Corporations
- ✓ Positions in Trade Unions and Professional or Business Associations
- ✓ Debts
- ✓ Dispositions of Property

The General Manager must keep a Register of Returns, lodged under Section 449 and table them at a Council meeting in accordance with Section 450A of the Local Government Act 1993. The Register is open to public inspection. The staff positions that are designated person positions are outline in Policy 14.3.

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES AND PROVISION OF FACILITIES TO COUNCILLORS

Policy 24.4 sets out the facilities provided to Councillors to enable them to discharge the functions of their Civic office.

Councillors are required to attend meetings of Council and its committees, to represent Council at public functions, to attend training and professional development sessions and to attend conferences that relate to the business of Council. These meetings are not only held in Kempsey Shire but are often held in Sydney or in regional New South Wales. The attendance at meetings can involve expenses relating to travel, accommodation and sustenance. Under these circumstances Council pays these expenses up to the limits outlined in the Policy.

Council provides the Mayor with a vehicle and mobile phone and each Councillor is provided with a fax, a telephone answering machine and computer facilities. Telephone expenses are also paid to each Councillor and Councillors are provided with a corporate wardrobe.

Each Councillor receives an allowance within a range set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. The Mayor receives a Mayoral Allowance within a range set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Council's management structure must be re-determined by the Council within 12 months after any Ordinary Election of the Council. In essence the organization structure is constantly reviewed to ensure that it meets the expectations of the community.

A new structure was adopted by Council during 2004 and commenced operation from the 6 December. The new structure is designed to increase service levels to customers. The number of departments have been reduced from four (4) to three (3) – Corporate Services, Shire Services and Sustainable Development Services. These departments are aligned to internal services, services to our residents and regulatory, economic and environmental services.

A "Customer First Centre" is to be established. Once constructed customers will need to contact or visit only the one area at the Civic Centre and our multi-skilled staff, who will be trained in all aspects of Council's operations, will be able to handle your enquiries and/or discuss your applications. Building alterations and staff selection and training are scheduled to be completed in the latter half of 2005.

The services provided and managed by each of the departments are displayed on the [following page](#).

COMMUNICATION

Council has a Communications and Public Relations Strategy that is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. A copy of the Strategy can be obtained on Council's web site at www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

The Communications and Public Relations Strategy aims to:-

1. Create a positive and professional image for Kempsey Shire Council
2. Develop clearly defined roles for Councillors, Management and staff relating to corporate image, communication and public relations
3. Clarify Directorate responsibilities relating to corporate image, communication and public relations within Kempsey Shire Council
4. Improve the level of internal and external communication within Kempsey Shire Council
5. Provide guidelines to ensure consistency in Council's activities and communication with all stakeholders
6. Clarify the need to consult with the community and identify opportunities and methods for effective consultation and public participation
7. Set in place a system to gain feedback from the community it serves
8. Develop a strong customer service focus within Kempsey Shire Council
9. Provide comprehensive information on Kempsey Shire Council and the role of Local Government to schools and educational facilities within the Shire
10. Develop a strong and co-operative relationship with local and regional media and enhance management and staff's media skills
11. Reinforce the Issues Management procedure for Kempsey Shire Council.

Council communicates with its customers through media releases, mayoral column, newsletters, web page or email, by conducting questionnaires, public meetings, mail outs, by inviting the public to make submissions, letterbox drops, displays, radio, by forming focus groups and through the publication of the Management Plan and Annual Report. Residents also have the opportunity to address Council on issues on the Ordinary Council meeting business paper.

We communicate with our staff by distributing the minutes of Management meetings, Council meetings, and Joint Safety and Consultative Committee meetings. Team meetings are held on a monthly basis. Information is also distributed to staff rooms, by attaching notices to pay slips and through email. A staff newsletter, Inbiz is distributed to all staff on a monthly basis and the development of the Intranet has provided staff with access to data, policies, award information, procedures, plans and strategies.

DELEGATIONS

Due to time constraints it is impossible for Council or the General Manager to be able to perform all of the functions allotted to them under The Local Government Act 1993. It is necessary to delegate functions to ensure the orderly and efficient operation of the Council.

A Council may, by resolution, delegate to the General Manager or any other person or body (not including another employee of the Council) any of the functions of the Council other

than those outlined in Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993. The General Manager may delegate any of the functions of the General Manager other than the power of delegation.

The General Manager's delegations are by exception, that is Policy 24.2 (General Manager Delegation of Authority) delegates to the General Manager, all the functions of the Local Government Act 1993 other than those listed in the Policy as exclusions. The General Manager has delegated many of his functions to other staff.

The Council has delegated certain Council functions to the Mayor under Policy 24.3 and delegates to committees the power to make decisions on behalf of Council.

Delegations are reviewed by Council during the first twelve (12) months of each term of office.

ACCOUNTABILITY – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Council's Corporate Strategic Plan covers a five (5) year period. Within that plan there are a number of strategies to be developed, each with their own measures and performance indicators. Council determines whether these measures are being achieved through the collection of data or through a survey questionnaire. Council's Annual Survey is conducted by a professional survey company and participants to the survey are selected at random. Many of the questions posed to participants relate to the performance indicators in the Corporate Strategic Plan. The General Manager reports the results to Council on an annual basis. The achievement/non-achievement of all of the Corporate Plan measures are addressed over the five (5) year period.

Council is responsible for assessing the performance of the General Manager. Each year the General Manager and Council agree on the outcomes to be achieved. Outputs to deliver those outcomes are prepared with performance measures. Council appoints a General Manager's Performance Review Committee comprising entirely of Councillors and this meets with the General Manager on a quarterly basis. A report on the results of those meetings is presented to Council. The annual performance appraisal of the General Manager is conducted by the full Council. This appraisal is facilitated by an external consultant mutually agreed to by Council and the General Manager.

Each year Council prepares a Management Plan. In respect of each of the principal activities of Councils operations, objectives, strategies and performance measures are developed. The General Manager reports to Council at the end of each quarter as to the extent to which the performance targets set by the Councils current Management Plan have been achieved during the quarter.

The General Manager requires all managers to develop outputs and performance measures in respect of their areas of operation. These outputs include the outputs in the Management Plan as well as outputs relating to their work programs. The Directors report on the progress of the attainment of these outputs to the General Manager on a monthly basis.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Council has a five (5) year financial plan that is reviewed on an annual basis. An annual budget is prepared and adopted by Council each year. The budget detailed estimate of income and expenditure is included in the Draft Management Plan together with details of:-

- Each charge proposed to be levied
- Types of fees proposed to be levied
- Proposed pricing methodology
- Proposed borrowings
- Each ordinary rate and each special rate proposed to be levied

The Management Plan is placed on public exhibition for at least twenty-eight (28) days and the public is invited to make submissions.

At the end of each quarter a budget review statement is prepared and submitted to Council that shows by reference to the estimate of income and expenditure, set out in the Management Plan, that the Council has adopted for the relevant year, a revised estimate of the income and expenditure for that year.

The budget review statement includes or is accompanied by:-

- a) A report as to whether the statement indicates that the financial position of the Council is satisfactory having regard to the original estimate of income and expenditure and;
- b) If that position is unsatisfactory, recommendations for remedial action

Each month Council receives a report on the Statement of Investments and a Statement of Bank Balances and each staff report submitted to a Council meeting outlines the financial implication if the recommendation is adopted by Council.

Council's accounts are externally audited and a report submitted to the Mayor. The external auditor attends a Council meeting at the conclusion of the audit and makes a presentation to Councillors on the financial health of the Council.

The Directors each month report to the General Manger on the progress of their programs and outline any variations or likely variations to the budgeted votes and any variations to scheduled completion times of capital works. This information is also reported to Council on a monthly basis.

An internal audit program has been introduced where each year processes are randomly selected and checked and recommendations made for improvement.

ANNUAL REPORT

Council prepares, within 5 months after the end of each year, a report as to its achievements with respect to the objectives and performance targets set out in its Management Plan for that year.

The information that must be included in the Annual Report is outlined in Section 428 of the Local Government Act 1993. In addition Kempsey Shire Council's report contains a Mayoral Message an Overview of the year by the General Manager and details of major achievements. The Annual Report can be viewed on Council's Web Site at www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

MANAGEMENT PLAN

During each year Council must prepare a draft Management Plan with respect to:-

- a) The Council's activities for at least the next three (3) years and;
- b) The Council's revenue policy for the next year

Council's Management Plan contains the following details:-

- A Profile of Kempsey Shire
- General Manager's Overview
- Corporate Strategic Plan
- Organisation Structure
- Management Planning Framework
- Issues of Concern
- Principal Activities
 - Community Services
 - Transportation Infrastructure
 - Land Use, Planning and Development
 - Macleay Water
 - Waste Services
 - Economic Development and Area Employment Issues
 - Business Activities
 - Recreation
 - Corporate Services
 - Governance

- Activities of a Business or Commercial Nature
- Financial Statements
- Summary of Estimates of Income and Expenditure
- 3 Year Financial Projections
- Environmental Activities
- Human Resources Activities
- Access and Equity Activities
- Rates and Charges
 - Land Categories
 - Ordinary Rates 2004/05
 - Water Charges
 - Sewerage Charges
 - Domestic Waste Management Services Charge

- Fees, Section 94 and Section 64 Contributions and Private Works
- Statement of Proposed Borrowings

➤ Submission Procedure

The Management Plan contains:-

- A statement of the objectives and performance targets for each principal activity
- A statement of the means by which the Council proposes to achieve these targets
- A statement of the manner in which the Council proposes to assess its performance in respect of each of its principal activities

Full details of the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 in respect of management plans are contained in Section 403.

Council places its Draft Management Plan on public exhibition for at least twenty-eight (28) days and invites submissions each year. The plan is not adopted until after consideration of any submissions.

At the end of each quarter the General Manager reports to Council as to the extent to which the performance targets set by the Management Plan have been achieved during the quarter.

A copy of the Management Plan can be found on Councils website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The State of the Environment Report for the year ending after each election of the Councillors must be a comprehensive State of the Environment Report. For each of the other years between Council elections the State of the Environment Report can be a supplementary report. A comprehensive report was prepared by Council in 2004.

The aim of the State of the Environment Report is to compare the present day environment in Kempsey Shire with that of previous years as a measure of Council and the community's progress in moving towards ecological sustainability. In doing so it will serve as a management tool for achieving sustainable outcomes for Kempsey Shire.

The objectives of the 2004 State of the Environment Report are summarized as follows:

- To provide a snapshot of the state of the environment in the Kempsey Shire Council LGA to enable monitoring of Council and the community's performance in moving towards sustainability.
- To provide usable information and data to enable more effective environmental decision-making across all departments of Council.
- To identify future reporting requirements with regard to data and information collection to establish appropriate environmental indicators.

- To identify priority environmental issues within the Shire that will enable environmental management and spending to be focused toward where it is most needed.
- To reflect community views as presented through a community consultation process.
- To observe and quantify changes in the state of the environment to allow Council to put in place appropriate responses, or to gauge the success of those responses already enacted.
- To provide open and transparent accountability of Council's operations and environmental performance.

Kempsey Shire Council, through the ESD Policy and Agenda 21 process, aims to demonstrate leadership and initiative in working toward a sustainable future for the Shire. This is to be achieved through consideration for the environmental, social and economic costs and/or benefits in decision-making and in strategy development.

The requirements for a State of the Environment Report are contained in the Local Government (General) Regulation 1999 paragraphs 17545 – 17585. A copy of Council's State of the Environment Report is available on Council's website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au.

RISK MANAGEMENT

We are continually endeavoring to minimise, and where possible eliminate, Council's risk exposure in the injury, non-injury and public liability areas.

All employees are risk managers and they are trained to report damage as a pro-active measure to minimise the possibility of claims. Council is committed to protecting, as well as possible, the health of the public utilising its facilities and infrastructure.

Council has a Staff Safety Committee that meets on a monthly basis and investigates safety issues in the workforce. The committee makes recommendations direct to the General Manager. A greater part of Council's training budget is utilised in training staff on the safe use of machinery, vehicles and on safe work procedures. Council employs a Safety Officer who has introduced new work methods and ensures their continued implementation and compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Each month the Executive Management Team, made up of the General Manager, Directors and the Human Resources Manager review safety statistics and the results of internal benchmarking of frequency rates, lost time injuries, lost time days and cumulative workers compensation claims.

ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

Section 12 of the Local Government Act 1993 outlines the documents that Council must make available for inspection. Council will allow documents to be taken away in certain circumstances to allow a person to photocopy the document. If Council is required to photocopy a document a photocopying charge in accordance with our Fees and Charges is payable by the applicant in accordance with Section 12B of the Act.

Members of the public can access information through the Freedom of Information Act. In respect of a FOI application Council charges the maximum fee prescribed by the legislation.

Council endeavors to assist persons seeking information under FOI by providing informal access to certain documents rather than requiring formal FOI applications.

In accordance with Section 33 of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, Council has adopted a Privacy Management Plan. Council's actions are also governed by the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government.

Council has appointed a Privacy Contact Officer who has been delegated authority to handle enquiries from the public and to conduct training and mentoring of staff within Council on the Act.

At regular intervals Council places notices in the local newspapers entitled "Privacy – Your Council and You", to provide information on the Act and how it affects members of the public and the way Council handles personal information it has about them.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Members of the public can make complaints by contacting Council personally, by telephone, faxing or emailing us or by writing to the General Manager.

Council strives to provide its services efficiently and effectively to minimise any causes for complaints. Kempsey Shire Council recognises that any complaints received provide the organisation with an opportunity to identify and resolve issues of concern raised by members of the community.

If a complaint is received procedures are in place to ensure that the complaint is managed so that a proper outcome is achieved within a minimum of time.

Council will ensure that every complaint is:-

- Received courteously
- Investigated fully
- Acted upon quickly and appropriately
- Processed according to consistent standards for privacy, timeliness, fairness, natural justice, cultural diversity, special circumstances and accessibility to all

Council will endeavour to prevent similar complaints from re-occurring in the future and will seek to re-establish positive relationships wherever possible.