

AGENCY INFORMATION GUIDE

Access to information
under the GIPA Act

August 2016

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Commission's agency information guide	3
2.1	Our functions and structure	3
2.2	What kind of government information we have	4
2.3	What kind of government information we make available to the public	4
2.4	How government information is made available to the public	5

1 Introduction

This document meets the Natural Resources Commission's (the Commission's) obligations under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* (GIPA Act) as it is annually reviewed and published on our website.

2 Commission's agency information guide

The GIPA Act requires agencies to develop and adopt an agency information guide as part of their mandatory open access information.

The Commission's agency information guide describes:

- Our functions and structure
- what kind of government information we have
- what kind of government information we make available to the public
- how that information will be made available
- whether or not there is a charge to access specific kinds of information.

2.1 Our functions and structure

Our functions

The Commission provides credible, high quality, independent advice to the NSW Government on managing natural resources and related issues. Through its advice, the Commission aims to improve productivity, biodiversity and community well-being across the State.

To achieve the above purpose, the Commission has established three strategic priorities:

- Independent advice: Developing evidence-based practical solutions and thoughtful leadership to resolve natural resource management challenges.
- Brokering and mediation: Providing cut-through options and negotiating solutions for contested issues.
- Accountability and assurance: Delivering independent oversight and assurance to investors and the community through performance audits, evaluations and planning reviews.

Established under the *Natural Resources Commission Act 2003*, the Commission has a general function to advise the Premier and Ministers on natural resource management.

The general advisory function is supported by specific functions, including:

- auditing, evaluating and reviewing plans, programs and organisational performance – for example, auditing performance of Local Land Services
- reviewing complex, scientific and policy issues under legislation or as requested by Government – for example, reviewing pest animal management, water sharing plans and conducting forest assessments
- evaluating trials of new Government initiatives – for example, evaluating supplementary pest control in national parks
- promoting and enabling best practice – for example, setting standards and targets.

The Commission draws on best available data, expert opinion, and community and stakeholder views in developing its advice.

Our structure

The Commissioner is responsible for making decisions related to governing the Commission and providing advice to the NSW Government.

The Commissioner is appointed by the Governor of NSW for a period of up to five years and is accountable to the Premier for exercising all functions under the *Natural Resources Commission Act 2003*.

The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the Commission programs, administration and financial affairs.

The Director Corporate Services reports to the Executive Director and leads corporate governance, financial management, audit and reporting activities.

The Commission also establishes project-specific review panels to seek additional expertise, as needed.

2.2 What kind of government information we have

The Commission has the following types of government information:

- planning documents, such as strategic plans
- policy documents, such as code of conduct, governance policy
- documents providing advice to Government, such as:
 - audit reports
 - forest assessment reports
 - reports on evaluation of Government initiatives and trials
- documents relating to internal administration of the Commission
- general documents, such as:
 - annual reports
 - research reports.

2.3 What kind of government information we make available to the public

Open access information

The Commission makes available, free of charge, the following open access information on our website:

- documents tabled in Parliament, such as annual reports
- policy documents, such as governance policy

- disclosure log that records a summary of information the Commission has released in response to formal access applications
- register of government contracts that records all of the Commission's contracts with the private sector valued over \$150,000.

Other pro-actively released information

In addition, the Commission proactively makes available, free of charge, on our website a large range of additional information, including the following::

- reports to Government
- research reports
- fact sheets and guidelines.

2.4 How government information is made available to the public

Information available on informal request

A request may be made at any time for other information held by the Commission. While the Commission reserves the right to require a formal access application to be made under the GIPA Act, the Commission will generally provide the following types of information in response to an informal request, without the need to make a formal access application:

- copies of correspondence sent to the Commission by you
- copies of documents that have already been made public
- copies of documents the release of which would not raise any potential concerns in terms of public interest considerations against disclosure.

The Commission reserves the right to impose conditions in relation to the use or disclosure of information that is released in response to an informal request.

Information available in response to an access application

An access application can be made for any other government information held by the Commission, except the information for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure (Schedule 1), and information categorised as 'excluded information' (Schedule 2) in accordance with the GIPA Act.

Address for mailing access applications:

Natural Resources Commission
GPO Box 4206
Sydney NSW 2001

Access applications are subject to application fees and processing charges in accordance with the GIPA Act.