

Public-Facing Internet Website Policy

Local Government Act 2009

1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines Council's minimum requirements for the creation, implementation and management of Council's public-facing websites for the delivery of information and services to the community.

2. Principles

Council will utilise the internet for the proactive publication and delivery of Council information and explore online options when assessing communication and service delivery strategies for the public.

Council's websites will:

- provide for best practice accessibility and usability by all groups of the community and maintain a consistent and customer focused view of Council;
- ensure that appropriate operational management, recordkeeping, security and privacy processes are in place for the maintenance of websites; and,
- facilitate the routine disclosure and active dissemination of information.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all of Council's public-facing websites and to all Workers responsible for uploading, developing, implementing and maintaining of website content and the related content management system on behalf of Council.

This policy may impact all Council Workers by placing guidelines on what is acceptable to be included on Council websites to ensure compliance and accessibility.

4. Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer, Director Community, Environment and Lifestyle and General Manager Community Engagement are responsible for ensuring all Council Workers understand and adhere to this policy.

5. Definitions

CUE standard - means Consistent User Experience standard template and guidance material covering the presentation, management and accessibility of Queensland government websites.

Disability - means the same as described in the *Disability Services Act 2006*, section 11.

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Impairment - means the same as described in the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, schedule - Dictionary.

Manager - an individual responsible for overseeing and coordinating specific functions, departments, teams or projects within Townsville City Council.

QGEA - means Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture

URL - means Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the global address of documents and other resources on the World Wide Web.

W3C - means Worldwide Web Consortium - an international consortium whose primary goal is to develop web protocols, standards and guidelines.

WCAG - means Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - international industry standard adopted by the Queensland government.

Workers - includes employees, contractors, volunteers and all others who perform work on behalf of Council.

6. Policy

6.1. Online Presence

Council is committed to making its public websites, within all reasonable efforts, as accessible and usable for all users and will display a consistent and customer focused view by:

- ensuring the use of the public websites and electronic service delivery form part of Council's corporate, strategic and operational planning processes;
- ensuring the implementation of consistent and stable URLs;
- providing a website search capability as required by the CUE standard;
- complying with and remain no more than three minor version reviews in arrears to the CUE standard;
- recognising that customers may access Council's online content using assistive technologies due to Disability, Impairment or preference and, with consideration of the W3C WCAG v2.1, will aim to ensure the following conformance levels:
 - A Level conformance with Guideline 1.2; and
 - AA Level conformance with all other Guidelines;
- ensuring the content design of Council's websites balances the need for quality and minimal file download times and give particular consideration to customers with lower bandwidth or poor telecommunications infrastructure;
- recognising the diversity of devices, configurations and preferences of consumers of website content, including:
 - a reasonable range of browsers;
 - internet-enabled devices; and,
 - assistive technologies e.g. screen-readers;
- reviewing all Council websites on a regular basis to ensure continued compliance against QGEA Information Standard 26 - Internet; and,
- remaining aware of compliance obligations, perform risk assessments and seek appropriate approvals before proceeding with the implementation of emerging technologies.

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6.2. Operational Management

Council is committed to ensuring the appropriate operational management, recordkeeping, security and privacy processes are in place for the maintenance of Council's websites. and will, within all reasonable efforts:

- ensure the currency, accuracy, suitability and quality of Council's website(s) information through the implementation of authorisation and monitoring process;
- ensure the development of any new websites is approved by the CEO to ensure the site is required and meets all relevant user testing standards and accessibility requirements;
- ensure consistency with regulatory and legislative requirements including the *Right to Information Act 2009*, the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, the *Public Records Act 2002*, the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and relevant QGEA Information Standards when managing Council's web records;
- ensure processes are in place to continually improve Council's website(s) through performance monitoring and management of customer feedback and information requests;
- assess the web security requirements and develop policies and controls to manage all aspects of Council's online activities as required by QGEA Information Standard 18 - Information Security;
- ensure Council's website archival procedures for website content meet the requirements of QGEA Information Standard 40 - Recordkeeping; and,
- have appropriate website management procedures in place to maintain current, accurate and high quality online information and services of Council including:
 - authorisation and approval processes for the creation and publishing of information and its terms of use;
 - processes to ensure the ongoing currency and accuracy of all online information;
 - processes to routinely check and manage links across the website; and
 - processes to check that Council sites continue to meet accessibility and usability requirements.

6.3. Content Requirements

Council websites will facilitate the routine disclosure and active dissemination of information which will provide a current view of Queensland government. Council will ensure the content of its websites:

- recognise the literacy and language needs of customers;
- includes information that falls within the classes of information identified within Council's publication scheme;
- may include a disclosure log;
- includes current contact information;
- includes privacy and security statements that are consistent with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*;
- presents copyright notices in a manner and location that provides customers with reasonable notice of the claim of copyright ownership; and,
- include disclaimer notices that are a part of the website content which are not a link.

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6.4. Exempt Content

Council recognises that occasions may arise where new content that must be available to the public on the website may not conform to appropriate level of the WCAG 2.1 (that is, it may not be available in an accessible format). If this situation arises, a justification is to be provided as to why the content or website element should be exempt.

6.4.1. Submitting a Justification

Sections requesting the inclusion of content on the website that may not meet the accessibility guidelines must submit a business case outlining their justification for grounds for an exemption to the Community Engagement Department.

Business cases will be available for viewing by the public on request.

The Community Engagement Department reserves the right to make a ruling on the appropriateness of the content for the website.

7. Legal Parameters

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

Disability Services Act 2006

Information Privacy Act 2009

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Public Records Act 2002

Right to Information Act 2009

8. Associated Documents

QGEA Information Standard 18 - Information Security

QGEA Information Standard 26 - Internet

QGEA Information Standard 34 - Metadata

QGEA Information Standard 40 - QGEA Domain Names Registration and Management Standard'

W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1

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