



Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is committed to open, accountable and transparent local government. This Information Statement is published in accordance with Part 5 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (WA) (FOI Act) and provides information about the Shire's functions, decision-making processes, the types of documents held by the Shire, and how members of the public can access information.

The Shire recognises the community's right to access information and encourages members of the public to obtain information through the many resources and services made available by the Shire before lodging a formal Freedom of Information application.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The operations of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu are governed primarily by the *Local Government Act 1995* and associated regulations. The Shire is also required to comply with a range of other State and Commonwealth legislation relevant to local government operations, including legislation relating to planning and development, health, building services, environmental management, public records, workplace safety, and freedom of information.

The *Freedom of Information Act 1992* provides the public with a right to apply for access to documents held by the Shire, subject to certain limitations and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and personal privacy. The Act also provides individuals with the right to seek amendment of personal information that is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

LEGISLATION

The principal legislation under which the Shire operates includes, but is not limited to:

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992*
- *State Records Act 2000*
- *Public Health Act 2016*
- *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911*
- *Planning and Development Act 2005*
- *Building Act 2011*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1986*
- *Bush Fires Act 1954*
- *Emergency Management Act 2005*
- *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*
- *Cat Act 2011*
- *Dog Act 1976*
- *Cemeteries Act 1986*
- *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

Additional State and Commonwealth legislation, regulations, local laws, and statutory instruments also impose obligations and responsibilities on the Shire. Current Acts and Regulations can be accessed through the Western Australian legislation website.

LOCAL LAWS

Local governments derive authority to make local laws from State legislation. The Shire's local laws include:

- *Fencing Local Law 2010*
- *Health Local Law 2010*
- *Cemeteries Local Law 2010*
- *Dogs Local Law 2016*
- *Parking and Parking Facilities Local Law 2010*
- *Property Local Law 2010*
- *Meeting Procedures Local Law 2010*
- *Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2010*

These are available on the Shire's website.

COUNCIL POLICIES

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu maintains a range of Council-adopted policies that guide decision-making, service delivery, governance, financial management, community development, planning, and operational activities. These policies assist in ensuring that Council's functions are carried out in a consistent, transparent, and accountable manner.

Current Council policies are available for public inspection and can be accessed through the Shire's website or by contacting the Administration Office. Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and consistent with legislative requirements and the strategic objectives of Council.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN

The Strategic Community Plan 2026–2036 (the Plan) sets the long-term direction for the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu and reflects the aspirations, priorities and values of our community. Developed through extensive community and stakeholder engagement, the Plan provides a clear framework to guide decision-making, service delivery and investment over the next ten years.

OUR VISION

Inclusive communities and thriving places, offering a vibrant future for all.

OUR MISSION

To provide the foundations that enable our community and local businesses to lead, grow and flourish into the future.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND THEMES

The Plan is built around a shared vision of inclusive communities and thriving places, offering a vibrant future for all, supported by a mission to provide the foundations that enable our community and local businesses to lead, grow and flourish into the future.

The key principles outlined in the Plan represent the priorities identified by our community and will guide Council's planning, advocacy and resource allocation as we work together to strengthen the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Shire.

Connections

The Shire will support a connected, inclusive and caring community where people of all ages, cultures and abilities are valued and able to participate fully in community life.

Foundations

The Shire will provide and advocate for accessible and well-maintained infrastructure that supports everyday life, community connection and opportunities for growth across all towns.

Sustainability

Our region will protect its natural environment and manage water, land and resources responsibly, building resilience to climate, environmental and emergency risks.

Opportunity

Our community will facilitate opportunity by supporting housing availability, local employment, business development and a resilient local economy.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

COUNCIL AND COUNCILLORS

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is governed by a Council comprising seven elected Councillors who are responsible for representing the interests of the community and making decisions on behalf of the local government. Council is the governing body of the Shire and is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation, determining policies, overseeing the allocation of resources, and ensuring the effective performance of the Shire's functions in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Councillors generally do not have authority to act or make decisions independently. Decisions are made collectively by Council through a formal meeting process, ensuring transparency, accountability, and proper governance.

The role of a Councillor includes:

- Representing the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district.
- Providing leadership and guidance to the community.
- Facilitating communication between the community and Council.
- Participating in Council's decision-making processes.
- Performing any other functions prescribed by the *Local Government Act 1995* or other legislation.

Councillors play an important role in advocating for the needs and aspirations of the community and ensuring that local priorities are reflected in Council's decision-making and strategic planning.

Local government elections are held every two years on the third Saturday in October, with approximately half of the Council positions becoming vacant at each election. Councillors are elected for a four-year term and may seek re-election at the conclusion of their term. Following each biennial election, Councillors elect a Shire President and Deputy Shire President from amongst their members for a two-year term.

Ordinary Council Meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise disclosed, excluding January. Council meeting agendas, minutes, elected member information and meeting schedules are available on the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu website.

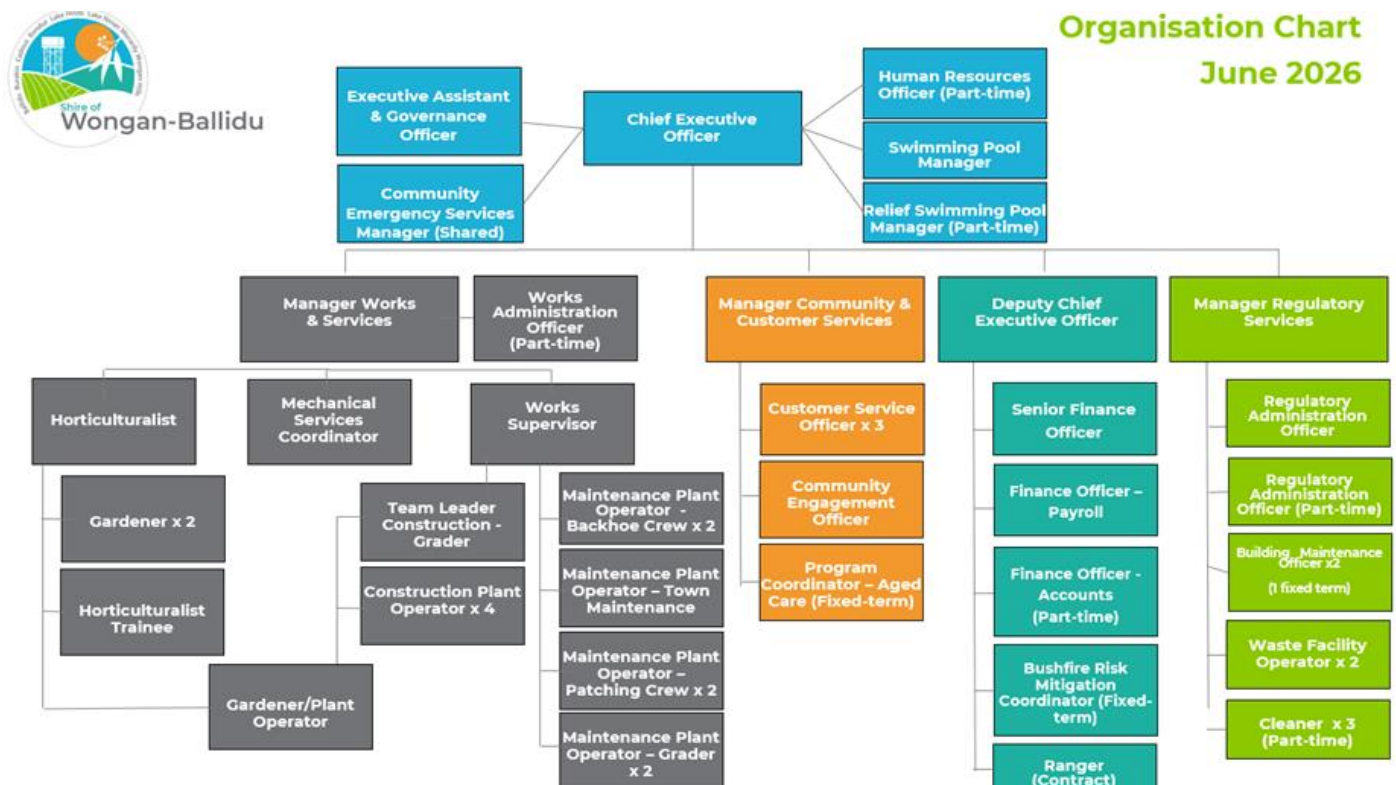
STAFF STRUCTURE

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu employs a team of professional and operational staff responsible for delivering services, implementing Council decisions, maintaining community assets, and supporting the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is appointed by Council and is responsible for the overall management of the Shire, including the implementation of Council policies and decisions, strategic leadership of the organisation, and ensuring compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

Reporting to the CEO are the Shire's management and staff, who work across a range of service areas including governance, finance, community services, infrastructure, works and services, regulatory services, planning, environmental health, and administration. Together, staff provide essential services and programs that support the wellbeing of residents, businesses and visitors throughout the district.

The organisational structure is designed to ensure efficient service delivery, clear lines of responsibility, and effective management of the Shire's resources. An organisational chart outlining the current reporting structure is provided below and is available on the Shire's website.



MANAGEMENT

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu's Executive Management Team is responsible for providing strategic leadership, organisational management and oversight of the Shire's operations. Working under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Management Team ensures Council's strategic objectives are implemented, services are delivered effectively, resources are managed responsibly, and legislative obligations are met.

The Executive Management Team comprises the Chief Executive Officer and four department managers who collectively oversee the Shire's key service areas, including Corporate Services, Health, Building and Planning, Works and Services, and Community Services. Together, they provide leadership across a broad range of functions that support the delivery of infrastructure, community services, governance, regulatory services and economic development throughout the district.

The structure below outlines the Executive Management Team and the primary areas of responsibility within each department.

| OFFICE OF THE CEO | CORPORATE SERVICES | HEALTH, BUILDING & PLANNING | WORKS & SERVICES | COMMUNITY SERVICES |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Chief Executive Officer | Deputy Chief Executive Officer | Manager Regulatory Services | Manager Works & Services | Manager Community & Customer Services |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance & Strategy • Elected Member Support • Risk Management • Leases, Agreements & Contracts • Human Resources • Public Relations • Statutory Planning • Economic Development • Policy Review & Development • Local Laws • Local Government Elections • Work Health and Safety • Swimming Pool | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance (Budget, Reporting and Planning for the Future) • Rates • Information Technology • Asset Management • Records Management • Bush Fire & Emergency Services Management • Payroll Ranger Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services • Building Services & Regulations • Building Maintenance • Environmental Matters • Waste Management • Town Planning • Disability Services • Heritage • Housing • Council Reserves • Asset Management Community Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and Maintenance • Transport, Infrastructure (roads and footpaths) • Community Amenities • Sporting Grounds • Land Care • Refuse Collection and Refuse Site Maintenance • Asset Management - Infrastructure • Parks & Gardens • Fleet & Plant Management Works Administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged Care • Arts and Culture • Community Development • Community Resource Centre • Cultural Development • Economic Development (w/CEO) • Community Grants • Marketing, media, communications • Wonga-Balli Boomer Magazine • Tourism • Department of Transport • Customer Service |

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu makes decisions through a combination of Council resolutions, delegated authority and administrative processes. Matters requiring a Council decision are presented to Council through formal reports prepared by Shire officers. These reports include recommendations based on relevant legislation, statutory obligations, adopted strategies and policies, technical advice, professional expertise, and consideration of community interests.

Council considers the information and recommendations provided in each report and may adopt, amend or reject the recommendation before making a decision by resolution at a Council meeting.

Council has adopted a range of strategic plans, policies and local laws that guide decision-making and support the achievement of the Shire's objectives. These documents provide a framework for consistent, transparent and accountable governance.

To ensure the efficient operation of the organisation, Council has delegated certain powers and duties to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*. These delegations are reviewed by Council on a regular basis. The CEO may further delegate specific functions to authorised Shire officers where permitted by legislation.

In carrying out their decision-making responsibilities, Council, the CEO and authorised officers make decisions on a wide range of matters that affect the community, including the provision of infrastructure and services, regulatory functions, planning and development, environmental health, community facilities, animal management, waste services and other local government responsibilities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu recognises that community participation is an important part of effective local government. Community feedback assists Council in making informed decisions and helps ensure services, projects and initiatives reflect the needs, aspirations and expectations of residents, ratepayers, businesses and visitors.

The Shire provides a range of opportunities for community members to participate in local decision-making processes and stay informed about Council activities.

PUBLIC NOTICES AND ADVERTISING

The *Local Government Act 1995* and other legislation require the Shire to provide public notice of certain proposals, decisions and statutory processes. In addition, the Shire may undertake public consultation on matters where community feedback will assist Council's decision-making.

Public notices may relate to matters such as local laws, planning proposals, policies, strategies, road closures, public works and other statutory requirements.

Public notices and advertisements are generally published through the Shire's website, social media platforms, community publications, local newspapers and public noticeboards, as appropriate.

To promote transparency and community participation, the Shire also advertises the dates, times and locations of Council meetings that are open to the public.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council meetings provide an important opportunity for community members to observe local government decision-making and engage with Council.

Open Council Meetings

Ordinary and Special Council Meetings are generally open to the public in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*. Council may resolve to close part of a meeting where permitted by legislation, such as when confidential matters relating to legal, contractual, commercial or personal information are being considered.

Public Question Time

Public Question Time is held at Council meetings to provide members of the public with the opportunity to ask questions relating to the business of the Shire. Questions may be asked in person or submitted in writing in accordance with the Shire's Meeting Procedures Local Law and Council policies.

Deputations and Presentations

Members of the public may seek approval to make a deputation or presentation to Council on matters of significance to the community. Petitions may also be presented to Council for consideration in accordance with legislative requirements.

COUNCIL AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Agendas

Council meeting agendas are made available to the public through the Shire's website and Administration Office prior to each meeting. Agendas are generally published on the Friday preceding an Ordinary Council Meeting.

Certain agenda items may be withheld from public inspection where they relate to matters that are likely to be considered behind closed doors in accordance with section 5.23 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Minutes

Council meeting minutes provide an official record of decisions made by Council. Confirmed minutes are available for public inspection at the Administration Office and on the Shire's website within ten business days after the meeting.

Audio recordings of Council meetings are also made available to the public on the Shire website following each meeting in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council may establish committees to assist with governance, strategic oversight and specialist advice. Committees enable detailed consideration of specific matters and support informed decision-making by Council.

Current Council Committees include:

Council Committees

- Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- CEO Performance and Remuneration Review Panel

Advisory Committees

- Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC)
- Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)

Committee structures and memberships may be reviewed and amended by Council from time to time.

ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Shire is required to hold an Annual Electors' Meeting following the acceptance of the Annual Report for the preceding financial year.

The Annual Electors' Meeting provides electors with an opportunity to discuss the Annual Report, ask questions and raise matters of interest relating to the affairs of the Shire. Notice of the meeting is published through the Shire's usual communication channels, including its website and community publications.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community Consultation

The Shire regularly seeks community feedback on a range of projects, plans, policies and initiatives. Consultation may be undertaken to satisfy legislative requirements or to assist Council in understanding community views on matters affecting the district.

Examples include:

- Strategic Community Planning
- Local law reviews
- Development and planning proposals
- Community infrastructure projects
- Recreation and community facility planning

Petitions

A petition is a formal written request from members of the community asking Council to consider a particular matter. Petitions must relate to matters within Council's jurisdiction and comply with legislative and procedural requirements.

Written Correspondence

Community members may contact the Shire at any time regarding Council policies, services, facilities or activities. Correspondence is considered and responded to in accordance with the Shire's Customer Service Charter, Communication Policy and applicable legislative requirements.

PUBLICATIONS

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is committed to making information readily accessible to the community. In accordance with section 5.94 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the principles of open and transparent government, a range of documents and publications are made available to the public free of charge through the Shire's website.

Where available, documents will be published in their most current format on the Shire website. The Shire endeavours to make as much information as possible accessible online to assist residents, ratepayers, businesses and visitors in obtaining information without the need to make a formal request.

Members of the public who are unable to access documents online may inspect or obtain copies of publicly available documents by visiting the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu and Wongan Hills CRC Customer Service Centre, emailing shire@wongan.wa.gov.au, or telephoning (08) 9671 2500.

While electronic access is generally provided free of charge, fees may apply for printed copies, reproductions or other services in accordance with Council's adopted Fees and Charges Schedule.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

| Document Description | Website | Purchase |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Agendas & Confirmed Minutes (excluding confidential sections closed to the public) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Unconfirmed Minutes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Annual Budgets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Annual Reports | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Codes of Conduct | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Corporate Business Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Council Meeting Dates | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Council Policies | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Disability Access and Inclusion Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Electoral Roll | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Fees and Charges | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Freedom of Information Statement & Public Interest Disclosure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Local Laws | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| News & Events – Media Released | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Register – Tender | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Registers – Electoral Gifts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Register – Gifts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Register – Fees and Allowances Paid to Elected Members | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Register - Council Meeting Attendance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Register – Elected Member Training | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Register - Complaints | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Register – Annual and Primary Returns | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Strategic Community plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

Requests for information of a general nature may be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. Requests for information that is not otherwise listed as available in this statement or is not publicly available on our website 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* (FOI Act) provides members of the public with a right to apply for access to documents held by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu, subject to certain exemptions and limitations prescribed by the Act.

The access provisions of the FOI Act do not apply to documents that:

- are available for purchase by, or free distribution to, the public;
- are available for public inspection under Part 5 of the FOI Act or another written law;
- are available for inspection through the State Archives;
- are publicly available library material held for reference purposes; or
- have been acquired or created by an art gallery, museum or library and are preserved for public reference, research or exhibition purposes.

The Shire maintains a wide range of records in both electronic and hard copy formats. These records relate to the administration, governance, financial management, service delivery and statutory functions of the organisation.

While the FOI Act promotes access to information, it also recognises that certain information requires protection. As a result, some documents or parts of documents may be exempt from disclosure where release would adversely affect personal privacy, commercial interests, legal proceedings, law enforcement activities, or the proper functioning of government.

Where practicable, access may be granted to a document with exempt information removed.

AMENDMENT OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

An individual may apply to the Chief Executive Officer to amend personal information held by the Shire if they believe the information is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

Applications must be made in writing and should provide sufficient details, together with any supporting documentation, to substantiate the requested amendment.

The Shire will advise the applicant in writing of its decision and the reasons for that decision. Applicants will also be informed of their rights to seek an internal review if dissatisfied with the outcome.

No application fee or charge applies to requests for access to, or amendment of, an individual's own personal information.

REASONS ACCESS MAY BE REFUSED

The FOI Act recognises that some information should not be released where disclosure would be contrary to the public interest or would adversely affect the rights of others. Common exemptions include:

Personal Information

Information that would reveal personal information about an individual may be exempt under Schedule 1, Clause 3 of the FOI Act. Personal information includes information or opinions about an identifiable individual, whether true or not and whether recorded in material form or otherwise.

Examples include:

- names and residential addresses;
- contact details;
- signatures;
- personal financial information; and
- other information from which an individual can be identified.

Commercial Information

Information that would disclose trade secrets, commercially valuable information, or information concerning the business, professional, commercial or financial affairs of a person or organisation may be exempt under Schedule 1, Clause 4 of the FOI Act.

Deliberative Processes

Information that would reveal opinions, advice, recommendations or deliberations prepared during a decision-making process may be exempt under Schedule 1, Clause 6 of the FOI Act where disclosure would be contrary to the public interest.

Legal Professional Privilege

Documents that contain confidential legal advice or communications protected by legal professional privilege may be exempt under Schedule 1, Clause 7 of the FOI Act.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCESSES

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is committed to making information available promptly, openly and at the lowest reasonable cost. Wherever possible, information and documents will be provided through administrative processes without the need for a formal Freedom of Information (FOI) application.

Where information is not routinely available, the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* provides members of the public with the right to apply for access to documents held by the Shire. The Act also provides individuals with the right to seek amendment of personal information that is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

Applications for access to documents under the FOI Act must:

- be made in writing;
- provide sufficient information to enable the requested documents to be identified;
- provide an Australian address for correspondence; and
- be lodged with the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu together with any applicable application fee.

Applications and enquiries relating to Freedom of Information should be directed to the Freedom of Information Officer using the contact details below:

- 1. By Email to:** shire@wongan.wa.gov.au
- 2. By Mail to:**
FOI OFFICER
PO BOX 84
WONGAN HILLS WA 6603
- 3. In Person to:**
Shire of Wongan-Ballidu and Wongan Hills CRC Customer Service Centre
"The Station"
1 Wongan Road
WONGAN HILLS WA 6603

NOTICE OF DECISION

Applications made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* will be considered by an authorised Decision Maker of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable and, in any event, within 45 days of a valid application being received.

The written Notice of Decision will include:

- the date on which the decision was made;
- the name and position of the officer who made the decision;
- details of the documents to which access has been granted, refused, or granted in part;
- where access is refused or information has been removed from a document, the reasons for the decision and the relevant exemption provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*; and
- information regarding the applicant's rights of review and the procedures for seeking an internal or external review of the decision.

Where only part of a document can be released, access may be provided to an edited copy of the document with exempt information removed.

FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and charges applicable to Freedom of Information (FOI) applications are prescribed under the Freedom of Information Regulations 1993.

An application fee applies when requesting access to non-personal information. Additional charges may be imposed for processing an application; however, these charges are discretionary and will be assessed having regard to the nature and complexity of the request. In many cases, straightforward applications incur only the prescribed application fee.

The current scale of fees and charges is outlined below:

| Description | Cost |
|--|----------------|
| Application - personal information about the applicant | Free of Charge |
| Application Fee non-personal information | \$30.00 |
| Charge for time dealing with the application (per 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 | Actual cost |
| Charge for delivery, packaging and postage | Actual 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.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access to documents may be provided in a number of ways, depending on the nature of the information requested and the format in which it is held. Access may be granted by:

- inspection of documents;
- provision of copies of documents;
- access to electronic records or documents;
- provision of audio or video recordings;
- transcripts of recorded information where available; or
- any other reasonable means of access permitted under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

The form of access provided will be determined having regard to the applicant's request, the nature of the document, and any practical considerations associated with providing access.

REVIEW RIGHTS

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision made under the Act have the right to seek a review of that decision.

Internal Review

An applicant may apply for an internal review of a decision by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. Applications for internal review must be submitted in writing within 30 days of receiving the Notice of Decision and must:

- identify the decision to be reviewed;
- provide any additional information relevant to the review;
- provide an Australian address for correspondence; and
- be lodged with the Shire.

The Shire will notify the applicant of the outcome of the internal review within 15 days of receiving a valid review application.

There is no fee or charge for lodging an application for internal review.

External Review

If an applicant remains dissatisfied following the internal review process, or where an internal review is not required under the Act, they may lodge a complaint with the Office of the Information Commissioner seeking an external review of the decision.

Complaints must generally be lodged within 60 days of receiving the relevant decision notice and must:

- be made in writing;
- include a copy of the relevant Notice of Decision; and

- provide an Australian address for correspondence.

There is no fee for lodging a complaint with the Information Commissioner.

Office of the Information Commissioner

Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
Perth WA 6000

Telephone: (08) 6551 7888

Email: info@oic.wa.gov.au

For further information, visit the Office of the Information Commissioner website.