

Copyright Licence for Local Government

Councils regularly access, receive, share, retain and reuse third-party content. This may include reports, media content, research, industry publications and online resources. Without appropriate permission or licensing, common day-to-day activities involving this content may create copyright risk. Text and images protected by copyright may include:

- news and magazine articles
- journal articles and research reports
- books and industry publications
- website content and online resources

Research conducted by independent market research agency FiftyFive5* found:

2 OUT OF 3 white-collar workers regularly access published content in their role, often downloading, copying and sharing it.

64% of white-collar workers use GenAI tools

59% copy and paste news items into AI prompts

83% cite compliance and risk as key concerns

59% would have greater peace of mind if their organisation had a copyright licence that allowed use of third-party content in AI tools for work

What is a Copyright Licence for Local Government?

Copyright Agency's Licence is a blanket licence that allows Councils to copy, store, share and use published content without needing to obtain permission from individual copyright owners.

The licence covers common workplace activities involving third-party content, including:

- organisation-wide copying and internal sharing rights for digital, online and print content, including newspapers, magazines, journals, books, websites and other published works
- use of Australian newspaper and selected licensed content in GenAI tools and workflows
- sharing Australian newspaper content and AI-generated outputs externally
- use of AI-generated outputs in internal and external reporting, communications and collaboration workflows, including summaries, briefings, white papers and partner communications
- use of published content in council reports, briefing papers and committee materials
- use of third-party content in staff training, education and internal knowledge-sharing activities
- storage and retention of published content for governance, compliance and record-keeping purposes
- additional rights beyond media monitoring licences, including content copied directly from websites and other published sources

Local Government is not defined or referred to as being under the Crown within the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). As a result, Councils are not covered by the statutory licence arrangements in place under s183 between Copyright Agency and the Commonwealth, and the States and Territories. Councils are therefore required to obtain a licence or permission to copy and share third-party content.

Support responsible AI use in Council workflows

Generative AI tools are increasingly being used across Council workflows for research, drafting, analysis and communications. Staff may upload documents, paste articles into prompts and use AI-generated outputs in operational activities. The Copyright Licence for Local Government enables Councils to use high-quality published content in GenAI tools, with permissions in place to support compliant AI use.

- Use Australian newspaper content in GenAI tools
- Use selected journal, book and trade publication content
- Share AI-generated outputs internally and externally

Why Councils use the licence

One agreement covering millions of published works relevant to Council activities

- Supports the compliant sharing and reuse of published content across Council functions
- Supports the responsible and compliant use of content in GenAI tools
- Reduces copyright, governance and reputational risk associated with content sharing and AI workflows
- Avoids the need to negotiate permissions with individual copyright owners
- Helps manage copyright obligations associated with content received and retained across records systems, collaboration platforms and Council systems
- Supports efficient Council workflows involving published content

Key benefits to your Council

Efficiency – Supports everyday workflows involving content sharing and GenAI use

Governance – Supports governance, compliance and responsible AI use across Council operations

Flexibility – One licence covers copyright material from millions of sources

Peace of mind – Reduces risk of infringement claims and reputational harm

Learning and innovation – Access to copyright training and educational resources



Copyright Agency is an Australian not-for-profit representing over 40,000 creator members, including publishers, authors and artists. Through agreements with overseas copyright organisations, our licences also cover international published content. We support responsible use of published content in Council and GenAI workflows while ensuring creators are fairly remunerated.



Getting a licence is easy.

Contact us to discuss licensing options for your Council.

Call 1800 066 844 or
email licence.enquiries@copyright.com.au

*FiftyFive5 research on third-party content and GenAI use

** This fact sheet is a guide only. Limitations apply to website and social media use of outputs. Refer to the licence agreement for full terms and conditions.

The Federal Government also provides some guidance for businesses who use copyright materials:
Attorney General's Department: <https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/copyright/copyright-users>
Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS): <https://ablis.business.gov.au/service/ag/copyright-access-licence/216>