



GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL
 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
 Agency Information Guide

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Refer to attached document.

.....
 General Manager

13/7/20

 Date

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GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Agency Information Guide

Approved by Council on 25 June 2020

Version 10



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INTRODUCTION

The Agency Information Guide is a mandatory document prescribed in the [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009 \(GIPA\)](#).

This Agency Information Guide describes the structure and functions of Council, the various kinds of information Council holds and how the public can access the information.

Council is required under s18(a) of the GIPA Act to make its agency information guide (this document) publicly available as open access information.

ABOUT COUNCIL

Basis of Constitution

Glen Innes Severn Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Organisational Structure and Resources

The leadership of Glen Innes Severn Council is provided by seven (7) councillors (one (1) of whom is the Mayor) working together for the benefit of the community. The councillors were elected on 10 September 2016 for a period of four (4) years. Elections were planned for September 2020, however, due to Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) local government elections have been postponed for 12 months to September 2021 making their term a total of five (5) years.

The Mayor presides at meetings of the Council, carries out the civic and ceremonial functions of the office, exercises, in cases of necessity, the decision making functions of the body politic between its meetings and performs any other functions that the Council determines.

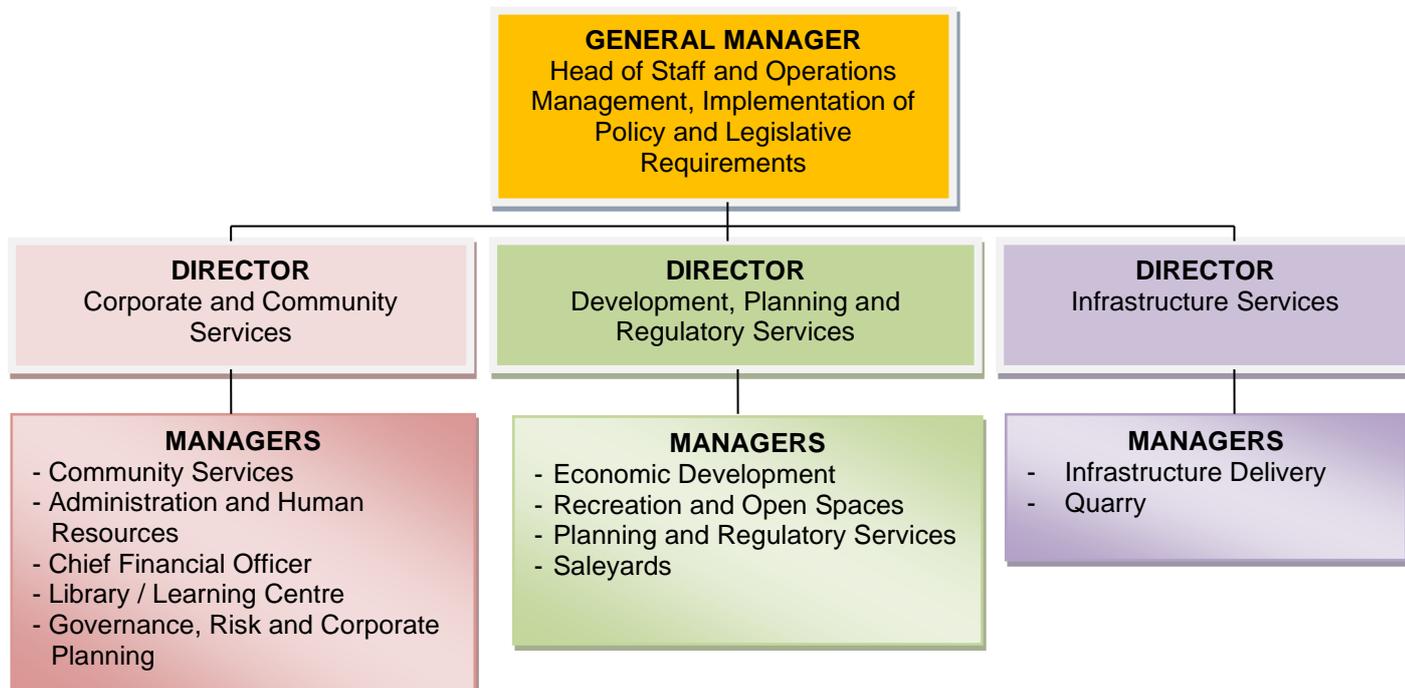
The councillors have responsibility for policy making/administration and good governance of the Council.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Council is the General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for the operation of the Council's organisation and for implementing decisions of the Council. The General Manager is also responsible for the day-to-day management of the Council; the exercise of any functions delegated by the Council; the appointment of staff; the direction and dismissal of staff and the implementation of Council's Equal Opportunity Management Plan.

The General Manager is assisted in the exercise of these functions through the three (3) directorates of Council. These are: Corporate and Community Services, Development, Planning and Regulatory Services and Infrastructure Services. Each of the directorates is headed by a Director. Directorates are further structured into a number of sections which are headed by either a Manager or Coordinator.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Public Officer: Ms Anna Watt
Director of Corporate and Community Services

Telephone: 02 6730 2300

Facsimile: 02 6732 3764

Email: council@gisc.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.gisc.nsw.gov.au

Address: PO Box 61
GLEN INNES NSW 2370

Office: 265 Grey Street, GLEN INNES NSW 2370

Office Hours: 8.30am - 4.30pm (Monday to Friday)

OUR CORPORATE VISION – MISSION - VALUES

Slogan	<i>“Embracing change, building on history”</i>
Vision	Glen Innes Severn will have a vibrant, confident and inclusive community supported by a sustainable and prosperous economy underpinned by a well-maintained road network.
Mission	To be a ‘can do’ Council, that is, a Council that is proactive and prioritises affordable and relevant service delivery for its community.
Values	Respect, Integrity, Courage, Honesty and Transparency. *Easy to remember: RICH to the “T”

In addition to serving the community through the delivery of its various operational activities, and fulfilling its compliance and statutory obligations, Glen Innes Severn Council has identified the following **Strategic Priorities**:

1. **Community services**

Create a growing community with optimal access to community services and facilities.

2. **Economic development**

Facilitate a growing local economy by continuing to support an attractive business climate.

3. **Infrastructure management**

As a priority, provide adequate infrastructure and facilities for the existing and future population.

4. **Environment and heritage**

Manage the natural values of our local area and conserve our heritage to ensure that it is enjoyed by the community, visitors and future generations.

5. **Council sustainability, transparency and communication**

Continue to be a sustainable and independent council, and foster transparency through clear communication with both internal and external customers.

These strategic directions are discussed in more detail within the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 along with the corresponding goals and strategic actions.

Strategic Financial Objectives

1. To maintain a realistic and achievable budgeted cash surplus each financial year to maintain an unrestricted current ratio of at least 2:1; thereby ensuring access to adequate working funds on a continual basis.
2. To ensure that a realistic and reasonable percentage of Council's rates revenue is expended on roads infrastructure.
3. To maintain sufficient funds to meet known financial commitments beyond the current financial year, and to renew or acquire new capital infrastructure assets in line with Council's Asset Management Plans for its various infrastructure assets.
4. To continually assess all expenditure to ensure consistency with Council's newly developed and adopted strategic objectives.
5. To continually review all operating expenditure and improve efficiency in service delivery where possible.
6. To concentrate expenditure upon capital renewal, rather than creating new assets, as this will increase Council's maintenance budget into the future.
7. To reduce Council-owned assets which do not align with Council's adopted strategic objectives, and place an unnecessary ongoing maintenance burden on Council and the community.
8. To implement user-pay principles on service provision and assets, excluding known and Council-approved community service obligations.
9. To maximise returns on Council's investments, without increasing Council's investment risk above acceptable levels.
10. To attract and maximise government grants and subsidies as external funding sources for Council services.
11. To extend and augment Council's own source revenue stream through business opportunities that align with Council's core business.

OUR FUNCTIONS

Functions of Glen Innes Severn Council – The [Local Government Act 1993](#)

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council's functions can be grouped into the following categories:

Service Functions	Regulatory Functions	Ancillary Functions	Revenue Functions	Administrative Functions	Enforcement Functions
Including:	Including:	Including:	Including:	Including:	Including:
Provision of community health, recreation, education and information services	Approvals	Resumption of land	Rates	Employment of Staff	Proceedings for breaches of the Local Government Act and Regulations and other Acts and Regulations
Environmental protections	Orders	Powers of entry and inspection	Charges	Management plans	Prosecution of offences
Waste removal and disposal	Building Certificates		Fees	Financial reporting	Recovery of rates and charges
Land and property, industry and tourism development and assistance	Permits		Borrowings	Annual reports	
Civil Infrastructure Planning			Investments	Infrastructure and Asset Reporting	
Civil Infrastructure Maintenance and Construction			Business Units	Procurement	
Water Supply, Waste Water Services, Rural Fire Services				Local Emergency Management Coordination	

As well as the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council has powers under a number of other Acts in accordance with appropriate delegated authority as follows:

- [*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979;*](#)
- [*Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997;*](#)
- [*Roads Act 1993;*](#)
- [*Companion Animals Act 1998;*](#)
- [*Impounding Act 1993;*](#)
- [*Swimming Pools Act 1992.*](#)

How Council's Functions affect members of the public

Nearly all of the functions of Glen Innes Severn Council have an effect on members of the public. The following is an outline of how the broad functions of Council affect the public.

Service Functions

Service functions affect the public in that services and facilities provided by the Council are for use by the public, such as halls and centres, recreation facilities and removal of garbage.

Regulatory Functions

Regulatory functions place restrictions on developments and buildings that are erected to ensure that they meet certain requirements that will not endanger the lives and safety of any person. Members of the public must be aware of and must comply with such regulations.

Ancillary Functions

Ancillary functions affect only some members of the public if, for example, the resumption of land is necessary or if Council's officers need to enter onto any person's land.

Revenue Functions

Revenue functions affect the public directly in that rates and other charges are paid by the public in return for services and facilities that are provided to the community.

Administrative Functions

Administrative functions do not necessarily affect the public directly but have an impact on the administration of the community. For example, Council has developed a operational plan which outlines the strategies of the Council over both the short term and long term.

Enforcement Functions

Enforcement functions only affect those members of the public that are in breach of certain legislation, such as the non-payment of rates and charges, unregistered dogs and parking fines.

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE OF COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

Council and Committee Meetings

Council is required, and actively encourages, under the provisions of Section 10(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, to open its full Council (Ordinary and Extraordinary) meetings and meetings of its Committees and Advisory Groups to the press and general public.

Similarly, Council is required to give notice to the public of the times and places of its meetings and those of its Committees. Copies of the business papers for all meetings are available for the general public at Council offices and at each meeting venue. Business Papers are also published on Council's website, www.gisc.nsw.gov.au.

Whilst Glen Innes Severn Council is committed to, and has fostered, the practice of open local government, some matters are of a sensitive nature and for that reason are dealt with in closed committee. Under these circumstances the minutes arising from such meetings are restricted to the resolutions and recommendations of the meeting.

The nature of such matters is contained within Section 10(A-D) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Open Community Consultation time is held prior to the commencement of an Ordinary meeting of Council:

1. A period of 15 minutes before the start of any official Open Council Meeting is available for members of the Public to address the Council Meeting or submit questions either verbally or in writing, on matters INCLUDED in the Business Paper for the particular Meeting, or matters deemed by the Mayor or Chair to be relevant.
2. A member of the public will be permitted a maximum of five (5) minutes to address the Council Meeting. An extension of time may be granted by the Mayor or Chair if deemed necessary.
3. A member of the public seeking to represent or speak on behalf of a third party must satisfy the Council Meeting that he or she has the authority to represent or speak on behalf of the third party.
4. Members of the public wishing to address the Council Meetings are encouraged to contact Council either by telephone (02) 6730 2316 or in person at the Town Hall office prior to 12 noon the day before the Council Meeting and register their intention to address the Council Meeting.
5. The Mayor or Chair will be guided by Section 10A(2)(a) – (i) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, in not allowing members of the public during community consultation sessions to deal with or discuss or disclose any information with regards to the matters mentioned in this section and subsections of the Act.

Council usually holds its Ordinary Meetings on the fourth (4th) Thursday of each month (Exceptions: no meeting in January; third (3rd) Thursday in December). These meetings are held in the William Gardner Conference Room at the Glen Innes Severn Learning Centre and are scheduled to commence at 6.00pm.

Council commenced live streaming and audio of Council meetings in October 2019 which provides further opportunity for members of the community to participate and view Council meetings, either on the night or later, through the Council website and webcast.gisc.nsw.gov.au link.

Committees

There are a number of internal and external committees that deal with a range of matters associated with Council's functions and community issues. Committee membership includes Councillors, community groups, residents and stakeholders.

Glen Innes Severn Councillors are associated with the following Committees:

Councillor / Staff Committees of Council:

- Annual Donations Review Committee;
- Business Incentives Fund Committee;
- Code of Conduct Review Committee;
- General Manager Recruitment Committee;
- General Manager's Appraisal Committee;
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework Committee;
- Significant Development Proposals Committee.

Community Committees of Council:

- Aboriginal Consultative Committee;
- Australia Day Committee;
- Australian Standing Stones Management Board;
- Community Access Committee;
- Emmaville Mining Museum Committee;
- Emmaville War Memorial Hall Committee;
- Glencoe Hall Committee;
- Glen Elgin Federation Sports Committee;
- Glen Innes and District Sports Council;
- Glen Innes Saleyards Advisory Committee;
- Glen Innes Severn Cemetery Committee;
- Glen Innes Severn Learning Centre Management Committee;
- Library Committee;
- Minerama Committee;
- Open Spaces Committee;
- Pinkett Recreation Reserve Management Committee;
- Public Art Reference Group;
- Roads Consultative Committee;
- Stonehenge Recreation Reserve Trust Committee;
- Youth Advisory Committee.

Groups of Councils:

- Fossickers Way Committee;
- LG NSW;
- New England Joint Organisation (NEJO)
- Northern Inland Regional Waste Group.

Delegate of the Council:

- Joint Regional Planning Panel;
- North West Weight of Loads Committee.

Community Committees NOT Committees of Council:

- Arts North-West;
- Business in Glen (BIG);
- Community Safety Precinct Committee;
- Community Services Interagency Committee;
- Deepwater Progress Association;
- Glen Innes and District Community Centre Inc;
- Glen Innes and District Historical Society;
- Glen Innes Correctional Centre Community Committee;
- Glen Innes Highlands Rail Trail Working Group;
- Glen Innes Highlands Visitor Association Inc;
- Glen Innes Local Health Committee;
- Glen Innes Showground Trust Inc;
- Glen Innes Wind Farm;
- GLENRAC;
- Local Emergency Management Committee;
- Local Traffic Committee;
- New England High Country;
- Northern Tablelands Bush Fire Management Committee;
- Sapphire Wind Farm;
- Vegetable Creek (Emmaville) Local Health Advisory Committee;
- White Rock Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee;
- White Rock Wind Farm Community Fund Committee.

Community Workshops/Working Parties

Community Workshops and Working Parties are held to gain public input and understanding in respect of major studies, key issues, projects and initiatives that may affect the area and be of public interest or concern. A special committee or working party may be formed to guide Council in its deliberation of a matter. Opportunities for members of the public to participate in these Community Workshops and/or Working Parties are generally advertised in the local newspaper and on Council's website.

Making Representations to Councillors

Councillors are the elected representatives of the community and make decisions having regard to the views of their constituents. Members of the public can discuss issues affecting the Glen Innes Severn Local Government Area with any of the elected Councillors.

Mayoral Meetings

Members of the public may make an appointment with the Mayor to discuss issues.

Public Exhibition and Submissions

Major policies, planning matters and development applications are advertised and submissions are invited during the exhibition periods. Submissions received in response to the public exhibition processes are considered prior to the adoption of recommendations. (Note: Refer to Privacy notification on submissions to Council below for details on how Council will manage the submissions, comments and objections).

Privacy Notification on Submissions to Council

Submissions, summaries of submissions and/or names and addresses of people making submissions may be included in publicly available reports to Council and/or Committee Meetings. All submissions will be placed on the appropriate Council file and may be accessed by Councillors, Council Officers, consultants to Council, or members of the public.

Submissions to Council on General Matters

The public can either personally or in writing address matters within the jurisdiction of the Council. Every attempt is made by Council to satisfy the concerns of the enquirer or explain the reasons why Council is undertaking certain actions.

FOUR WAYS TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* establishes four (4) ways for the public to access government information:

- **Open Access Information**

Council must publish open access information on its website, free of charge. Where it is not practical for Council to provide open access information on the website, the information will be made available free of charge in at least one (1) other format.

Council is constantly upgrading its website. Open access information will be added to the website as it becomes practicable to do so. Please contact Council on 02 6730 2300 to access information that is not currently available on Council's website.

Other information and data relevant to Glen Innes Severn Council that is open access and not on Council's website may be located on the data.nsw.gov.au website.

- **Proactive Release of Information**

Council is encouraged to take the initiative to release as much government information as possible, in an appropriate manner and free of charge (or at lowest reasonable cost).

- **Informal Release of Information**

Council is encouraged to release information without the need for a formal application, unless there are good reasons to require one. Requests for personal information would usually fall into this category. Depending on the amount of work involved a fee may be charged as per Council's fees and charges within the Operational Plan.

- **Formal Release of Information**

In limited circumstances, access to information will require formal access applications. An application fee of \$30 will apply and processing charges of \$30/hour may apply as per the GIPA Act. Examples of where a Formal Access application could be required include applications where third party consultation is required, or large volumes of information are requested.

Formal Access applications are a last resort as Council will endeavour to make its information available through the other three (3) alternatives.

OUR INFORMATION SERVICES

Types of Information held by Council

Glen Innes Severn Council holds information which relate to a number of varying issues. This information can be grouped into five (5) categories:

- Policy documents;
- General information;
- Registers;
- Guidelines plans, reports and other information;
- Files.

Council's website has links to a significant amount of information which the public can view and download copies.

The public seeking a copy of or requesting to view information described below that is not on the website should contact Council's Right to Information Officer.

Policy Documents

Council is required by legislation to have certain policies, such as Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice. In order to function effectively and in accordance with legislation, Council has also adopted a considerable number of local policies.

All of these policies are reviewed at least every four (4) years and amended or deleted as required. Any changes to policies must be adopted by Council.

[The policies are available on Council's website](#) as prescribed by section 18(c) of the GIPA Act.

General Information

Any other information held by Council **not** described in the sections below and **not** on the Council website, would require the lodgement in the initial instance of an informal access application with Council's Right to Information Officer:

- [*Agendas and business papers for Council and Committee Meetings \(but not including business papers for matters considered when a meeting is closed to the public\);*](#)
- [*Annual Report;*](#)
- [*Annual Financial Reports;*](#)
- [*Asset Management Strategy;*](#)
- [*Auditor's Report;*](#)
- [*Cemetery Register;*](#)
- [*Code of Conduct;*](#)
- [*Code of Meeting Practice;*](#)
- [*Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027;*](#)
- [*Cultural Plan;*](#)
- [*Delivery Program 2017-2021;*](#)
- [*Delegations Manual;*](#)
- [*EEO Management Plan;*](#)

- *Environmental Planning Instruments, development control plans made under Section 94AB of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 applying to land within the Council's area;*
- *Glen Innes Severn Land Use Strategy;*
- *Leases and licenses for use of public land classified as community land;*
- *Local Environmental Plan;*
- [*Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings, but restricted to the recommendations of the meeting \(in the case of any part of a meeting that is closed to the public\);*](#)
- [*Operational Plan 2019/2020;*](#)
- *Plans of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired by Council;*
- [*Plans of management for community land;*](#)
- [*Policy concerning the payment of expenses incurred by, and the provision of facilities to Councillors;*](#)
- *Records of building certificates;*
- [*Register of Council's Plans, Strategies and Other Public Documents;*](#)
- [*Register of Council's Policies;*](#)
- [*State of the Environment Report.*](#)

Registers

Council is required by legislation to maintain the following Registers:

- *Council Land;*
- *Delegations;*
- *Development Consent;*
- *Disclosure of Donations;*
- *Disclosure of Interests;*
- *Investments;*
- *Planning Committee;*
- *Returns of the Interests of Councillors, Designated Persons and Delegates.*

The Registers must be made available to the public as part of Council's open access information. Where the Registers are not available on Council's website they are available at Council's Administration Office for inspection through the Right to Information Officer and a copy can be either provided free of charge or at a reasonable cost for photocopying.

Guidelines, Plans, Reports and other documents

Council has a significant number of guidelines, plans and reports which are either available to the public to view and download from Council's website or through an informal access application to the Right to Information Officer. The information can be categorised as follows:

- *Building Application Register and Plans (excluding floor plans);*
- *Codes / Policies Manuals;*
- *Community Service Publications;*
- *Development Application Register;*
- *Development Applications and Plans (excluding floor plans);*
- *Development Control Plans;*

- *Drainage Plans;*
- *Engineering Design Plans;*
- *Environmental Impact Statements;*
- *Flood Mitigation Reports;*
- *General technical reports on water supply and sewerage, planning design and operations;*
- *Guidelines for the Submission of Reports on Contaminated Land 1992;*
- *Lease Register;*
- *Local Environmental Plan Amendments;*
- *Maps of the Council area;*
- *Other planning policies;*
- *Quarterly Financial Reviews;*
- *Quarterly Performance Reporting;*
- *Road opening permits;*
- *Section 94 Contribution Plans and register;*
- *Sewer Plans;*
- *Subdivision Register;*
- *Tender Register;*
- *Traffic Volumes / data;*
- *Water Plans;*
- *Works Programs;*
- *Zoning Information.*

Files

The main types of files that are held by Council include:

- Development Application;
- General;
- Property;
- Road; and
- Subdivision.

HOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ACCESS OUR INFORMATION

Where practical, open access information will be made available free of charge on Council's website (www.gisc.nsw.gov.au). Where it is not practical for Council to provide open access information on the website, the information will be made available free of charge in at least one (1) other format.

The information on Council's website is constantly being updated. Open access information will be added to the website as it becomes practical to do so. To access information that is not currently available on Council's website, please contact Council's Right to Information Officer, Manager of Governance, Risk and Corporate Planning on (02) 6730 2300.

The Officer will either advise where the information is located or request that an "Informal Access Application" form be lodged with Council (there is no charge for this request, however appropriate photocopying charges of obtained copies of information may apply).

The Officer will discuss the method of supply of the information, including likely timeframe. The Public will also be offered the opportunity to inspect and obtain copies of the information from Council's Administration Office between the hours of 8.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

Council will continuously be seeking to make information proactively available and will strive towards releasing personal information informally.

In limited circumstances, such as applications where third party consultation is required, or large volumes of information is requested, the Right to Information Officer will inform an applicant that the access to information request will require the lodgement of a "[Formal Access Application](#)" with Council. The applicant will be required to pay an application fee of \$30.00 and may be required to pay an additional charge for processing the application (\$30.00/hour). The Application Form for Formal Access to Government Information is available on Council's website.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RIGHT TO INFORMATION

- Go to www.ipc.nsw.gov.au
- Email ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
- Mail GPO Box 7011, Sydney, NSW, 2001
- Visit Level 11, 1 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000
- Call 1800 INFOCOM (1800 472 679) between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).