

POLICY NAME: Christmas and New Year Office Arrangements

POLICY REF:

MEETING ADOPTED: Resolution No.

POLICY HISTORY:



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**OBJECTIVE**

To clarify how Council manages the operation of the Council Offices and Community Facilities during the Christmas to New Year period.

**BACKGROUND**

Traditionally the determination of whether the Council Administration Office, located at 40 Cherry Street Ballina, remains open or closed during the Christmas to New Year period has been determined on an annual basis by the elected Council in consultation with the General Manager. The decision as to whether other community facilities or other operational buildings, such as the Works Depot, remain open or closed has traditionally been determined by senior management.

The annual decision to open or close Council's administration office was typically determined in November of each year, which created uncertainty for Council management and employees in planning leave and staffing arrangements for the Christmas to New Year period. There was also uncertainty as to whether or not the three standard working days between Christmas and New Year would be granted as time in lieu or were required to be taken as leave.

The benefits of adopting a Policy that provides clear direction to the General Manager is that it allows the General Manager and staff to carefully examine the customer service requirements for Council's operations and adequately plan for leave or staffing coverage during the Christmas to New Year period.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Christmas to New Year period** means the days between Christmas Day and New Year's day, which are not public holidays and would normally be work days for Council staff.

**Community facility** means council buildings/centres/offices staffed by Ballina Shire Council staff.

**Concessional leave** means an agreement between Council and the staff member where the staff member is able to work additional time, above their normal working hours, during the year, to use this time to take leave between Christmas and New Year.

**SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to Council salary classified employees.

**RELATED DOCUMENTATION**

Related documents, policies and legislation:

- Local Government State Award
- Christmas and New Year Concessional Leave Union Agreement

**POLICY**

The management of staff and the day to day operations of Council is the responsibility of the General Manager. This includes ensuring that Council's customer service delivery meets our corporate objectives and community requirements.

The decision to close a community facility for the Christmas to New Year period needs to be undertaken on a case by case basis taking into consideration the customer service and operational requirements of that facility.

The senior management team are responsible for reviewing the operations under their control and recommend to the General Manager by June of each year whether any facilities are to remain open or close. The General Manager is then authorised to make the decision as to whether a facility will remain open or close.

Following this determination Group Managers are to notify their staff of the decision and to make any necessary arrangements surrounding leave or staff coverage.

Where a decision is made to close a facility during Christmas to New Year the General Manager must ensure that leave entitlements are accessed for any normal work days during that period, or alternatively the General Manager must ensure that an accountable and transparent time recording system is in place, if a concessional leave arrangement is available.

In respect to concessional leave and in recognition of the ability for Council to make a determination to close its operations during the Christmas to New Year period, Council in August 2013 established an industrial agreement with the relevant unions party to the Local Government State Award.

This agreement provides an accountable and transparent system that enables management and employees the ability to work additional concessional time during the year to provide sufficient leave coverage should Council determine to close the Council Administration Office (40 Cherry Street) during the Christmas to New Year period.

This agreement also identifies that where a decision is made by Council to keep the Council Administration Office open, then employees with accumulated concessional leave entitlements can utilise this leave at another time convenient to the employee and Council prior to the end of March of the following year. This agreement does not replace any employee entitlement provisions under the Local Government State Award.

This Policy also acknowledges that these types of arrangements may be extended by the General Manager to other Council community facilities which are operated by salary classified employees.

The General Manager is responsible for overseeing community notifications surrounding community facility operational hours or closures.

**REVIEW**

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.