Guide for agencies

Updated April 2023

IPC GIPA Tool User Guide

The IPC GIPA Tool is a free cloud-based and fully supported internet-based application that has been developed to assist agencies and organisations to comply with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) when processing and reporting on government information access applications. The IPC GIPA Tool supports enhanced service delivery to citizens by applying contemporary technology and ease-of-use functionality.

The IPC GIPA Tool:

- is a free Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) application developed on the Salesforce © platform for the creation and reporting of GIPA applications by NSW Government Agencies and to support agencies to comply with the GIPA Act.

The IPC GIPA Tool also:

- allows secure access to agencies/parties registered to use it
- allows agencies to add GIPA applications
- allows agencies to edit GIPA applications
- allows agencies to search GIPA applications
- allows reporting for individual agencies by providing reporting and charting tool functionality
- enables agencies to submit their annual GIPA data to the Information Commissioner in order to assist in their reporting obligations.
- provides identity and access management allowing secure login and data entry
- is auditable
- is a highly available system (24-hours a day excluding any agreed outage periods which require at least 24 hours' notice)
- complies with legislative requirements (the GIPA Act).

Custodianship and access to GIPA data

GIPA data submitted to the Information Commissioner, using the GIPA tool, is used in the production of the Information Commissioner's yearly report on the operation of the GIPA Act.

Agencies have custodianship and control over the data entered by them into the GIPA Tool. Agency officers are responsible for the reliability and quality of the data in the GIPA Tool.

Requests to access case management data held in the GIPA Tool should be made directly to the agency for which data is sought. Information on how to make such a request should be available on the agency's 'right to information' webpage. The IPC does not hold agency case management data.

Agency annual GIPA report data is available in the relevant agency's corporate annual report, which is usually accessible via the agency website. The GIPA data underlying the Information Commissioner's Report is available here while the annual report on the operation of the GIPA Act is accessible here.

How to access the IPC GIPA Tool

Register for an account

To access the IPC GIPA Tool, you will need to register for an account.

Click here to register for the IPC GIPA Tool.

An account will be set up for you and within two business days and you will be advised of your login credentials by email from Salesforce. Please check your Spam folder just in case the confirmation email was delivered there instead of your inbox.

Check your browser

To access the IPC GIPA Tool please only use one of the following internet browsers:

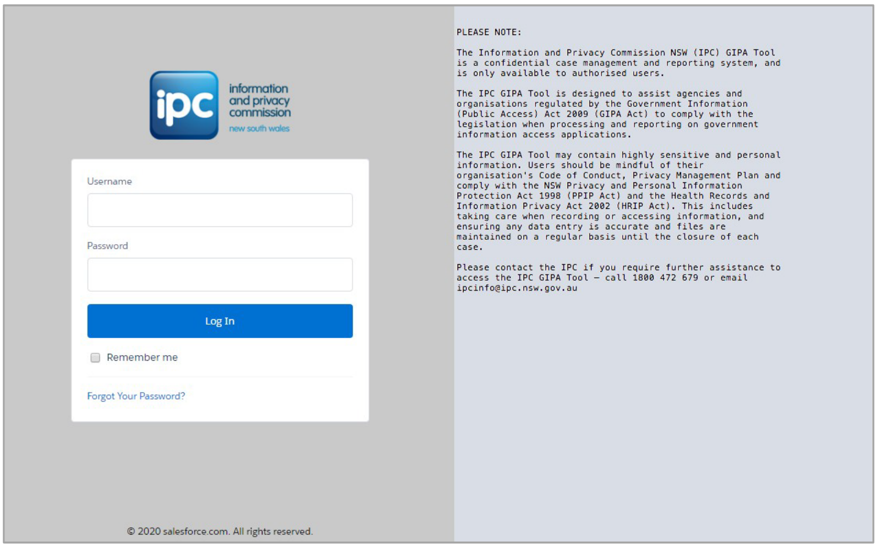
- Internet Explorer 11 or above
- Google Chrome
- Mozilla Firefox.

Log in to the IPC GIPA Tool

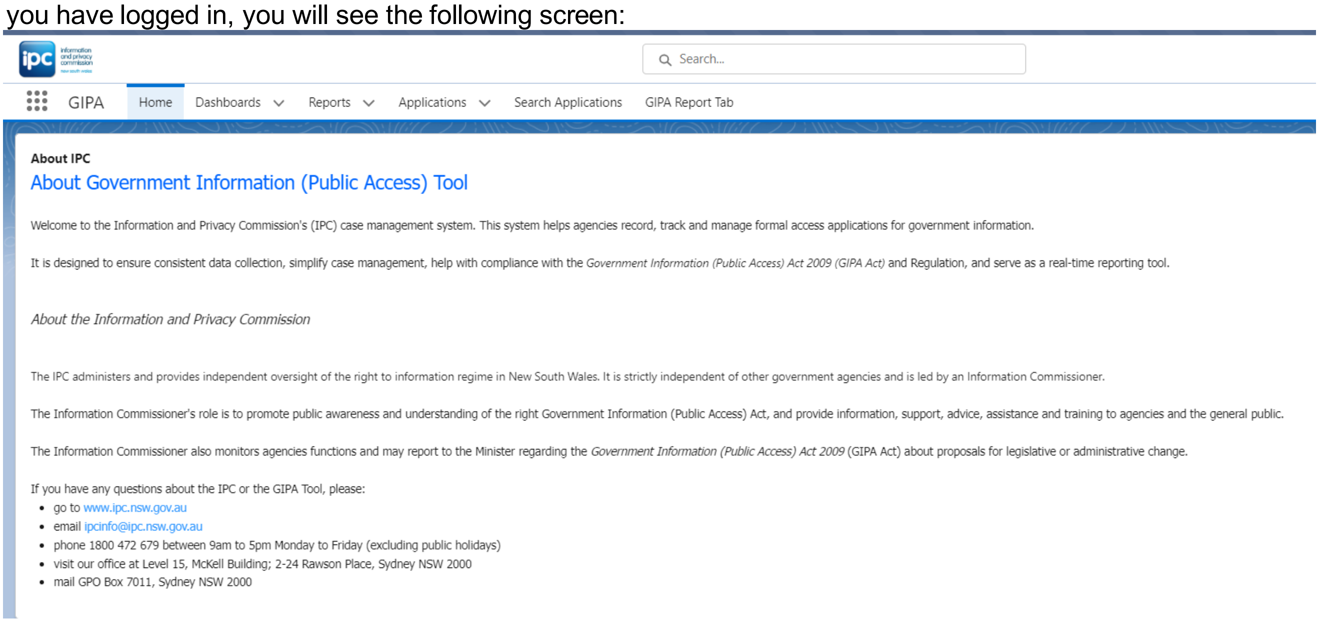
Log in by:

- launching your internet browser
- entering the following link into the browser address bar: https://gipa.ipc.nsw.gov.au
- using your provided login credentials.

The login screen:



Once you have logged in, you will see the following screen:

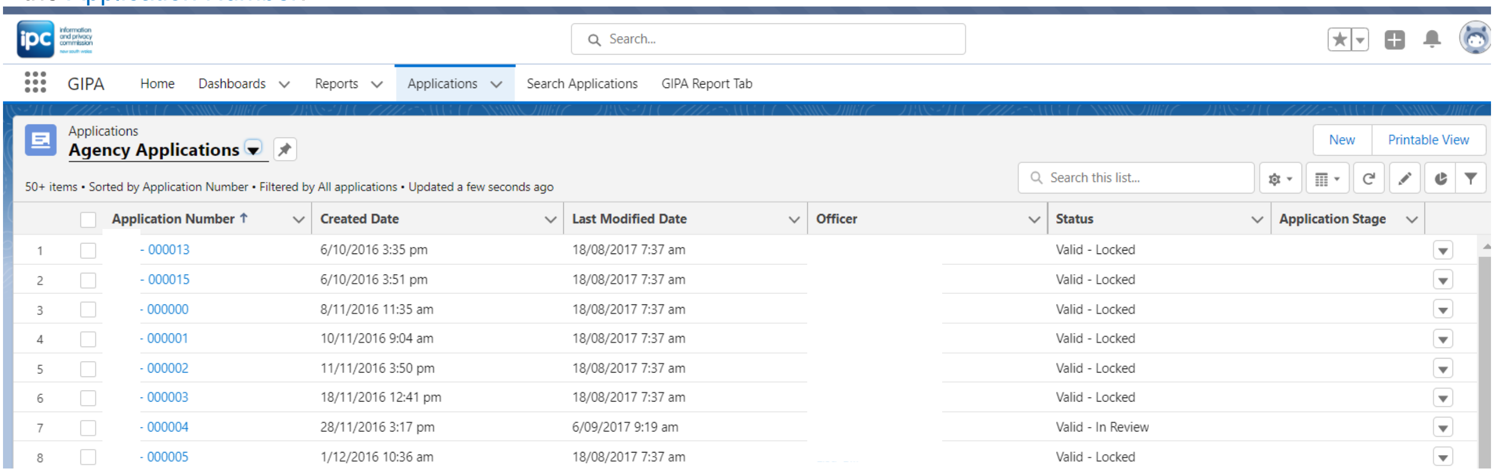


Application processing

An application can be opened from the Applications page, or Search Applications page.

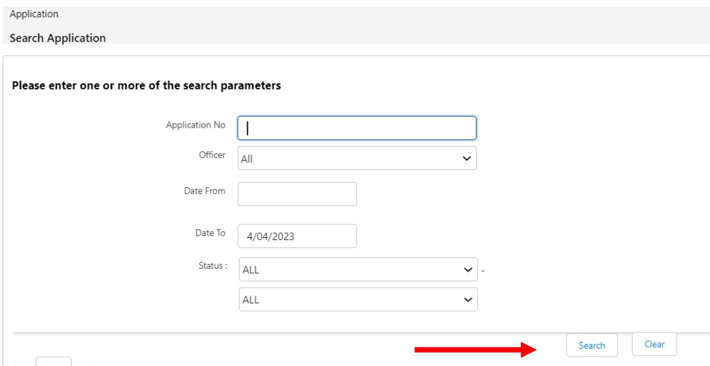
Applications page

To see applications Recently Viewed, Recently Created or Recently Modified click on the Applications tab and then select the Application Number:



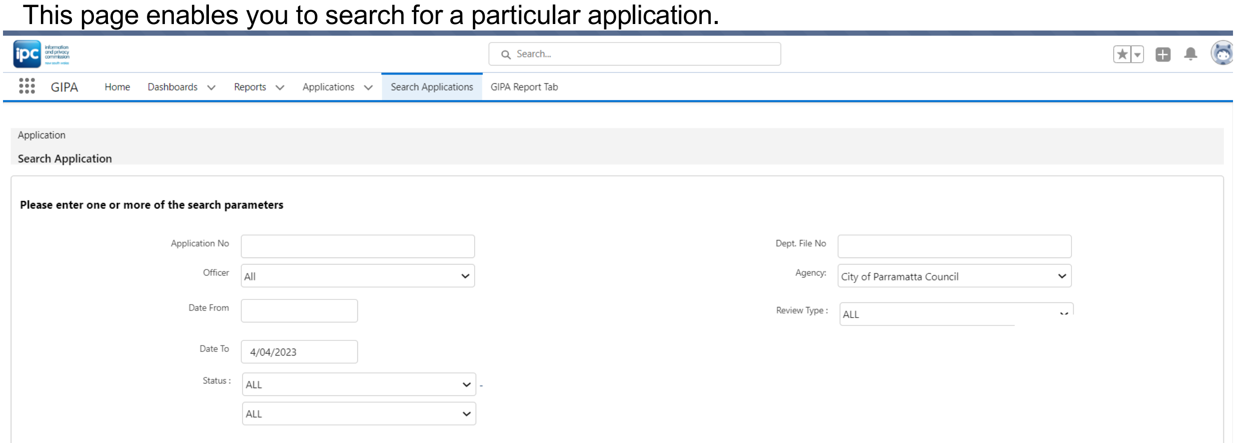
NOTE:

To see all your agency's applications, go to Search Applications tab and then at then click the search button



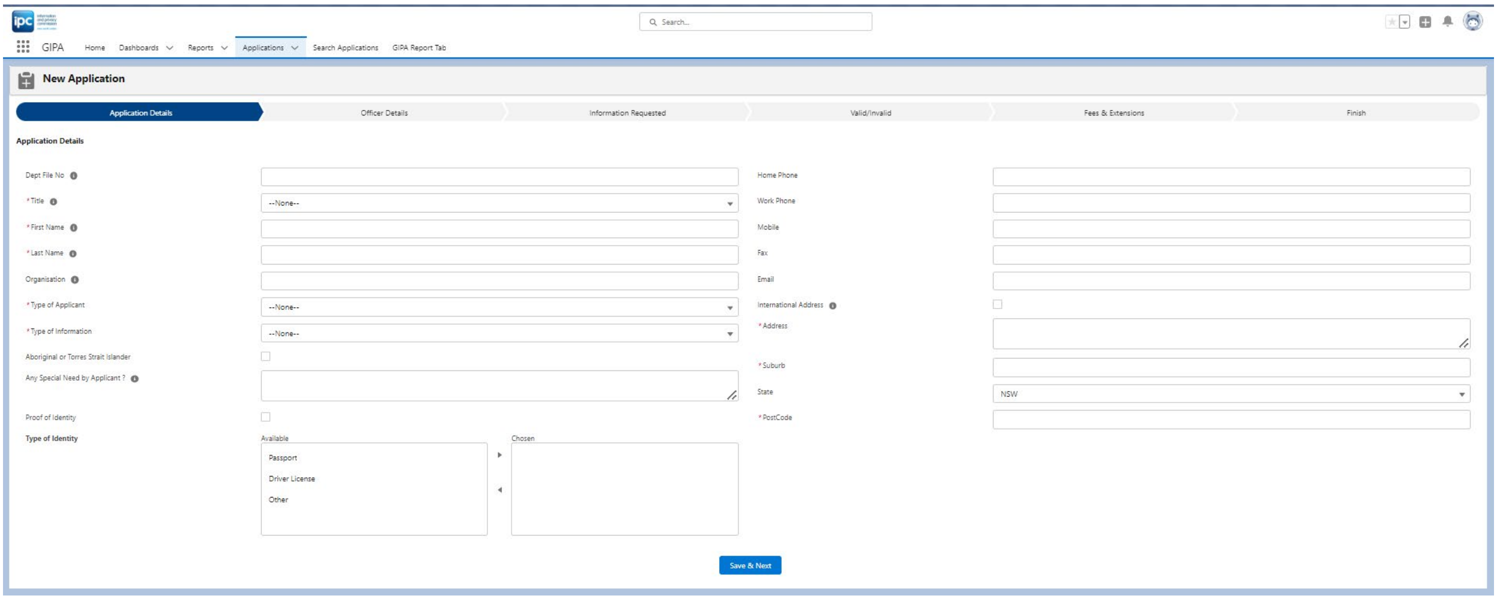
Search Applications page

This page enables you to search for a particular application.

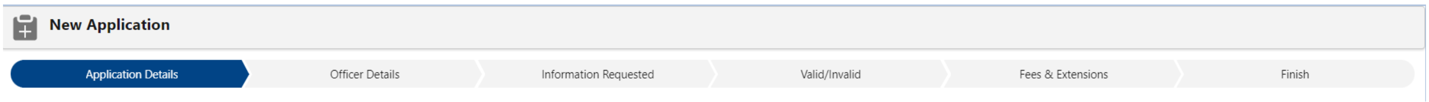


Add an application

Create a New Application – General Details



To create a new application, go to the Application page and click the New button on the right hand side of the screen. Proceed filling at least all mandatory fields (marked with a *) within each tab. Once completed click Save and Next. This will then take you through a workflow to fill in other details of the application.

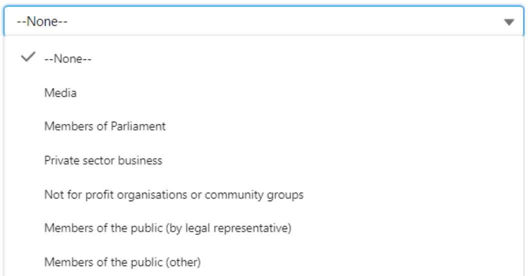


These sections are:

- Application Details
- Officer Details
- Information Requested
- Valid/Invalid
- Fees and Extensions
- Finish (end page)

Notes:

The Type of Application field is a dropdown menu with the following options:

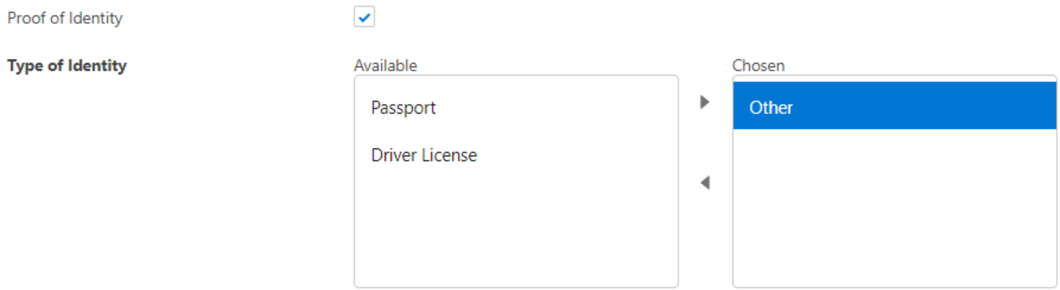


- This is where full international address details are entered.
- The email, International phone and International mobile fields are non-mandatory free text fields that allow entry of text and numbers.

Proof of Identity fields.

If Verified is selected the options of Passport, Driver Licence, and Other become available – select one or more of these.

If Other is selected, then an additional Please specify free text box is exposed and you must record the proof of identity there.



NOTE:

Ensure you select the correct Type of Information to be requested from the dropdown menu – Personal, Other or Partial.

NOTE:

The Dept. File No. field is where to insert the agency's internal reference number that pertains to the GIPA application.

NOTE:

Once the mandatory fields are filled (fields marked with a red *), click Save. Save regularly while you have an application open to ensure no information you add is lost.

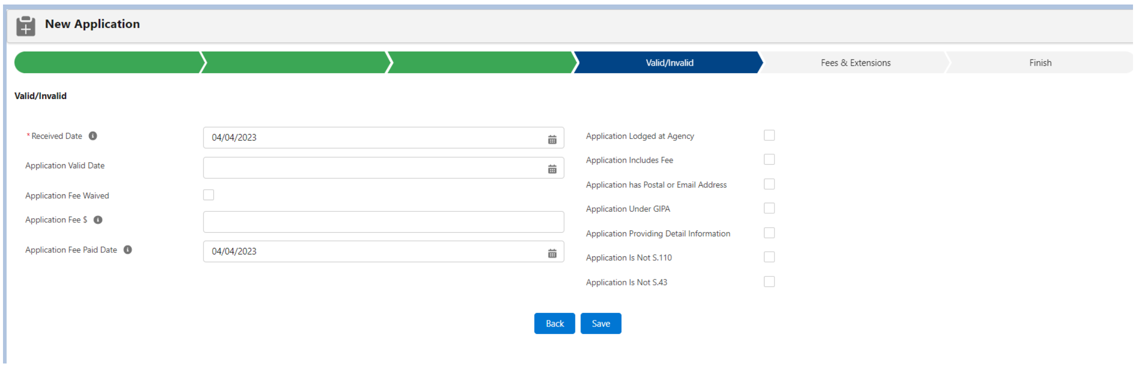
Valid/Invalid

Confirmation of validity criteria

The Valid/Invalid section of the IPC GIPA Tool enables the confirmation of validity criteria as required under the GIPA Act and is also the place to note whether an application fee has been waived.

The Received Date is entered by the user. Once all validity criteria is checked the application's Valid Date will populate with the current date.

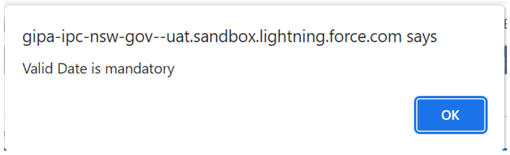
On saving the application the due date will advance by 20 working days from the Valid Date. Public holidays are accounted for.



NOTE:

Validity criteria can be selected in multiple Edit sessions.

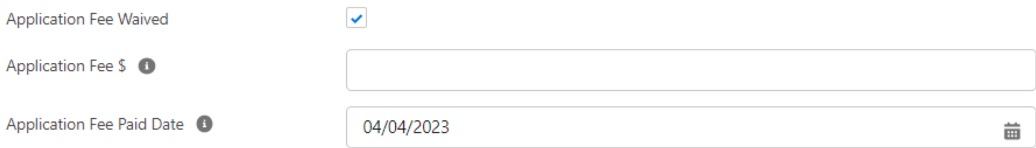
If the Valid Date is for some reason blanked out and the Save button selected, an error message will display, and the application will not save. To rectify this, enter the correct Valid Date and save the application again.



NOTE:

The application's Valid Date cannot be a date before the received date.

To waive an application fee, select the checkbox next to Is the application fee waived?



NOTE:

The application fee will be added to the Total Fee + Charge $ field in the Application Fee, Processing Charge & Discount section.

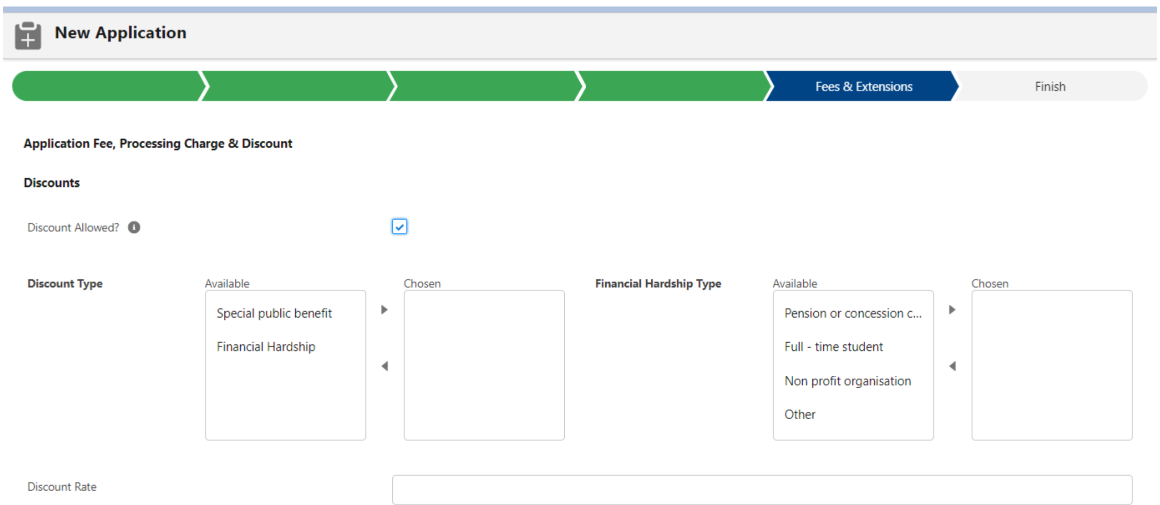
Application Fee, Processing Charge & Discount

Discount

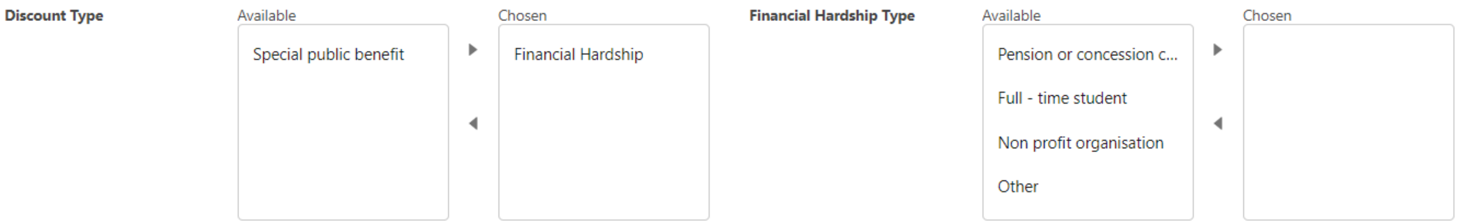
If Discount Allowed? is selected Discount Type options become available.

When Discount Allowed? is selected the Actual Processing Charge is discounted by the % entered into the rate field.

Either Special public benefit or Financial Hardship or both can be selected.



If Financial Hardship is selected, then you will be required to select the hardship type/s that apply. Click on the hardship type and then click the right facing arrow to move them into the chosen box. Anyone or a combination of these may be selected.



When Discount allowed checkbox is selected the minimum discount rate is set at 50%.Where a higher discount is to be applied this can be manually entered. Less than 50% or greater than 100% may not be entered.

Save the discount applied to the actual processing charge.

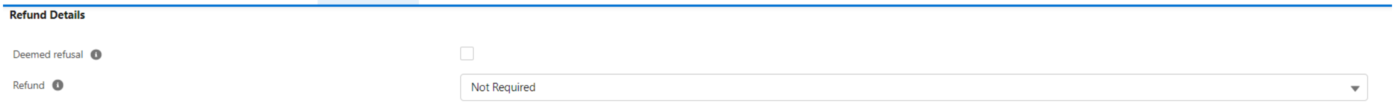
Processing Charges

Completing the Processing Charges part of the Application Fee, Processing Charge & Discount section is required for the GIPA Tool to calculate discounts and totals:

- The Estimated Charge $ field is a non-mandatory numeric field and is not taken into account for calculations of totals
- The Actual Charge $ field is a non-mandatory numeric field and is taken into account for calculation of totals
- The Actual Charge Paid $ field is a non-mandatory numeric field and is taken into account for calculation of totals
- The Processing Charge Paid Date field is non-mandatory and is taken into account for calculation of totals.

Refund Details

This part of the Application Fee, Processing Charge & Discount section is used to record any refunds paid to the applicant.



If Deemed refusal is selected, then the Refund option becomes Required and two additional fields are exposed – Amount and Paid Date.

The Amount field is mandatory and is taken into account for calculation of totals. The Paid Date field is also mandatory.

NOTE:

The refund option of Required can be selected whether the Deemed refusal check box is selected or not.

Totals

This part of the Application Fee, Processing Charge & Discount section is where calculations are made and recorded:

- The Total Fee + Charge $ field will auto-populate with the sum of the Application Fee and the Actual Processing Charge
- The Total Discount field will populate with the total processing charge multiplied by the discount rate.
- The Total Amount Due field will auto-populate with the sum of the Application Fee plus Actual Processing Charge less discount
- The Total Fee + Charge Paid $ field will auto-populate with the Application Fee plus the Actual Charge Paid
- The Total Refund will calculate as the Total Amount Due less the Total Fee + Charge Paid $.

Acknowledgement Letter

Agencies are required to acknowledge an application within 5 working days of receiving an application. The GIPA Tool assists agencies by providing two methods to automate this requirement.

1. Microsoft Word Acknowledgment Template

To create a template Acknowledgement Letter, click on the Create Acknowledgement button. Amend the content of the template letter as required and page settings within Microsoft Word to fit your agency's letterhead dimensions as appropriate.

2. Automated Email Acknowledgement

The Tool also provides an option to send an email to the applicant to notify them of a valid decision. Please note that you will have to click the button to trigger an email to the email address registered in the application. The email contains the same information as the Create Acknowledgment letter and will be customised with the applicant's details. Also note, you will not get the opportunity to amend this email when you send it, it will be sent automatically to the email address attached to the application and the sender email address will be the person who has logged into the GIPA Tool.

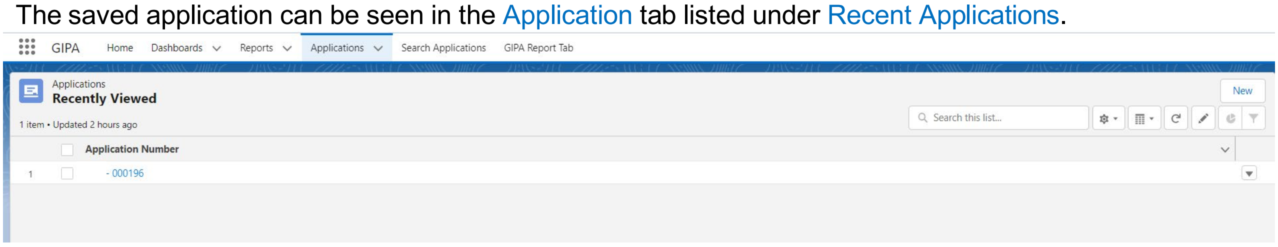
NOTE:

Please note the automated email acknowledgement button functionality will not appear unless an email address is entered in the first page of the application form.

Edit an application

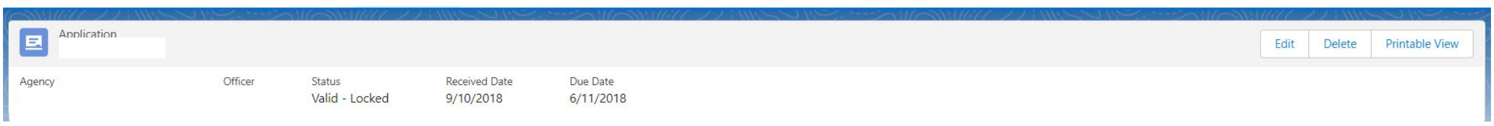
Editing an existing application

The saved application can be seen in the Application tab listed under Recent Applications.



Select the application you want to edit by clicking on the Application Number field link which takes you to the Application Detail page.

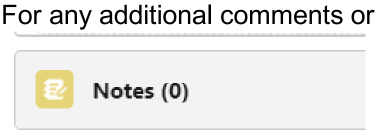
Clicking on the Edit button will take you to the saved application screen where you can edit the application.



Ensure that you save your work regularly while working in the application as well as when you have finished editing the application.

TIP 2:

For any additional comments or notes you may have for an application, add to the Notes field and save the application.



The Notes field can be found at the bottom of each application. Please be aware that the Notes field is not encrypted so make your comments non-identifiable where possible.

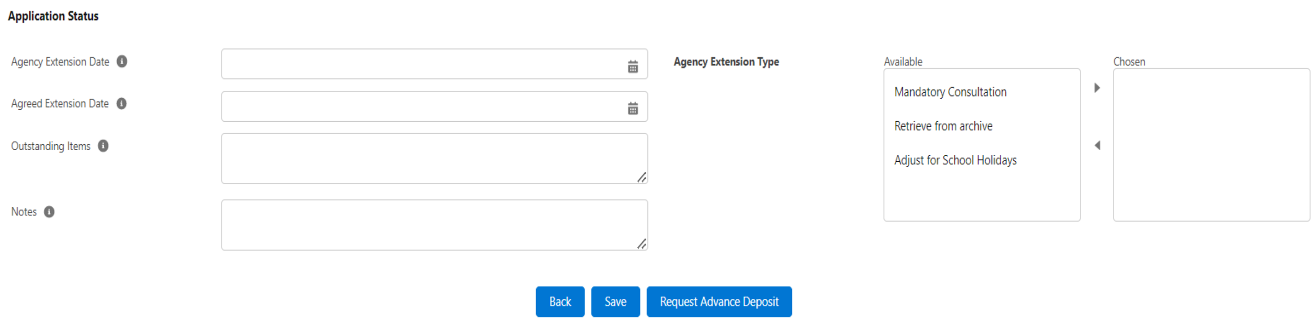
Fees and Extensions

This section is used to record extensions to an application including agency extensions and applicant agreed extensions.

Agency Extensions

The reasons for an agency extension include:

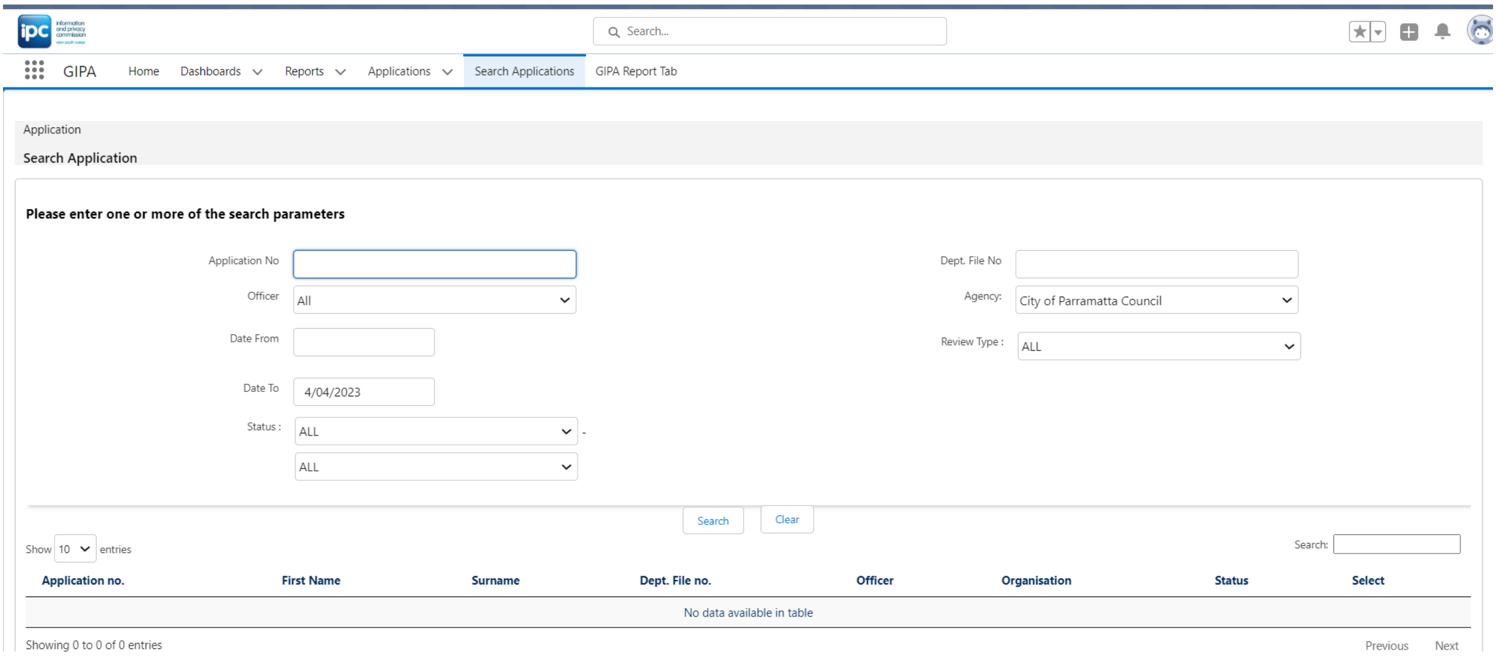
I. Mandatory Consultation – when this is selected the due date is advanced by 10 days. However, an earlier date can be manually entered
II. Retrieve from archive – when this is selected the due date is advanced by 10 days. However, an earlier date can be manually entered
III. If both Mandatory Consultation and Retrieve from archive are selected, then the due date advances by 15 days. However, an earlier date can be manually entered
IV. Adjust for School Holidays – if this is selected then the Agency Extension Date must be manually entered, and this becomes the due date.



Applicant Agreed Extension

If an extension is agreed with the applicant, then the Applicant Agreed Extension Date must be manually entered, and this becomes the due date. It is presumed that the Applicant Agreed Extension Date is further into the future than the Agency Extension Date.

Search Applications enables you to search for a particular application – e.g., by Application No.



TIP 3:

In the Applications tab you can view your agency's applications in several ways. Click on the Status dropdown menu located top right to select Recently Viewed, Recently Created or Recently Modified.

TIP 4:

Enter as many criteria as you like to narrow your application search and to provide a higher likelihood of finding the application(s) that you are seeking.

TIP 5:

The default view in the Application tab displays all recently used or recently viewed/updated applications, so instead of searching, you may be able to find the application more efficiently by sorting or filtering your view.

Reopening a valid application – Locked or Valid – Closed

To open an application that is Valid – Locked:

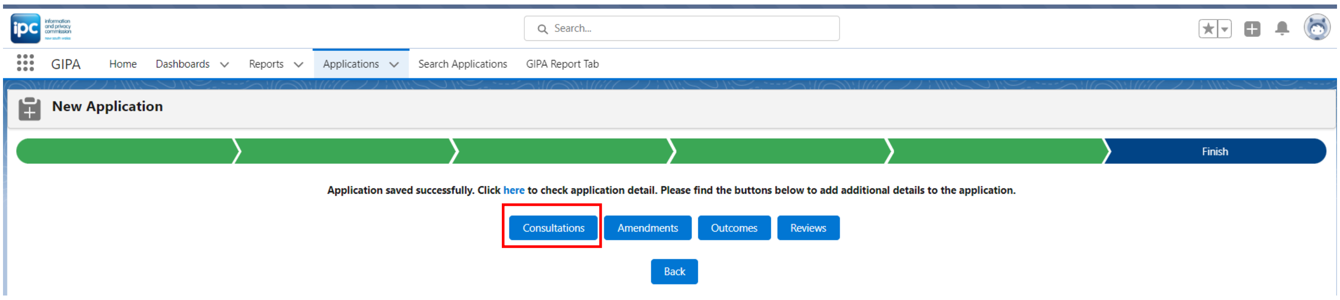
2. Go to the Applications tab
3. Select the application in question
4. Select Edit
5. Go to the bottom of the screen and select Reopen
6. You can then edit the content
7. To close the case again an Outcome must be selected and saved, then completed (Complete Outcome).

- Note that in this instance if the existing outcome is selected then selecting Complete Outcome is all that is required
- When managing an application, an Outcome must be saved then completed (Complete Outcome) and then closed (Close) in separate steps for the application to be closed – i.e., to be Valid – Closed
- To reopen a closed application, follow the same steps as for a Locked application.

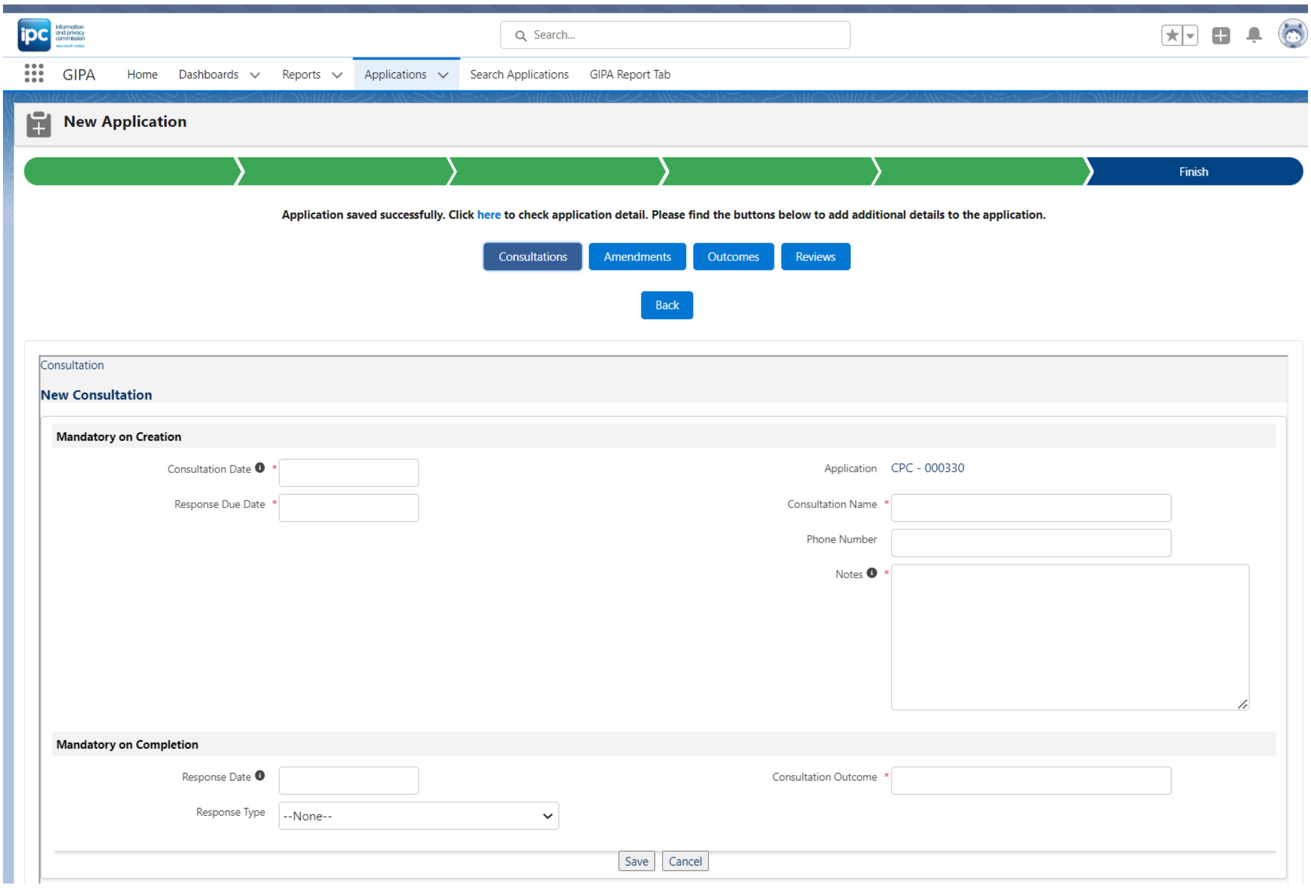
Consultations

Third Party Consultations

Third Party Consultations can be recorded using the Consultations option found on the Finish page of your application.



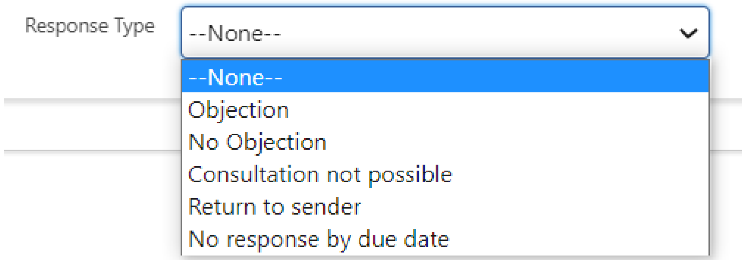
Select Consultations and a screen window will pop up at the bottom of the page.



The consultation has both mandatory fields and non-mandatory fields:

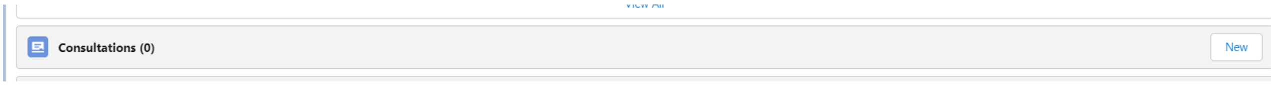
- The Consultation Date is mandatory
- The Consultation Name is a free text box and is mandatory – this is where you record the name of the person with whom the consultation is occurring
- The Phone Number is non-mandatory
- The Response Due Date is mandatory – a consultation cannot be saved without this date being entered
- The Notes field is a free text box and is mandatory – this is where details of the consultation can be recorded
- The Response Date is mandatory and is the date that the response is actually received

- The Response Type field is mandatory and has the following dropdown menu options:



- The Consultation Outcome is a free text field and is mandatory.

You can also access the Consultation section on the Application Detail page. Scroll down to the bottom and select New to add a consultation.



NOTE:

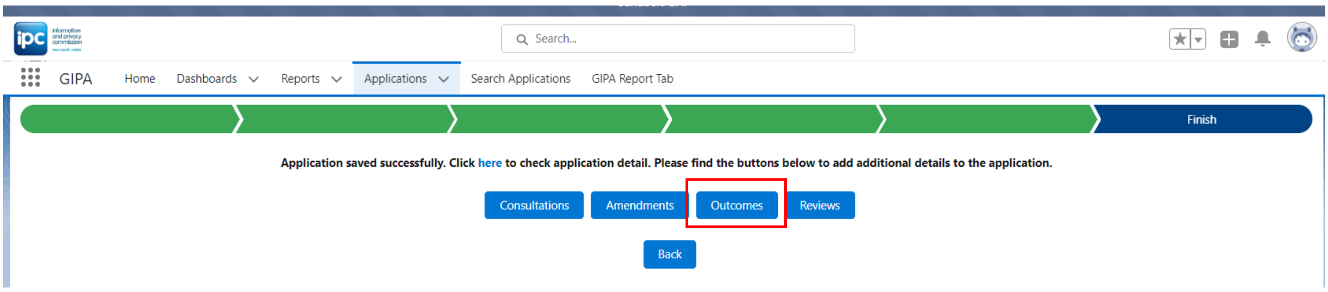
Be sure to record all details correctly – once saved a consultation cannot be edited.

NOTE:

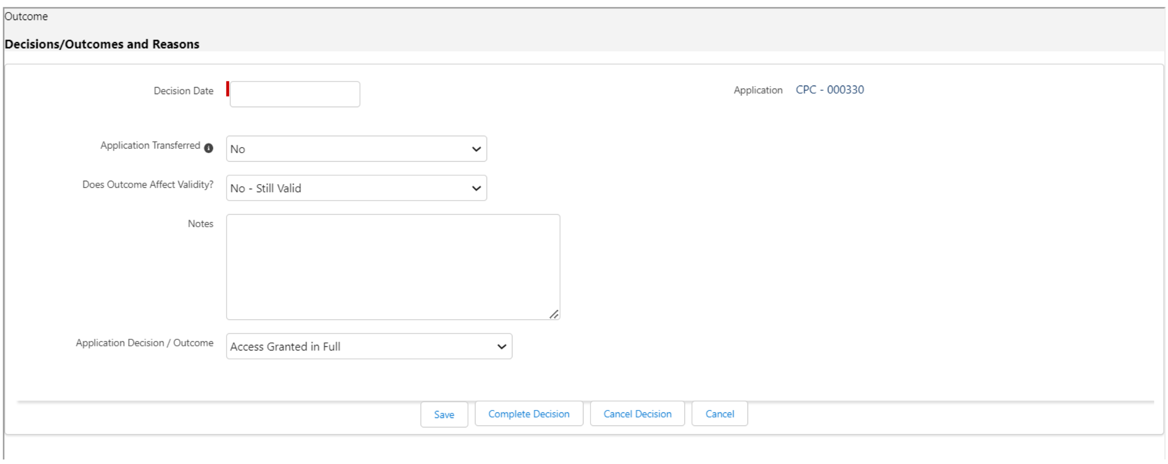
Multiple consultations can be recorded following the same process.

Outcomes

A New Outcome can be recorded at the conclusion of managing an application. The button can be found on the Finish page of your application.

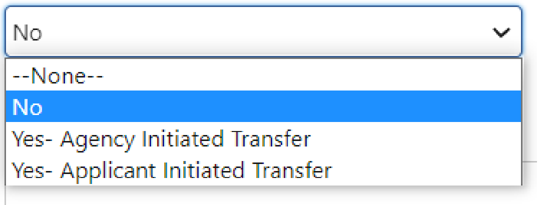


Select Outcomes and a screen window will pop up at the bottom of the page:

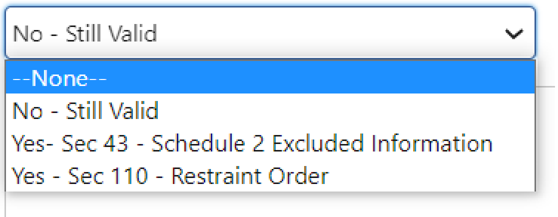


A New Outcome has the following fields:

- The Decision Date field which is mandatory
- The Application Transferred field which is a dropdown menu with the options of:



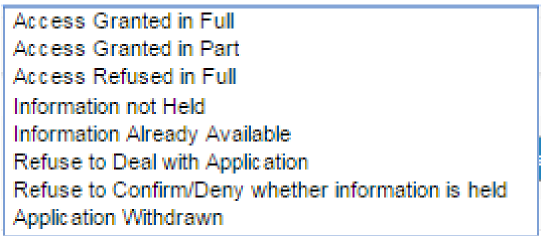
- The Does Outcome Affect Validity? field which is a dropdown menu with the options of:



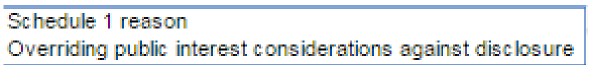
NOTE:

If Yes – Sec 43 – Schedule 2 Excluded Information or Yes – Sec 110 – Restraint Order is selected, then the Application Outcome field will be hidden.

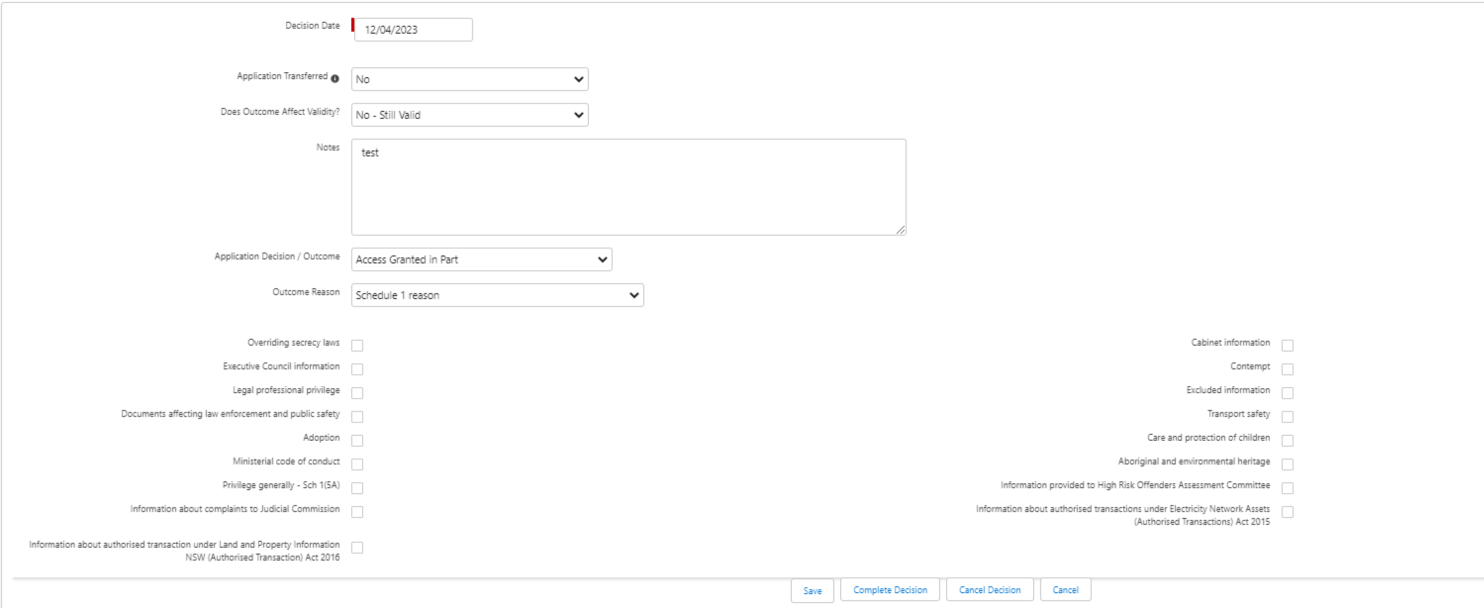
The Application Outcome dropdown menu has the options of:



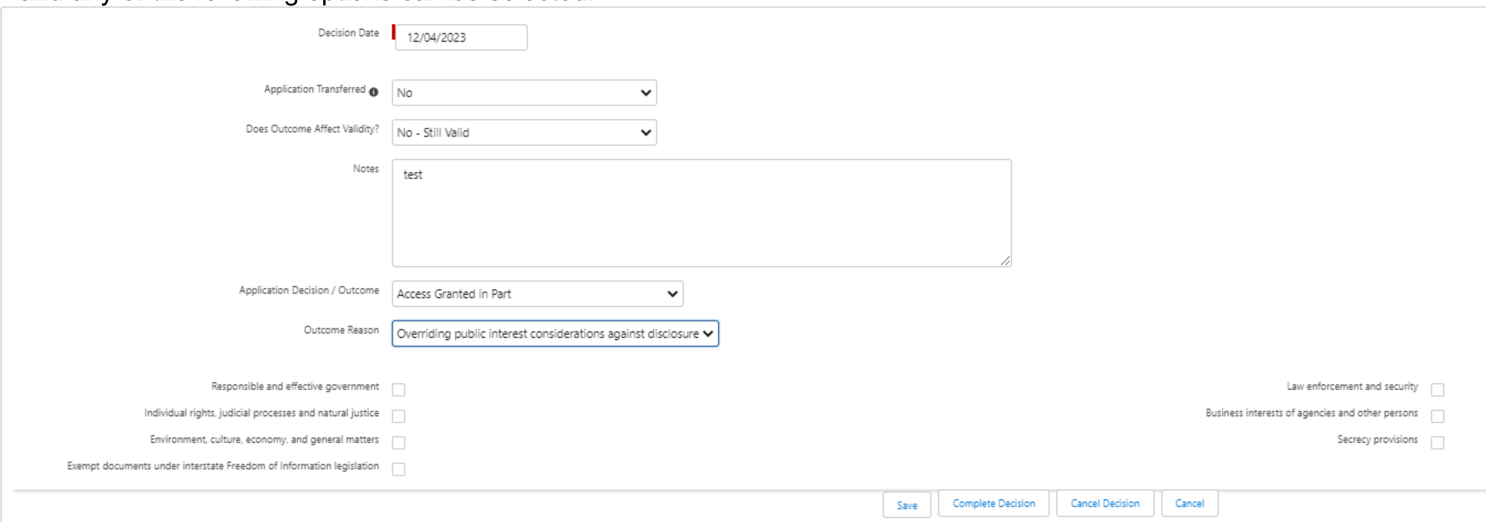
If Access Granted in Part or Access Refused in Full is selected, then an Outcome Reason dropdown menu is exposed with the options of:



Selecting Schedule 1 reason exposes a checklist, and any of the following options can be selected:



Selecting Overriding public interest considerations against disclosure (Section 14 table) exposes an alternative checklist, and any of the following options can be selected:



After saving the Application Status changes to Valid – Outcome.

NOTE:

Completion of the outcome will result in the Application Status changing to Valid – Locked. To do this select the Outcome, Edit then Complete Outcome.

NOTE:

To close an application again, select Edit and then select Close.

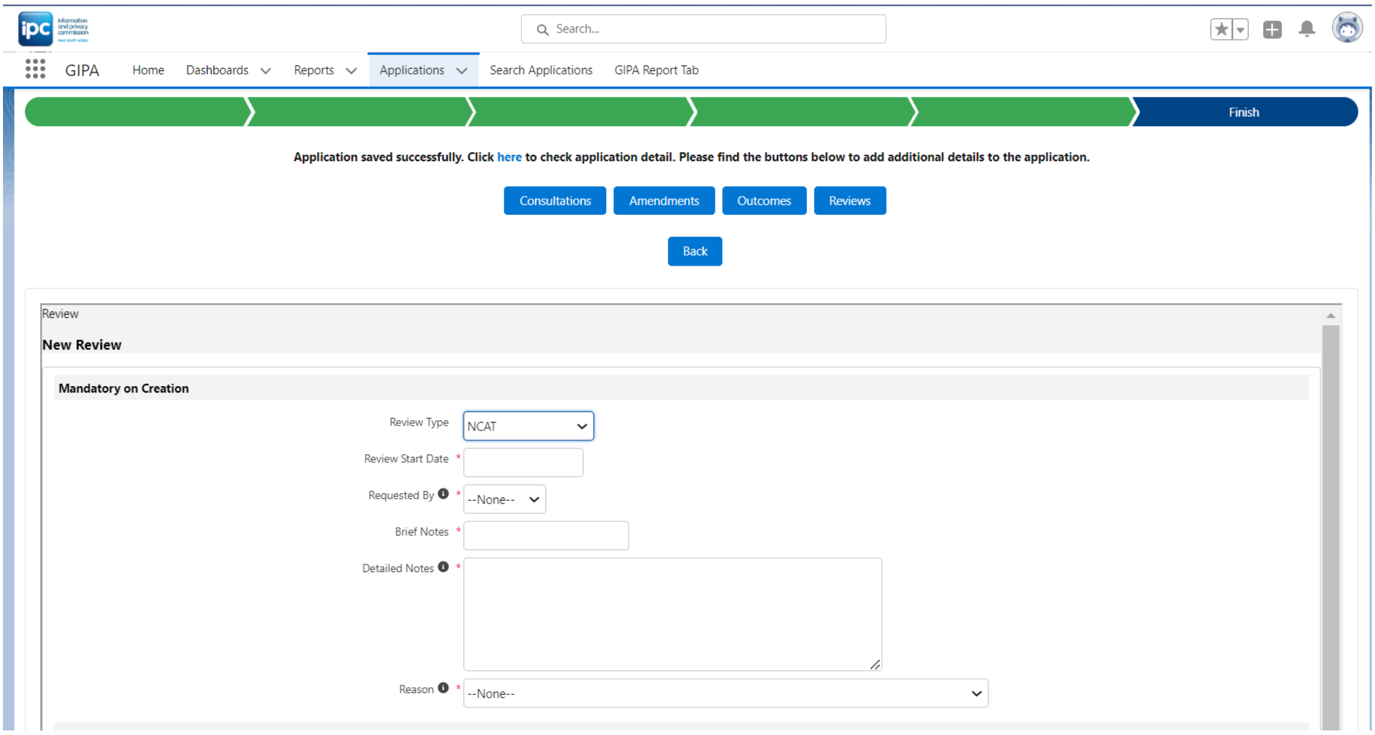
NOTE:

An application must be closed in order to stop the clock and prevent the application from becoming overdue.

Reviews

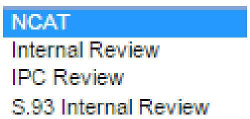
To record a review, a closed application must first be reopened. To do this select Edit for a closed application and then select Reopen. Once this is done all fields can be edited.

To record the review, select Review on the Application Detail page, then select New Review.

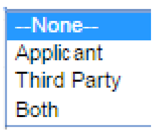


The following fields are exposed and are Mandatory on Creation of a New Review:

- The Review Type field is a dropdown menu with the following options:

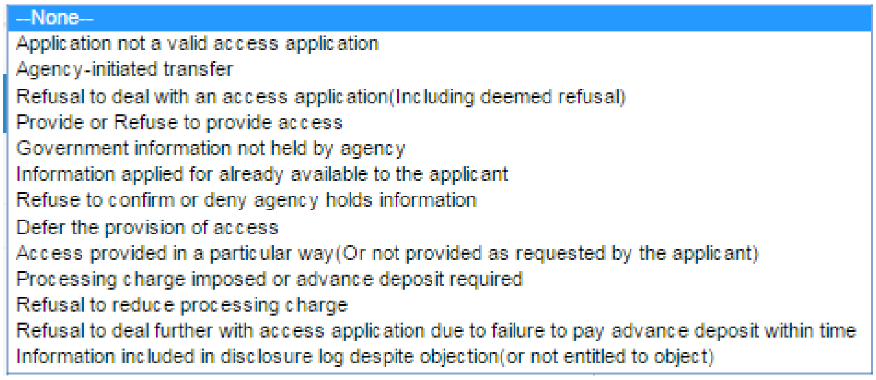


- The Review Start Date field is mandatory and should occur on or after the Application Received Date and on or before the current date
- The Requested By field is mandatory and is a dropdown menu with the following options:

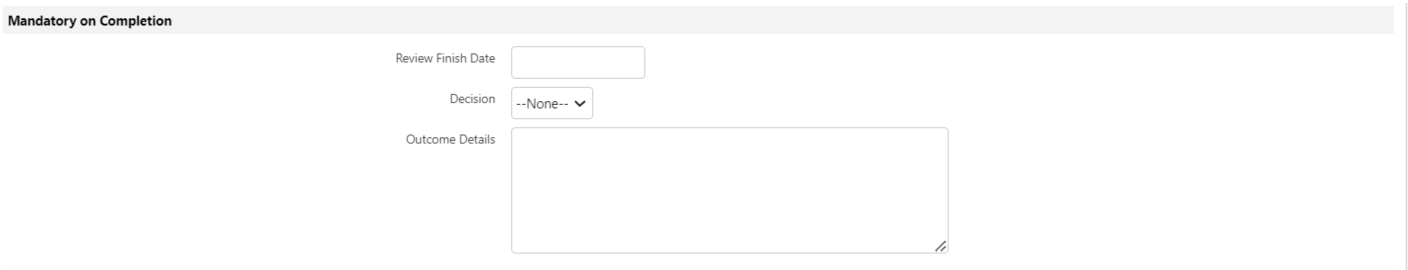


- Brief Notes is a free text field and is mandatory
- Detailed Notes is a free text field and is mandatory

- The Reason field is mandatory and is a dropdown menu with the following options:

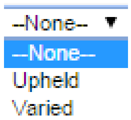


The review can be saved at this point. At a later date the review can be edited again before completion.



The following fields are exposed and are Mandatory on Completion of a review:

- The Review Finish Date field is non-mandatory
- The Decision field is non-mandatory with the options of:



- The Outcome Details field is non-mandatory.

This section also records when an NCAT matter commences and when it is completed.

NOTE:

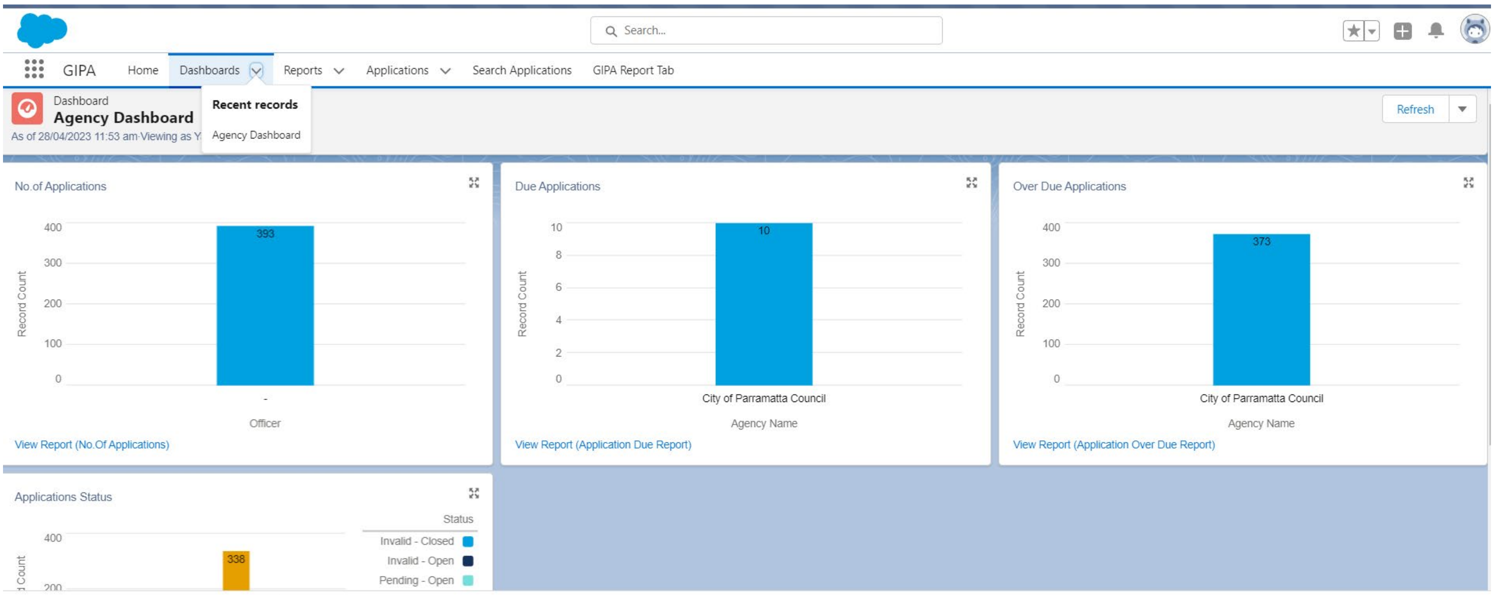
Remember to again close the application, as a New Outcome must be recorded, or the existing one again completed, and the application closed.

Dashboards and Reporting

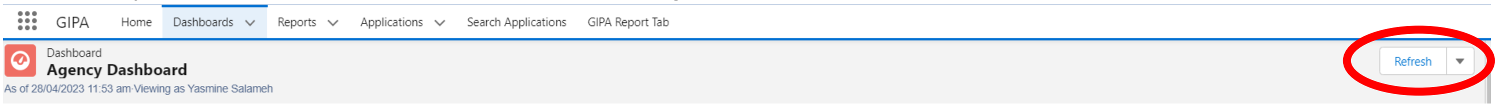
Dashboards

You have a number of dashboards available at log in. Hover over the data fields within each dashboard's chart for further detail. Refer to the landing page under the [Log in to the IPC GIPA Tool](#) on page 2.

You can also view your agency's dashboards by clicking the Dashboards tab and then clicking on Agency Dashboard



To refresh you data, click on the Refresh button on the right hand side of the screen



Each dashboard can be easily printed. Refer to the [Appendix 2](#) of this guide for an example.

Annual GIPA Reporting

All agencies must report annually information and data on their obligations under the GIPA Act.

Agencies should use the GIPA Tool for submitting their report to the IPC. Agencies should not send copies of reports to the IPC.

The IPC's *Guide on GIPA Reporting* explains how to use the IPC GIPA Tool to complete your agency's annual GIPA Report and is available on the [IPC website](#).

Handy Hints

Please find below some hints, tips and notes to assist you when using on the IPC GIPA Tool.

Application – look and feel

Creating an Application is a type of web form – it is designed using a top-down multi-tab approach with the user experience in mind. It is straightforward and easy to use.

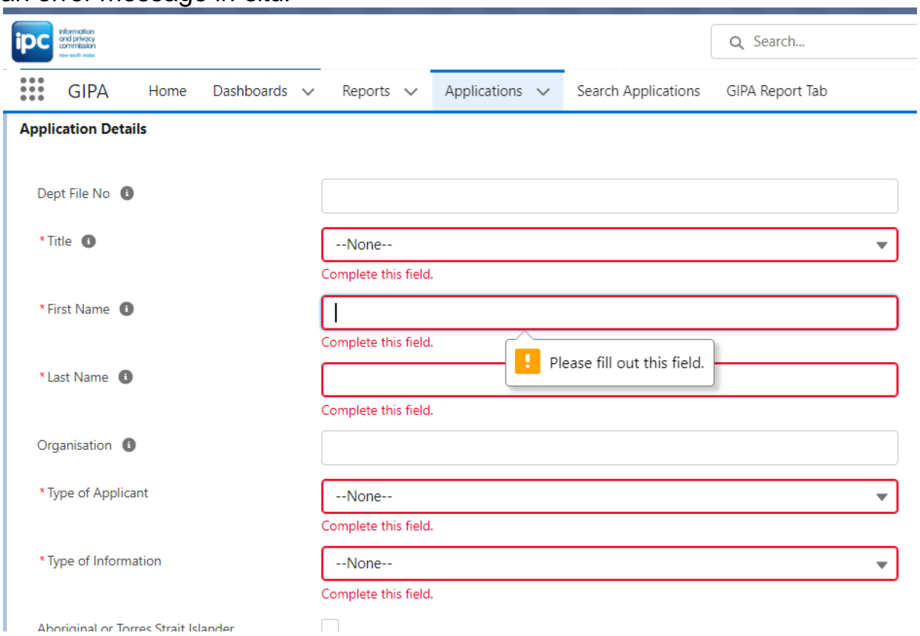
Application – type of information

A Partial selection for Type of Information means that you are entering details within the application that includes personal information.

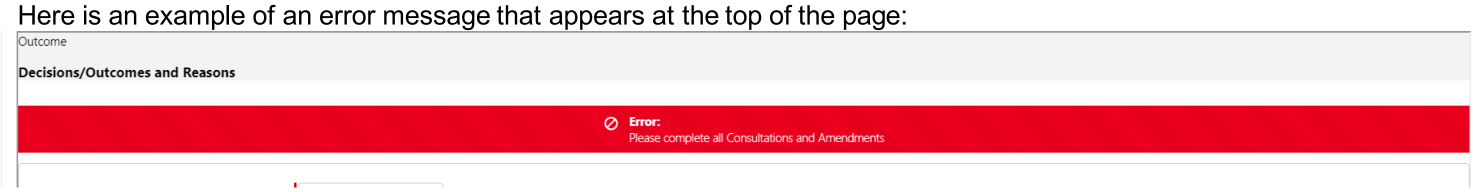
Display of error messages

Not all error messages are displayed in exactly the same place each time. Like most internet forms, some errors may appear in-line where you are, and others may appear at the top of the screen in a message bar error. If you find that you cannot save an application or update and you cannot work out why or see an immediate error message, scroll up to the top of the screen to find the error message.

Here is an example of an error message in-situ:



Here is an example of an error message that appears at the top of the page:



Field validation

Most fields contain validation criteria to ensure that you are saving the correct type of detail into them. Should a save of a tab not work, invalid data entry within a field would usually be the issue, so double-check your entries prior to proceeding.

IPC GIPA Tool account access

All IPC GIPA Tool accounts within an agency have the same access rights. This means that you and others within your agency who have an account can perform exactly the same functions. You can add, update, save, print and delete your own and others' applications within your agency. However, you cannot see or perform these functions on other agencies' applications. Please be mindful of this feature and note that all actions within the IPC GIPA Tool are logged for auditing purposes.

WARNING:

You can delete other officers' applications within your own agency – once deleted, they are not retrievable.

Linking and attaching documents

The IPC GIPA Tool is not a replacement for an agency's record management system. Documents cannot be attached to GIPA applications. Ensure all relevant information pertaining to an application is contained within the application and supplement with 'links' to other material as required. Please note that 'links' are references that can be placed into a Notes field, and are not clickable nor printable references that automatically launch or print for you.

Mandatory fields

All mandatory fields are indicated by a red line on the left-hand side of the text box. Whilst many fields are mandatory, some are not, and while it is advised to include as much information as possible into your application to assist with its processing, it is discretionary whether you enter information into any non-mandatory fields (e.g., country of birth, language).

Printing

Applications and Reports can be printed. Please refer to the examples throughout this guide and in the Appendix.

Public holiday dates

The IPC GIPA Tool incorporates NSW public holidays. Be aware of this when selecting dates (e.g., extension dates) so that you do not add in extra working days to your dates.

Need more help?

General enquiries

For further information or assistance with the IPC GIPA Tool, please contact the IPC on 1800 472 679 or email ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au

NOTE:

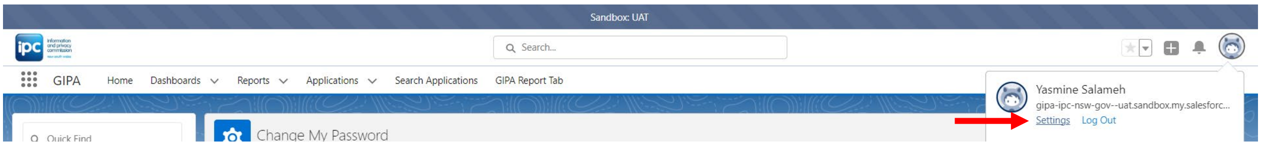
A Tour dialogue box pops up when items are new to you within the IPC GIPA Tool. Help can also be run manually by selecting the Guided Tour or Help and Training links, or clicking Help for this Page.

APPENDIX 1: Security settings

How to change your IPC GIPA Tool password

Your password for the IPC GIPA Tool must be a minimum of eight characters, and contain at least one numeric character. To make your password stronger, best practice suggests at least a 13-character password, with a combination of alphanumeric characters, including use of upper and lower case for the alphabetic characters.

Go to Settings located under your login name:



Then select Change My Password in the options on the left hand side: