



# RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

**Approval Date:** 11 April 2018  
**Review Date:** As required  
**Responsible Officer:** Director of Corporate & Urban Services

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Records Management Policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities and decisions of the Coonamble Shire Council are created, managed and disposed of appropriately to meet the Coonamble Shire Council's organisational needs and accountability requirements. The Policy will also seek to ensure that Council achieves the following objectives:

- To manage records efficiently and effectively;
- To meet accountability requirements and community expectations;
- To comply with legislative and policy requirements relating to record keeping practices.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Coonamble Shire Council recognises that records are a vital asset to:

- support its program delivery, management and administration
- deliver customer services in an efficient, fair and equitable manner
- provide evidence of actions and decisions and precedents for future decision making, and
- protect the rights and interests of Government, Coonamble Shire Council and its clients and citizens.

A small percentage of Coonamble Shire Council's records will become archives, part of the cultural resources of the State.

Coonamble Shire Council is committed to adhere to the New South Wales State Records Act 1998 S.12.(2), Local Government Regulations and any Standard or other Regulation applying to Record and Information Management.

This policy applies to all Council officials, including staff, contractors, consultants and volunteers, in their conduct of official business for Coonamble Shire Council. This policy applies to records in all formats, including electronic records.

### **3. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS**

#### **Records Management Program**

##### **3.1 Objectives of the Records Management Program**

A records management program is a planned, co-ordinated set of policies, procedures, people, systems and activities that are required to manage records.

The Coonamble Shire Council's Records Management Program seeks to ensure that:

- it has the records it needs to support ongoing business activity and customer service, meet accountability requirements and community expectations
- these records are managed efficiently and effectively
- these records can be easily retrieved and used
- the [public office] complies with all requirements concerning records and records management practices
- records of longer term value are identified and protected for historical and other research.

See Appendix A for a list of legislation and government directions which affect recordkeeping.

##### **3.2 Organisation and management of the Coonamble Shire Council's Records Management Program**

A records management program encompasses the management framework, people and systems required within an organisation to manage full and accurate records over time. Coonamble Shire Council supports a Centralised Management Program where activities are carried out by records staff which is located in one location. The Director of Corporate & Urban Services is responsible for the management of the Records Management Program. See 4.3.

##### **3.3 Elements of the Records Management Program**

**Creation** - Employees should ensure that they create official records of all decisions and transactions made in the course of their official business. This can include making file notes of telephone conversations and minutes of meetings etc.

All paper based records should be placed on an official file. Files are registered in the file database and given a unique number. File titles/numbers can be obtained from E drive under registers, Files. New file numbers are allocated by the Records Officer. All official outgoing communications, including letters, faxes, and e-mails, should contain reference to the file number. If the outgoing communications are a response to an incoming document then the document number must also be referenced.

Activities and business transacted electronically, including email, also need to be captured into an official recordkeeping system. Print the document and refer to the Records Officer to register into the records management software.

Whenever new databases and automated systems are being designed, the Records Officer should be consulted to determine whether and what records should be created by the system.

For existing electronic systems and databases it is important to ensure that information is kept and readable for as long as required. This may entail the migration of data when new systems are introduced.

**Maintenance** - The location of each record needs to be recorded and updated at every movement of the record. This ensures that records, as assets, can be accounted for in the same way that the other assets of the Coonamble Shire Council are. Staff members should notify the Records Officer when passing records on to another officer.

**Storage** -Current hardcopy records should be stored in the designated storage areas for current records with appropriate restrictions, eg Payroll, Workers Compensation and the centralised filing room.

Rarely used records should be transferred to the archive room located at the back of the Administration Building of Coonamble Shire Council.

Records which are no longer in use for official purposes and that are required as State archives under a current Retention and Disposal Authority should be forwarded to the Records Officer.

**Protection of Records** - Under the State Records Act 1998 (NSW), Council records are deemed to be State records. Employees are obliged to handle records sensibly and with care and respect so as to avoid damage to records and to prolong their lifespan. Employees must not alienate, relinquish control over, damage, alter or destroy Coonamble Shire Council records

**Disposal** -Council records are disposed of in accordance with the General retention and disposal authority: local government records (GA39) – and the Guidelines of Normal Administrative Practice (State Records Act 1998).

Employees who wish to initiate the archiving and/or disposal of records are required to contact the Customer Service & Administration Officer – Records.

Records cannot be disposed of without the concurrence of the relevant manager and only after being submitted to the General Manager for approval.

**Archives** -The Retention and Disposal Authorities indicate which records of the organisation are required as State archives. The Customer Service & Administration Officer – Records is responsible for transferring these records to the State Records Authority of NSW in accordance with the Records Management Procedures.

**Access** - Records must be available to all authorised staff that require access to them for business purposes, unless the access contravenes the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

All access to Coonamble Shire Council records by members of the public, including Freedom of Information requests, will be in accordance with the Records Management Procedures.

**Confidentiality and Privacy** - Council officials have a legal responsibility to protect confidential and personal information which they may come across in the course of their official duties. Council information must be released in accordance by authorised officers in accordance with relevant legislation.

Section 7.10 of Council's Code of Conduct states that in use of Council information, Council officials must:

- protect confidential information
- not use confidential information for any non-official purpose
- only release confidential information if you have authority to do so
- only use confidential information for the purpose it is intended to be used
- only release other information in accordance with established Council policies and procedures and in compliance with relevant legislation
- not use Council information for personal purposes
- not disclose any information discussed during a confidential session of a Council meeting.

**Contractors and Outsourced Functions** - All records created by contractors performing work on behalf of the Coonamble Shire Council belong to the Coonamble Shire Council and are State records under the State Records Act 1998. This includes the records of contract staff working on the premises as well as external service providers.

Contracts should clearly state that ownership of records resides with Coonamble Shire Council, and instructions regarding creation, management, and access to the records created. The Manager of Corporate Services/Records Officer should be consulted during the formulation of the contract.

## **4 Responsibilities**

### **4.1 General Manager**

- Ensures that the Coonamble Shire Council complies with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* and the standards and requirements issued under the Act
- Ensures that the Coonamble Shire Council complies with other legislation relating to records management and recordkeeping.

### **4.2 Director of Corporate & Urban Services**

- Ensures that the Records Management Program is adequately resourced
- Represents records management interests on the Executive
- Has ownership of the *Records Management Policy*
- Reports to the State Records Authority on the Records Management Program eg. responds to records management surveys.

### **4.3 Customer Service & Administration Officer – Records**

- Compiles *Records Management Policy* and *Procedures* and standards in relation to all aspects of records management

- Monitors compliance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedures* and standards across the Coonamble Shire Council and makes recommendations for improvement or modification of practices
- Designs and advises on recordkeeping systems
- Manages the records management software/file register etc
- Authorise the disposal of records, in liaison with relevant manager
- Ensures that all staff are aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities
- Coordinates a records management training program
- Develops strategic and operational plans for the Records Management Program
- Formulates and maintains retention and disposal authorities
- Formulates and maintains vital records lists and counter disaster plans
- Responsible for the conduct of records management operations.

#### **4.4 Senior Customer Service & Finance Officer – IT**

- Provides support and infrastructure to ensure that records kept in electronic form are managed so that they are accessible, readable, inviolate, complete, comprehensive, and authentic for as long as required
- Ensures that information management policies and projects take into account the special nature of records
- Liaises with Records Officer regarding counter disaster planning for electronic records.

#### **4.5 Business Unit Managers (Snr Technical Officer, Executive Officers' Team Leaders etc)**

- Ensure that records are created and managed within their business unit in a way which complies with the *Records Management Policy and Procedures*
- Ensure that staff are trained in how to create and manage records
- Authorise the destruction of records, along with Records Officer
- Consult with the Records Officer when introducing new activities and systems to ensure that records are created, and that relevant terms appear in the thesaurus
- Determine legislative requirements for records relating to their specific activities
- Ensure that contract with service providers contain records management clauses in accordance with this *Records Management Policy*.

#### **4.6 All staff**

- Comply with *Records Management Policy and Procedures*
- Create full and accurate records of their business activities.

#### **4.7 Contractors**

- Manage records that they create on behalf of the [public office] according to the terms of their contract.

## **Appendix A - Legislative and Other Requirements for Recordkeeping Legislation**

- State Records Act 1998
- State Records Amendment Act 2005
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA)
- Privacy and Protection of Personal Information Act 1998
- Evidence Act 1995
- Public Finance and Audit Act 1983
- Copyright Act 1968
- Environmental Protection and Assessment Act 1979
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- AS ISO 15489

### **Other requirements for recordkeeping**

- Council's Code of Conduct

## **Appendix B - Glossary of Terms**

This glossary has been compiled from the *State Records Authority Glossary of Recordkeeping Terms*. Sources of terms include Australian and international standards on records management.

**Access** - Right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving information. *AS ISO 15489 Part 1 Clause 3.1*

**Appraisal** - The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations. *AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.3*

**Archives** - Those records that are appraised as having continuing value. *AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.5*

**Classification** - Systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in a classification system. *AS ISO 15489 Part 1 Clause 3.5*

**Counter disaster plan** - A plan for measures to be taken for disaster prevention, disaster response and recovery and vital records protection.

**Disposal** - A range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions. These include the retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from recordkeeping systems. They may also include the migration or transmission of records between recordkeeping systems, and the transfer of custody or ownership of records. *AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.9*

**Recordkeeping** - Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. *AS 4390-1996, Part 1.4.19*

**Recordkeeping requirements** - Requirements arising from regulatory sources, business needs and community expectations that identify the types of records that should be created and the management framework needed in order to have, and accountably manage, all the business information that is necessary for an organisation.

**Recordkeeping systems** - Information systems which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time. *AS 4390-1996, Part 1. Clause 4.20*

**Records** - Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. *AS ISO 15489 Part 1 Clause 3.15* Any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means. *State Records Act 1998(NSW)*

**Records management** - Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. *AS ISO 15489 Part 1 Clause 3.16*

**Records management program** - A records management program encompasses the management framework, the people and the systems required within an organisation to manage full and accurate records over time.

**Retention and Disposal Authority** - Documents authorised by the Board of State Records NSW that set out appropriate retention periods for classes of records. There are two main types:

- Functional retention and disposal authorities authorise the retention and disposal of records unique to a specific organisation.
- General retention and disposal authorities authorise the retention and disposal of records common to more than one organisation.

**State archive** - A State record that the State Records Authority of New South Wales has control of under the *State Records Act, 1998 (NSW)*.

**Thesaurus** - A thesaurus is a controlled list of terms linked together by semantic, hierarchical, associative or equivalence relationships. Such tools act as a guide to allocating classification terms to individual records. In a thesaurus the meaning of the term is specified and hierarchical relationships to other terms shown. A thesaurus provides sufficient entry points to allow users to navigate from terms which are not to be used to the preferred terminology adopted by the organisation. *AS ISO 15489 Part 2 Clause 4.2.3.2*

**Vital records** - Those records that are essential for the ongoing business of an agency, and without which the agency could not continue to function effectively. The identification and protection of such records is a primary object of records management and counter disaster planning.

#### 4. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be automatically revoked at the expiration of twelve months after the declaration of the poll for the next general NSW Local Government Election, unless Council revokes it sooner.

Note: Automatic revocation of the policy is provided for by section 165(4) of the Local Government Act 1993. The next general local government election is expected to be held in September 2020.

This policy may also be reviewed and updated as necessary when legislation requires it; or Council's functions, structure or activities change; or when technological advances or new systems change the way that Council manages its Records.

#### **Policy Review History**

Date	Changes Made	Approved By
January 2017	Policy Reviewed – Included Protection of Records & Privacy & Confidentiality clause	
February 2018	Policy Reviewed – Included Policy Review details	Council at meeting on 11 April 2018 Min #3024 (on public exhibition until 23 March 2018 – no submissions received.