

1. Purpose

The Warrumbungle Shire Council's policy on records management is to effectively manage information, relating to both physical and electronic formats.

For evidential purposes and accountability the Council needs to be able to identify and control their records.

The objectives of the State Records Act 1998 are –

- to ensure the better management of Government records throughout their existence
- to promote more efficient and accountable Government through improved record keeping
- to provide better protection for an important part of the State's cultural heritage
- ensure the safe custody and proper preservation of the State's records that it has control of.

Part 2 of the State Records Act 1998 - is concerned with:

- protecting records in the custody of a public office
- making and keeping full and accurate records of its activities
- establishing and maintaining a records management program in conformity with standards and codes of best practice which may be issued by State Records
- making arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the records management program
- keeping technology dependent records accessible.

A systematic approach to records management within Warrumbungle Shire Council is vital to protect the information contained in records and support the conduct of business activities.

The regulation of records management practices ensures that uniform protection is given to all records and that information can be readily retrieved owing to a standard form of identification and retrieval procedures.

2. Objectives of the Policy

This Policy establishes a framework for the records management program and outlines responsibilities for the operation of the Council's Records Management Program. All procedures and practices concerning records management are to be in accordance with this document.

The purpose of the Records Management Policy is also to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities and decisions of the Warrumbungle Shire Council are created, managed and retained or disposed of appropriately, and in accordance with relevant legislation. This will enable the Council to achieve information accessibility, business enhancement and improvement. It will also meet its obligations for accountability while ensuring that it protects the rights and interests of the Government, the organisation, its staff, clients and the community.

3. Policy Scope

All staff, contractors and consultants must comply with this policy, and associated Records Management Procedures, in their conduct of official business for the Council. This policy applies to records in all formats, including electronic records.

This Policy is issued under the authority of the General Manager and is available to all staff. The Policy will be reviewed and amended as required in consultation with Directors, Managers and staff of council.

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring that Warrumbungle Shire Council complies with the regulations and requirements of the State Records Act.

The Director responsible for records management is the Director of Corporate Services and is accountable for the records and document management systems.

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the operational and efficient management of council records incorporating sound recordkeeping principles and records management best practice guidelines rests with the Manager Administration & Customer Service. Records staff will assist staff in fulfilling their recordkeeping responsibilities.

The Manager Administration & Customer Service has the authority to set and issue corporate standards in relation to all aspects of records management and to monitor and audit compliance with those standards.

4. Background

This policy has been prepared on the basis of adherence to the statutory requirements detailed in the State Records Act 1998 and to enhance effective information management and retrieval within the Council.

4.1 Legislative Requirements

The records management and recordkeeping practices of the Warrumbungle Shire Council and its staff will comply with relevant Acts and Regulations, standards and other mandatory requirements relating to records management.

These include:

- State Records Act 1998 (NSW)
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)
- Limitations Act 1969 (NSW)
- Australian Standard AS 4390 Records Management
- Standard on Records Management Programs
- Standard on Full and Accurate Records
- Policy on Electronic Recordkeeping
- General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records (GA39)

5. Definitions

Records Management focuses on the management of records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

Document Management focuses on the management of records such as documents produced by word processing packages, E-mail packages, spread sheet packages.

Image Management focuses on the management of electronic images of documents, drawings and pictures.

In many official documents such as legislation, bills and standards, the term '**record**' is used to mean '**document**'.

For the purpose of this policy:

"a record is any information captured in a reproducible form which is capable of transmitting meaning from one user to another."

Reproducible forms include paper, optical disk, magnetic tape, microfilm, scanned electronic image, computer disks, audio tape, photograph.

A State Record is defined under the terms of the State Records Act 1998 as follows:

"any record made and kept, or received and kept, by any person in the course of the exercise of official functions in a public office, or for any purpose of a public office, or for the use of a public office"

Below is a list of terms used that staff will come across from time to time.

Archives	Those records selected and retained permanently because of their administrative, financial, legal, research or informational value.
Active Records	Current/frequently used in the normal course of business.
Custody	The responsibility for the care of records, archives or other material, based on their physical possession. Custody does not always include legal ownership, or the right to control access to records.
Disposal	A program of activities to include the migration or transmission of records between recordkeeping systems and the transfer of custody or ownership of records. It includes retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from recordkeeping systems.
Disposal Schedule	A systematic listing of records which plans the life of those records from the time of their creation to their disposal.
Inactive Records	No longer required in the normal course of business
Recordkeeping	Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evident of business transactions in the form of recorded information
Recordkeeping systems	Information systems, which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time.
Register / Registration	The act of giving a record a unique identity in a recordkeeping system

Semi-Active Records	Required for the normal course of business, but are no longer required for frequent reference. (Used less than three (3) times per month)
Tracking	Capturing and maintaining information about the movement and uses of records

6. Policy Statement

- 6.1 The Warrumbungle Shire Council recognises that records are a vital asset to:
- facilitate information accessibility, and enhance business by supporting 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, [the public office] and its clients and citizens.

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

6.2 Purpose of the Records Management Program

Records management is the discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations. Council is committed to maintaining a records management program that meets its business needs and accountability requirements.

An effective records management program entrenches formalised standards, procedures, recordkeeping systems and controls for future expansion and needs. Records are a vital ingredient in the support of Council's ongoing business activities. Access to records-based information is achieved through the provision of effective recordkeeping which support business operations and enable the Council to meet statutory and accountability requirements

6.3 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 Council's Records Management Program seeks to ensure that:

- it has the records it needs to support and enhance ongoing business and customer service, meet accountability requirements and community expectations
- these records are managed efficiently and can be easily accessed and used for as long as they are required
- records are stored as cost-effectively as possible and when no longer required they are disposed of in a timely and efficient manner
- the Council complies with all requirements concerning records and records management practices
- records of longer term value are identified and protected for historical and other research.

The organisation is committed, through its Records Management Program, to maintaining digital and other technology dependent records in authentic and accessible form for as long as they are required in accordance with s.14 of the *State Records Act 1998*.

6.4 Elements of the Records Management Program - Creation and capture

The Council has endorsed the use of a number of standard, open source file formats. These formats have been chosen to streamline the ongoing management of the Council's records and should be the only formats used for the creation of records.

Staff should ensure that they create official records of all decisions and actions made in the course of their official business. For example, if business is transacted by telephone, file notes of the key points in the conversation should be documented. Official meetings should include the taking of minutes.

To assist in promoting the responsible creation of records, the capture of essential information and the management of records over time, business units are responsible for defining their recordkeeping requirements and creating procedures to ensure their capture.

All records defined by the organisation as important to create should be captured into Council's recordkeeping systems so they can be managed appropriately.

Records should be placed on an official file. File titles are listed in Council's records management program (InfoXpert) and each record is given a unique number. All official outgoing communications, including letters, faxes, e-mails etc should contain reference to the file or document number.

6.5 Storage

Current hardcopy records should be stored in designated storage areas for current records. Rarely used records or records no longer in use for official purposes that are still required to be retained in accordance with the current *Retention and Disposal Authority* should be forwarded to the records officers for action.

Electronic records may either be retained online (on servers) or offline (on CD Roms, DVDs, magnetic disks or other removable media). Records of short term value will be disposed of at suitable intervals by records staff. Records of long term or archival value should be retained online wherever possible and managed in accordance with the *Records Management Procedures*.

If vital records are stored on removable media, copies should be made and sent to records staff for retention. Removable media should be forwarded to records staff when rarely or no longer used for official purposes.

6.6 Maintenance and monitoring

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 Council are. Staff members should notify the records staff when records are required for access from the compactus and when passing records on to another officer.

The Manager Administration & Customer Service is responsible for ensuring that records and environmental conditions are monitored regularly to protect records and ensuring that digital records are refreshed or replicated when scheduled, when new storage devices and media are being installed or when degradation is detected.

Maintenance of electronic records can also entail the migration of data. Migrations must be authorised by The Manager Administration & Customer Service and Manager Communications & IT and must produce authentic, complete, accessible and useable records.

6.7 Disposal

The Council uses the State Records NSW *General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records* covering records relating to its core functions and activities.

6.8 Transfer

The Council has a storage facility at the Coonabarabran Depot for the storage of physical records that are infrequently used for business purposes but still need to be retained according to the *General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records*. The Records staff are responsible for transferring these records to the facility.

6.9 Access

Records must be available to all authorised staff that require access to them for business purposes.

6.10 Monitoring of the Records Management Program

Monitoring of the records management program is undertaken by the Manager Administration & Customer Service with results being reported to the Director Corporate Services.

6.11 Value of records as a corporate asset and resource

The records of Council are a valuable and important information resource and in many cases are unique and vital assets for its daily functions and operations that often cannot be easily reconstructed or replaced. They exist for a variety of administrative, functional, historical and legal reasons.

Records are the major component of the Council's corporate memory. They provide evidence of actions and decisions and document Council's transactions.

6.12 Archives

The purpose of an archives program is to:

- establish and maintain physical and intellectual control over the Council's semi-active and inactive records
- establish and maintain a system to transfer information to non-current storage, to facilitate quick access and to alleviate storage problems of paper files.
- preserve the physical condition of those records in the archive's custody which have been selected as potential State Archives by the Archives Authority prior to transfer to the State Archives.

6.13 Disposal

The two main components of disposal are Retention and Destruction.

The Director of Corporate Services and Manager Administration & Customer Service are accountable for the disposal of records. This will be carried out in accordance with the Local Government Records Disposal Authority (GA 39).

Destruction is authorised only by official disposal schedules. Destruction of records will be carried out to ensure that sensitive or confidential information is protected from exposure.

If there is a need to destroy records or documents, staff should contact the Manager Administration & Customer Service.

6.14 Risk Management (Vital Records) – Records Security

The security of all Council records is crucial as records provide evidence of business transactions, support management decisions and ensure public accountability requirements are met.

Records in all formats should be stored securely to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal.

Records which are integral to the conduct of Warrumbungle Shire Council's business require special measures to protect them from damage or destruction. Risk assessment is necessary to identify vulnerable records.

Vital records should be classified as such and clearly identified. Vital records should be stored in protective or fire resistant conditions with suitable access conditions. Confidential records should be stored in locked storage cabinets in a fire proof safe with access restrictions.

6.15 Audit

Regular audits of the records and document management systems shall be carried out to ensure that it is operating efficiently, that all records can be accounted for (including destruction that has taken place within audit period) and to identify and resolve any anomalies in the system.

7. Responsibilities

All persons using the records and document management system should be aware of the requirements of the system.

Particular care must be taken with regard to the following activities:

- classifying, titling, indexing, registering and numbering files and documents;
- distribution – document/file movement and tracking, circulation and dissemination;
- maintenance – storage, file attachments, copying and data conversion;
- authorising records for destruction;
- choosing and purchasing of records management equipment;
- reviewing the records and document management system;

- maintaining, implementing and changing all or any part of the records management system.

7.1 Obligations of Records Users

Staff members shall not alienate, relinquish control over or destroy records of Council without authorisation to do so.

Staff members shall ensure that records in any format, including electronic documents and electronic messages are captured into the Council's recordkeeping systems.

Staff members are required to following authorised procedures in carrying out records management functions.

Staff members are required to handle records with care and respect in a sensible manner, to avoid damaging records, with a view to prolonging their life span.

Smoking, eating and drinking should not occur near records or in records storage areas.

7.2 Areas of Responsibility

The following table defines the areas of responsibility for all persons dealing with information:

Manager Administration & Customer Service - is responsible for:

- Determining and maintaining document management policy and standards throughout Warrumbungle Shire Council;
- Actively promoting the concept and usage of the Document Management System;
- Developing strategies for document management in the storage and retrieval of both physical and electronic records;
- Implementing records management policies and procedures;
- Monitoring the implementation of the requirements of the record keeping standards - Full and Accurate Records and Records Management Programs.
- Ensuring that physical and electronic records disposal schedules are utilised and that disposal of records or documents is in accordance with those schedules;
- Ensure regular audits of the records and document management system; and
- Ensure the integrity of the system - maintenance and updates.
- Supervising and allocating of work to clerical staff, and to ensure accurate sorting, indexing, filing and distribution of all incoming and outgoing correspondence;
- Providing efficient and effective day to day management of the records section to ensure that procedures are implemented and maintained for all records management functions;

Records Officers - are responsible for:

- Opening, sorting and delivery of incoming mail;
- Preparing all outward mail and parcels for despatch;

- Assisting individual users in the indexing of documents they create.
- Scanning, registering and allocating of correspondence;
- Creation of new and part files according to established practices;
- Attending to enquiries relating to file identification, movements and locations;
- Providing access to active files and recording file movement;
- Maintain regular audits of the records and document management system;
- Maintain the integrity of the system – accurate and up to date;
- Assisting in the development and implementation of improvements to the records and document management system;
- Assisting in records and document management training programs including on the job training.
- Maintaining databases recording active, semi active and inactive files;
- Providing access to and retrieving archived files;

Individual Users – are responsible for:

- Creation of records which will adequately document the business activities in which they take part and registering of those records into the recordkeeping system
- Accurately indexing documents they create.
- Active, semi-active and inactive files held or accessed by them
- Return of files to Records Officers when action has been completed on a file or further action is not contemplated in the immediate future.

8. Associated Documents

Standards, Policies and Procedures produced by State Records of NSW from time to time including Standard on Full and Accurate Records (Standard 7) and Standard on Managing a Records Management Program (Standard 8).

9. Getting Help

The staff members who can assist with enquiries about this Policy are:

Positions: The Manager Administration & Customer Service or Records Officers

Department: Administration Services within Corporate Services

10. Version Control

Review Date: June 2015

Staff Member responsible for Review: Manager Administration & Customer Service

Policy	Version	Resolution	Date
Records Management Policy	1	119	22 October 2009
Records Management Policy	2	Endorsed by MANEX	14 May 2014