

# Warrumbungle Shire Council Records Management Strategy

Resolution 156/2021  
19 November 2020

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out an overarching framework for integrating current records management initiatives, as well as recommending new ones. It defines a strategy for improving the quality, availability and effective use of records at Warrumbungle Shire Council ('Council') and provides a strategic framework for all records management activities. This will enable overall coordination of all records management activities and ensure alignment with Council's business strategies.

1.2 The records management strategy should be read in conjunction with Council's Records Management Policy for Councillors; Records Management Procedure for Councillors; and Records Management Policy.

## 2. Objectives

2.1 The objectives of Council's records management strategy are to ensure:

- A systematic and planned approach to records management covering records from creation to disposal;
- Efficiency and best value through improvements in the quality and flow of information, and greater coordination of records and storage systems;
- Compliance with statutory requirements;
- Awareness of the importance of records management and the need for responsibility and accountability at all levels; and
- Appropriate archiving of Council's records.

## 3. Scope

3.1 This strategy relates to all operational records held in any format by Council as required by section 12.1 of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) ('the Act'):

*"12 RECORDS MANAGEMENT OBLIGATIONS*

*"(1) Each public office must make and keep full and accurate records of the activities of the office."*

3.2 These include records held in all formats, including but not necessarily limited to:

- Paper records, reports, minutes, diaries and registers;
- Electronic records;
- Audio and video tapes.

## 4. Associated Legislation and Documents

<b>Associated Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>State Records Act 1998</i> (NSW)</li><li>• <i>Government Information and Public Access Act 2009</i> (NSW)</li></ul>
<b>Associated Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Records Management for Councillors (draft)</li><li>• Records Management Policy (Management)</li></ul>
<b>Associated Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Records Management for Councillors Procedure</li><li>• Records Management Procedure (management)</li><li>• <i>State Records 'General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records'</i></li></ul>

## **5. Key Elements**

**5.1** The records management strategy comprises the following key elements:

### **5.1.1 Responsibility and Accountability**

*To provide a clear system of accountability and responsibility for record keeping and use.*

It is important that all individuals undertaking Council business appreciate the need for responsibility and accountability in the creation, amendment, management, storage of and access to all Council records. A major target is therefore to have a clear chain of managerial responsibility and accountability for all records created by Council. This is the prerequisite for an effectively coordinated records management strategy.

### **5.1.2 Record Quality**

*To create and keep records that are adequate, consistent, and necessary for statutory, legal and business requirements.*

Council records should be accurate and complete, in order to facilitate audit, fulfil Council's obligations, and protect its legal and other rights. Records should show proof of their validity and authenticity so that any evidence derived from them is clearly credible and authoritative.

### **5.1.3 Management**

*To achieve systematic, orderly and consistent creation, retention, appraisal and disposal procedures for records throughout their life cycle.*

Record-keeping systems should be easy to understand, clear, and efficient in terms of minimising staff time and optimising the use of space for storage.

### **5.1.4 Security**

*To provide systems which maintain appropriate confidentiality, security and integrity for records in their storage and use.*

Records must be kept securely to protect the confidentiality and authenticity of their contents, and to provide further evidence of their validity in the event of a legal challenge.

### **5.1.5 Access**

*To provide clear and efficient access for employees and others who have a legitimate right of access to Council records, and ensure compliance with government information legislation.*

Access is a key part of any records management strategy. Fast, efficient access to records unlocks the information and knowledge they contain.

### **5.1.6 Audit**

*To audit and measure the implementation of the records management strategy against agreed standards*

The performance of the records management programme will be audited.

### **5.1.7 Training**

*To provide training and guidance on legal and ethical responsibilities and operational good practice for all staff involved in records management*

Effective records management involves Councillors and staff at all levels. Training and guidance enable all stakeholders to understand and implement policies, and facilitates the efficient implementation of good record keeping practices.

## **6. Version Control**

Review Date: July 2022

Staff Member responsible for Review: Manager Corporate Services

<b>Document</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Date</b>
Records Management Strategy	Adopted	156/2021	19 November 2020

## **7. Attachments**

### **7.1 Implementation Plan**

## Attachment 1 – Implementation Plan

The action points, in the table below, have been developed from Council's *Records Management Policy for Councillors* and *Records Management Policy* which require the following fundamentals to be present:

- Existence of an overall policy statement on how records (including electronic records) are to be managed;
- Endorsement of policy by senior management;
- Circulation of policy to councillors and staff at all levels;
- Organisational commitment to create, keep and manage records which document activities;
- Definition of roles and responsibilities;
- Definition of responsibility of personnel to document actions and decisions in the records and to dispose of obsolete records;
- Provision of framework for supporting appropriate standards, procedures and guidelines;
- Provision of monitoring mechanisms to ascertain compliance with appropriate standards, procedures and guidelines; and
- Review of policy at regular intervals (at least once every four years).

The key elements of this strategy will be implemented as follows:

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
<b>1 Responsibility and Accountability</b>	To provide a clear system of accountability and responsibility for records	Establish a records management strategy with processes for ongoing monitoring and review	Council	15/10/2020
		Maintain senior management 'buy-in' to improving records management, and the designation of a senior manager to be responsible for records management.	Director Corporate and Community Services	Complete
		Maintain a Records Management function (to manage all Council records), with clearly defined responsibilities and links to other Information Governance functions eg <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> , State Records, Information and Privacy Commission.	Manager Corporate Services	Complete

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
<b>1 Responsibility and Accountability (cont.)</b>		Manage implementation of the records management strategy, including provision of advice on records management, establishment of good practice guidelines and of compliance with relevant legislation.	Manager Corporate Services	15/10/2020
		Provide contacts through which the Records Officer can aid and support departments, and provide better co-ordination of record keeping across Council. Individual Departments to nominate local records managers.	Manager Corporate Services	30/10/2020
		Provide an appropriate competency framework to identify the knowledge, skills and corporate competencies required for records and information management.	Manager Corporate Services (with advice from Organisation Development)	16/10/2020
		Undertake regular reviews and analysis of records management training needs, at least yearly.	Director Corporate and Community Services	20/05/2021
		Maintain inclusion of records management and information issues and practices in induction training programmes for all new staff.	Manager Corporate Services to ensure up-to-date information provided to Organisation Development	16/10/2020
		Allocate appropriate resources across Council to enable the maintenance of the records management function within resource constraints.	Director Corporate and Community Services	20/05/2021
	<b>2 Record Quality</b>	To create and keep records that are adequate, consistent, and necessary for statutory, legal and organisational requirements	Develop guidance on good practice with the aim of establishing common and consistent standards of record creation and record keeping within Council, considering current Government Information legislation.	Manager Corporate Services

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
<b>2 Record Quality (cont.)</b>		Reduce the duplication of records to improve information sharing, reduce cost and save space	Manager Corporate Services	30/06/2021
		Maintain procedures and metadata (descriptive and technical documentation) to ensure the authenticity and evidential value of records held in electronic form.	Manager Corporate Services	Complete
		Identify all records vital to the continuing functioning of the activities of Council in the event of disaster and make provision for their protection (to be cross-referenced with Council's Risk Management Policy and Business Continuity Plan).	Manager Corporate Services	16/10/2020
<b>3 Management</b>	To achieve systematic, orderly and consistent creation, appraisal, retention and disposal procedures for records during their lifecycle	Review existing records management practices to establish what needs to be done to comply with the <i>State Records Act 1998</i> (NSW)	Director Corporate and Community Services, Manager Corporate Services (with advice from State Records)	15/10/2020
		Undertake an inventory of all Council records held in either hard copy or electronic formats. (This is to ensure that all record collections/information sets are identified along with the volume of records held, the type of media on which they are held, their physical condition, their location, the environmental conditions in which they are stored and the responsible manager.	Manager Corporate Services	30/04/2021
		Produce Council records retention schedules consistent with the Retention and Disposal schedules detailed in the State Records ' <i>General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records</i> '	Manager Corporate Services	31/05/2021

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
		Review and maintain procedures for the continuous monitoring of the records management process to ensure that legal and statutory requirements are met and new types of records have a lifecycle determined at the point of creation.	Director Corporate and Community Services, Manager Corporate Services	15/10/2020
<b>3 Management (cont.)</b>		Develop a selection policy to identify which records are likely to be suitable for permanent preservation. Establish contact with an approved archival institution with appropriate storage and public access facilities.	Manager Corporate Services	31/05/2021
		Establish a system for managing records' appraisal and for recording the disposal decisions made.	Manager Corporate Services	30/04/2021
		Plan resource requirements to take account of the volume and nature of the records due for appraisal.	Manager Corporate Services	20/05/2021
		Establish procedures for the closure of records when no longer current, secure storage of archived records, and effective disposal, as soon as appropriate.	Manager Corporate Services	31/05/2021
		Identify a secure and confidential method for the disposal of records, and organise its implementation.	Manager Corporate Services	31/05/2021
		Establish and maintain a log of records which have been destroyed showing their reference, description and date of destruction.	Manager Corporate Services	30/06/2021
		Assess the risks associated with the destruction of records or any delay in appraising them.	Manager Corporate Services	30/04/2020
		Whilst electronic records are subject to the same creation, appraisal, retention and disposal process as paper records, develop guidance as appropriate to consider the particular technical requirements of electronic media	Manager Corporate Services	30/04/2020

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
<b>4 Security</b>	To provide systems that maintain appropriate confidentiality, security and integrity for records in their storage and use	Review and maintain policies and procedures to protect records from unauthorised alteration or erasure, to ensure that access to records is properly controlled, and to maintain adequate audit trails to track the use and location of records held.	Director Corporate and Community Services, Manager Corporate Services (with assistance from Tamworth Regional Council under the Agreement for provision of IT services)	15/10/2020
		Maintain secure storage arrangements for information and documents, while allowing access by authorised personnel.	Manager Corporate Services	Complete
		Maintain appropriate storage accommodation for active paper records secure from fire, flood and theft, which is also secure and safe from unauthorised access.	Manager Corporate Services	Ongoing
		Organise the relocation of paper records into appropriately secure storage when they are no longer required for the conduct of current business, to await disposal and at the same time meeting standards to ensure that no environmental damage is caused whilst also providing security and having strictly controlled access for authorised personnel only.	Manager Corporate Services	Ongoing
		Maintain appropriate protocols for the exchange of confidential and personal information.	Manager Corporate Services	Complete (ongoing)
		Provide guidance on 'back-up', archiving processes and audit trails for electronic records, as well as on measures to prolong their access and use for as long as required, including migration across systems and onto different types of media.	Manager Corporate Services	15/10/2020

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
<b>4 Security (cont.)</b>		Review and ensure that standards for the safe and secure transportation of records are strictly applied especially when transported by users.	Manager Corporate Services	15/10/2020
		Review and maintain a full and tested contingency or business recovery plan.	Manager Corporate Services	Ongoing
<b>5 Access</b>	To provide clear and efficient access for employees and others who have a legitimate right of access to Council records, and ensure compliance with current Government Information legislation	Maintain effective tracking systems and audit trails, ensuring that information can be retrieved effectively and speedily when required.	Manager Corporate Services	Ongoing
		Maintain systems to determine any access restrictions at the point of records creation.	Manager Corporate Services	Complete (ongoing)
		Maintain policies and procedures to address the particular requirements of Government Information legislation in relation to agreed publication schemes and meeting requests for information by the public.	Manager Corporate Services	Complete (ongoing)
<b>6 Audit</b>	To audit and measure the implementation of the records management strategy against agreed standards.	Establish standards for records management performance (eg response to GIPA requests, record keeping, availability etc) and monitor the performance of the function.	Manager Corporate Services	31/10/2020

Strategic Goal	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
<b>7 Training</b>	To provide training and guidance on responsibilities and good practice for all staff involved with records.	Provide Councillors and staff with procedures for good practice, and advice on procedural issues and requirements. These instructions should cover all records management systems within Council, information quality and security, data protection, information handling, and legislative and statutory requirements.	Manager Corporate Services General Manager, Director Corporate and Community Services	30/10/2020
		Raise the profile of records management within Council through publicity about the issues involved and the staff responsible.	Director Corporate and Community Services, Manager Corporate Services	Implemented regular internal communications program July 2020; ongoing
		Develop training programs and materials, including instruction on the concepts and basics of records management to be targeted at new and existing staff who need a basic awareness of the issues and procedures and those who need more detailed instruction on records management policies and procedures.	Manager Corporate Services (with advice from Senior Organisation Development Officer)	30/06/2021
		Provide specific training and instruction on Government Information legislation	Senior Organisation Development Officer (training and development)	30/06/2021