

1.9A Records Management

POLICY TITLE: RECORDS MANAGEMENT

FILE REF: SC67

EXPIRY DATE: DECEMBER 2026

PURPOSE

1. This policy sets out a framework for the creation and management of records within the Lockhart Shire Council. The Council is committed to establishing and maintaining recordkeeping practices that meet its operational needs, accountability requirements and legislative requirements.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Council's records are a major component of its corporate memory. They are a vital asset that supports ongoing operations and provides valuable evidence of business activities and transactions over time.
2. The Council recognises its regulatory responsibilities as a public agency and is committed to the principles and practices set out in the Australian Standard for Records Management (AS ISO 15489) to the extent appropriate for the organisation.
3. The Council is committed to implementing appropriate recordkeeping practices and systems to ensure the creation, maintenance and protection of accurate and reliable records. All practices concerning recordkeeping within the Council are to be in accordance with this policy and its supporting procedures.

SCOPE

1. This policy applies to all Lockhart Shire Councillors and employees.
2. It applies to records which are created, collected, processed, used, sentenced, stored and disposed of in the conduct of all Council's business and all business applications used by Council to create records including email, database applications and websites.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

1. Council will maintain recordkeeping systems that capture and maintain records with appropriate evidential characteristics in accordance with its obligations under applicable legislation including the following: -
 - a) Copyright Act 1968 (Clth)
 - b) Electronic Transactions Act 200 (Clth)
 - c) Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)
 - d) Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)
 - e) Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
 - f) Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
 - g) State Records Act 1998 (NSW)
2. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies: -
 - a) 1.5 Privacy Plan and Privacy Code of Practice
 - b) 1.23 Cyber Security and Information Systems Security
 - c) 3.22 Gathering Information
 - d) 3.26 Computer, Internet, Email and Social Media Policy

RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS

1. The Council's primary recordkeeping system is the HPE Content Manager (CM) Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).
2. Where appropriate, paper-based records sent or received by the organisation are captured within this system through digital imaging. Relevant electronic communications (email) sent or received by the Council are also recorded in Content Manager.

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3. The Council also has a range of secondary systems that are used to manage specific electronic records as follows: –
 - a) Practical - financial and accounting system which maintains information on financial transactions and reporting including local government rates and charges.
 - b) Intramaps - Geographic Information System.
 - c) Univerus – Asset Management System
 - d) Pulse – Employee Performance Reviews
 - e) Damstra – WHS management system
 - f) LG Software Solutions – cloud based specialised accounting software
4. The recordkeeping systems manage the following processes: –
 - a) the creation or capture of records within the recordkeeping system
 - b) the storage of records
 - c) the protection of record integrity and authenticity
 - d) the security of records
 - e) access to records
 - f) the disposal of records
5. A Quick Reference Guide provided by HPE Content Manger as well as Business Rules and Naming Conventions developed by Council facilitate the efficient and effective use of the Content Manager EDRMS.

STORAGE AND SECURITY

1. Council hardcopy files are stored both on site at Council's Administration Building and offsite at the Lockhart Railway Station building. Files from 2008 onwards are kept on the premises with older files stored at the Lockhart Railway Station building. With respect to the records physically stored on site:
 - a) Files from 2008 onwards are kept in the Strong Room.
 - b) Original certificates of title, legal documents, Confidential Council meeting agenda and minutes prior to 2016 and former employee personnel files are kept in a locked section in the Strong Room.
 - c) Confidential Council meeting agenda and minutes post 2016 are kept in a locked cabinet by the Executive Assistant to the General Manager.
 - d) Open Council meeting agenda and minutes are kept in the Strong Room.
 - e) Current employee files are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Human Resources Co-ordinator's office.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Council
Council is responsible for the adoption and regular review of the Records management policy and for providing the resources required for the protection, safe custody and return of all State records under its control, ensuring accessibility to all equipment or technology dependent records.
2. General Manager
The General Manager is responsible for implementing Council's Records Management Policy and ensuring Council's compliance with the requirements of the NSW State Records Act 199.
3. Director Corporate and Community Services
The Director Corporate and Community Services is operationally responsible for the efficient management of Council records (physical and electronic) including the effective management and system administration of the EDRMS and for providing advice and training in relation to Council's records management policies and procedures.
4. Directors and Managers
Each Director and Manager are responsible for ensuring that their staff:
 - a) Respond to correspondence and action requests in a timely manner and that this information is also recorded in the (EDRMS).
 - b) Comply with Council's Records Management Policy.
 - c) Receive training on records management and use of Council's EDRMS (Content Manager).

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- d) Who have access to information of a confidential nature, are instructed as to their rights and obligations when dealing with such matters.

5. All Staff

- a) The State Records Act 1998 requires public officials to *"make and keep full and accurate records' of their business activities."*
- b) The Ombudsman's Good Conduct and Administrative Practice Guidelines for Public Authorities 2017 states that:
"Public officials must make and keep full and accurate records of their official activities. Agencies and their staff must create and maintain records as evidence of business activities and transactions."
- c) The Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW 2020 states that:
"Members of staff of council must provide full and timely information to councillors and administrators sufficient to enable them to exercise their official functions and in accordance with council procedures."
- d) Accordingly, all staff are responsible for:
 - i. Creating records that document:
 - Decisions made.
 - Verbal decisions and instructions or commitments given, including telephone conversations.
 - Business activities they are involved in.
 - Meetings and other events.
 - ii. Registering records into the EDRMS in accordance with the Business Rules and naming Conventions applying from time to time.
 - iii. Ensuring all corporate emails are registered to the EDRMS.
 - iv. Handling hard copy records and information sensibly and with care, so as to avoid damage to the records.
 - v. Not relinquishing control over, damaging, altering, destroying or losing records of Council.
 - vi. Accessing records from within the EDRMS.
 - vii. Maintaining confidentiality of records they have access to, in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct, and the requirements of the Government Information (Public Access) Act, and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act.

DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

1. Records must be protected, maintained, findable, and useable for their entire retention period, as outlined in the General Authority 39 (GA 39), Local Government Records.
2. Records cannot be disposed of other than in accordance with the State Records Act 1998 and GA 39.
3. Records cannot be disposed of without the concurrence of the Director Corporate and Community Services.
4. If files have been classified as State Archives, they are transferred to the State Records Authority in accordance with relevant guidelines e.g. open or closed access provisions.
5. Physical destruction of records shall be undertaken by methods appropriate to the confidentiality or otherwise of the records.
6. An auditable trail documenting all destruction of records shall be maintained by the Records Section.
7. If destruction is undertaken by third parties, then certificates of destruction shall be obtained for all destruction undertaken.

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

1. Council shall demonstrate that recordkeeping systems are designed and operating according to best practice, its records are captured in the corporate system, and all systems are performance tested on a regular basis to ensure that the objectives of the system are being met.
2. Compliance with the Records Management Policy, and its related policies and procedures, throughout the Council, shall be monitored by the Director Corporate and Community Services.
3. The monitoring of compliance with the Records Management Policy, and its related policies, shall be subject to internal audit and related evaluations from time to time.

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4. Council shall make its records available to meet accountability requirements, such as auditors, regulatory authorities and investigative bodies.
5. Ensure the quality of information captured into the corporate system is maintained.

GLOSSARY

Archive means the whole body of records of continuing value of an organisation, sometimes called 'corporate memory'.

Business activities is an umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of an organisation and its employees.

Capture is a deliberate action which results in the registration of a record into a recordkeeping system. For certain business activities, this action may be designed into electronic systems so that the capture of records is concurrent with the creation of records.

Classification is the 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.

Disposal refers to a range of processes associated with implementing records 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.

Disposal Authority is a formal instrument that defines the retention periods and consequent disposal actions authorised for classes of records which are described in it.

Document refers to recorded information or object which can be treated as a unit.

Electronic Records are records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment.

Recordkeeping is the making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.

Recordkeeping systems are information systems that capture, manage and provide access to records through time.

Records are the 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.

Records Management is the 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.

Registration is the act of giving a record a unique identifier on its entry into a system.

Confirmed by Council 18 December 2023

Refer minute 235/23

Adopted by Council 21 December 2020

Refer minute 267/20

Confirmed by Council 17 August 2009

Refer minute 283/09

Adopted by Council – 17 September 2007

Refer Minute No. 296/07