

S-G12-P Information Management Procedure

Purpose	To outline how Council implements the Information Management Policy
Department	Governance
File No.	ADM/0300, ADM/0900
Council Meeting Date	
Minute Number	
Next Review Date	Four (4) years from Council Resolution Date
Review History	

PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

Business Classification Scheme

A hierarchical model of the relationship between the Council's functions, activities and transactions. It provides the core foundation for the development of the agency's recordkeeping tools including a retention and disposal schedule.

Destruction Authority

A once-off authorisation from the State Archivist that permits destruction for a defined set of records.

Disposal

Involves either the destruction of records; their transfer to the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office for retention as part of the State archives; their transfer to another custodian; or some other process approved by the State Archivist which removes them from the custody of the agency.

Record

Information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in the pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. (Source: *International Standard ISO 15489 – 2002, Records Management, Part 1: General, Clause 3.15*)

Retention and Disposal Schedule

An ongoing authorisation from the State Archivist that specifies minimum retention periods and consequent disposal actions for a defined set of records.

State Archive

State record or any other record which is deposited and preserved permanently in the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office.

State records

Records of State Government agencies/departments, State Authorities, or Local Authorities. These public bodies are defined in Section 3 of the *Archives Act 1983*.

2. Creation and maintenance of records

Business records should provide a reliable and accurate account of business decisions and actions. Therefore, include all necessary information to support business needs including the names, dates and time, and other key information needed to capture the business context.

Records can be folders, documents or data created, received or maintained as evidence and information of work done for or on behalf of the Council. Records may be either hard copy or electronic.

Examples of the Council's records include (but are not limited to):

- Agendas, minutes and papers;
- Complaint correspondence;
- Contracts and agreements;
- Correspondence received from members of the public, private and public sector organisations that require action;
- Documents related to events organised with or for external organisations, students etc.;
- Facilities hire forms and documentation;
- Documents related to planning and development;
- Personnel recruitment and appointment documentation;
- Policies and guidelines;
- Reports and submissions;
- Risk management registers and documentation;
- Training program documentation; and
- WorkCover documents and files.

Ultimately, if the record contains a business transaction or evidence of any decision that has been made on behalf of the Council it must be kept for the required time as per an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule authorised by the State Archivist. Where no Retention and Disposal Schedule exists for the records they must be retained until such a time as they can be either destroyed according to a Destruction Authority authorised by the State Archivist, or transferred to the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office as State archives.

3. Records that do not have to be kept

Some records do not belong in the Council's recordkeeping system, including:

- External advertising material;
- Externally published newsletters that do not contain material created by or referencing the agency;
- Internal e-mails received by "carbon copy" (cc) or "blind carbon copy" (bcc);
- Junk e-mail;
- Personal items including e-mail;
- Rough notes, working papers and calculations used solely to assist in the preparation of other records such as correspondence, non-auditable reports and statistical tabulations;
- Copies of any documents, preserved solely for reference;
- Published material preserved solely for reference; and
- Electronic revisions of documents in the agency's recordkeeping system which can be purged/deleted when finalising documents.

Documents of this nature may be destroyed, as defined by the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office *Retention and Disposal Schedule for short-term value records (DA2158)*.

4. Systems used to maintain records

Records generated within the council in the course of normal business practice or received from an external source are to be registered and captured in the council's recordkeeping system.

The following business and administrative databases and software applications are endorsed for the capture and storage of specific information and records. These include:

- Property Wise, a standalone database that contains property, rates, dogs, receipting and vaccinations records;

- Xero Accounting System, a cloud-based program for financial and payroll information;
- Approval Max, a cloud-based program for issuing of purchase orders and billing;
- RecFind 6, a standalone Electronic Records Document Management System in use from 1996 to 2014;
- Shared Drive, for all records since September 2014;
- Finance Drive (restricted access), for financial records; and
- Management Drive (restricted access), for personnel and confidential records;

These endorsed systems appropriately support information and records management processes such as creation and capture, storage, protection of integrity and authenticity, security, access and retention, destruction and transfer.

Corporate records must not be maintained in email folders, personal drives or external storage media as these lack the necessary functionality to protect business information and records over time. Records created when using social media applications or mobile devices may need to be captured into an endorsed system.

5. Access to records: sharing corporate information within Flinders Council

Information is a corporate resource to which all staff may have access, except where the nature of the information requires restriction. Access restrictions should not be imposed unnecessarily but should protect:

- individual staff, or client privacy; and
- sensitive material such as material marked as confidential.

When handling information, staff and elected members are reminded of their obligations outlined in their statements of duties and under the Employee Code of Conduct Policy, the Elected Member Code of Conduct and the Personal Information Protection Policy.

6. Release of publicly available information

In accordance with our obligations under the *Right to Information Act 2009*, access to publicly available information will be provided on our website. This is the responsibility of all staff.

The public have legislative rights to apply for access to information held by our organisation under the *Right to Information Act 2009*. This applies to all information held by the agency, whether in officially endorsed records management systems or in personal stores such as email folders or shared and personal drives. Responses to applications for access under Right to Information legislation are the responsibility of the Executive Officer.

7. Retention or destruction of records

Council records are destroyed when they reach the end of their required retention period set out in Records Retention and Disposal Schedules issued by the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO). Retention periods in disposal schedules take into account all business, legal and government requirements for the records. Council uses the following schedules to determine retention, transfer and destruction actions for its records:

- DA2200 Disposal Schedule of Functional Records of Local Government; and
- DA2158 Disposal Schedule of Short-term Value Records.

Records cannot be disposed of other than in accordance with all relevant Retention and Disposal Schedules and Destruction Authorities authorised by the State Archivist. In addition to this, records cannot be disposed of without the approval of the Corporate Services Coordinator and the manager/coordinator of the business unit that is the owner or is responsible for the records.

Some records can be destroyed in the normal course of business. These are records of a short-term, facilitative or transitory value that are destroyed as short-term value records. Examples of such records include rough working notes, drafts not needed for future use or copies of records held for reference.

Central to the council's accountability process is the requirement it maintains a Register of Records Destroyed. This is the council's formal evidential record of destruction and must be retained permanently by the council. The Register must be clearly identified as the Register of Records Destroyed under Section 20(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983*.

8. Transfer of records

At times, certain records may be required to be transferred out of the custody of Flinders Council. This occurs when records of archival value are no longer being actively used and/or are 25 years or older. In this instance, Flinders Council transfers them to the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO). We are still able to access records if a subsequent need arises to consult records in TAHO's custody.

Another instance where records may be transferred is when records are affected by administrative change and are transferred to an inheriting agency or to a private body. In either case, permission must be sought from TAHO before the records are transferred.

9. Monitoring the Records Management program

The records management program will be monitored for breaches of this Policy by the General Manager who will facilitate training as required. Day-to-day records management audit activities will be coordinated by the Corporate Services Coordinator.

10. Responsibilities

All staff, elected members, consultants, and contractors employed or engaged by the agency are responsible for the management of all records created in the course of their work. This includes complying with this Policy at all times.

Staff must always be mindful that all records created in the course of their employment are the property of council.

Specific responsibilities and accountabilities for information and records management at the council include:

10.1. General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that Council's records management program satisfies operational and legislative requirements and obligations;
- Maintaining and extending the Business Classification Scheme according to Council's requirements following appropriate consultation;
- Implementing and continually improving the Council's information management program;
- Defining Council's requirements for information, records and document management;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities relating to the management of information;
- Maintaining and reviewing the Information Management Policy and relevant documentation as required;
- Creating records that document their activities and decisions and saving them into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Ensuring e-mail records are saved into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Ensuring paper records are scanned to electronic format and saved into Council's recordkeeping systems; and

- Not destroying records without authorisation and adhering to Council's disposal requirements.

10.2. *Elected Members*

- Reviewing this Policy and relevant documentation as required;
- Creating records that document their activities and decisions to be saved into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Ensuring e-mail records are saved into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Ensuring paper records are scanned to electronic format to be saved into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Not destroying records without authorisation and adhering to Council's disposal requirements;

10.3. *Managers/Coordinators*

Council will support staff by:

- including records management training in induction programs; and
- arranging for refresher training sessions as required.

10.4. *Corporate Services Coordinator*

- Efficient management of Council's recordkeeping system, ensuring that sound recordkeeping principles and records management best practice guidelines are followed and adhered to;
- Administration and management of employee folders within the Finance Drive; and
- Requesting the creation of personnel files.
- Arranging training sessions for staff and supporting staff in the use of Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Ensuring records are captured uniformly across Council and stored in approved systems;
- Maintaining the integrity and authenticity of records;
- Managing the storage of hardcopy records located onsite and offsite;
- Managing the disposal of records under approved disposal schedules and maintaining the register of destroyed records;
- Ongoing review and amendment of Retention and Disposal Schedules; and
- Responding to user requests for assistance with Council's recordkeeping systems or other records management issues.

10.5. *Staff Members*

Staff members should take care to handle records sensibly, with care and respect to avoid damage to them and to prolong their lifespan. Staff must not damage, alter or destroy information and records of Council, without authorisation. Staff are responsible for using, maintaining and managing records in accordance with the Information Management Policy and records management procedures including complying by:

- Creating records that document their activities and decisions and saving them into Council's recordkeeping systems using specified filing and naming conventions;
- Ensuring version controls are captured and integrity and authenticity of records are maintained;
- Ensuring e-mail records are saved into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Ensuring paper records are scanned to electronic format and saved into Council's recordkeeping systems;
- Storing hard copy records securely;
- Ensuring hard copy records are not hoarded in work areas and are captured in Council's recordkeeping systems in a timely fashion;

- Learning how and where records are kept within the agency;
- Not destroying records without authorisation and adhering to Council's disposal requirements;
- Not losing records; and
- Being aware of the Information Management Policy and Procedure and records management procedures.

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