

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY



Responsible Department: Corporate Services
Responsible Section: Information Technology
Responsible Officer: Manager Information Services

Objective

The objectives of this Policy are:

- 1 To ensure that all records that form part of Council business are captured into Council's Record System, Infoxpert.
- 2 To ensure that all records are stored in accordance with required standards and are available when required.
- 3 To ensure that all records are retained in accordance with the State Records Act, 1998.
- 4 To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities for good record keeping.

Policy

Council is required to comply with the requirements of the State Records Act, 1998. The State Records Act, 1998 requires Council to make and keep full and accurate records as evidence of business activities. The State Records Act outlines various principles which must be complied with and are outlined as follows:

- 1 **Principle 1 - Recordkeeping should be compliant:** Record keeping should comply with legal and administrative requirements. Council must operate in an environment of accountability where the organisation as a whole and individual employees are accountable for decisions and actions
- 2 **Principle 2 - Recordkeeping should be reliable:** record keeping systems, procedures and practices should work reliably to ensure that records are credible and authoritative. This can be achieved by ensuring business processes where transactions become the record are operating routinely at the time the record is created and formal guidelines must be established for reporting system failures that may affect an electronic record.
- 3 **Principle 3 - Recordkeeping should be systematic:** records should be made, maintained and managed systematically. Standard operating procedures should be used for all work practices including the need to document record keeping requirements.
- 4 **Principle 4 - Recordkeeping should be managed:** Recordkeeping must be managed through an identifiable records management program. Recordkeeping systems must have assigned responsibilities and accurately documented policies and procedures.
- 5 **Principle 5 - Recordkeeping should be routine:** Recordkeeping systems should be used when transacting business. Business processes and systems should be designed so that making records and capturing them into Council's recordkeeping system becomes a normal part of the work process.

- 6 **Principle 6 - Records should be made:** Records should be made to document and facilitate the transaction of business and ensure capture into recordkeeping systems. Officers must ensure all records, including electronic messages, faxes and details of oral decisions or commitments are captured into Infoxpert.
- 7 **Principle 7 - Records should be retained.** Records should be retained for as long as they are required and should only be disposed of in accordance with the relevant retention and disposal authority/authorities as set down by State Records. Refer:
 - General Disposal Authority – Local Government Records (GA 39).
 - General Retention and Disposal Authority – Imaged Records 2006 (GDA 24).
 - General Retention and Disposal Authority – Administrative Records 2007 (GDA 28).
- 8 **Principle 8 - Records should be complete:** A record should contain not only the content, but also the structural and contextual information necessary to document a transaction. It should be possible to understand a record in the context of the organisational processes that produced it and of other, linked records. Electronic messages that are a reply to a previous message should either contain the original message or make reference to the original message.
- 9 **Principle 9 - Records should be comprehensive :** records should document the whole of the business of a public office. Records must be made to support evidential requirements. Any outsourced functions must also keep accurate records to support those functions.
- 10 **Principle 10 - Records should be adequate:** records should be adequate for the purposes for which they are kept. There must be adequate evidence of the conduct of business activity to be able to account for that conduct within the context of relevant accountability requirements.
- 11 **Principle 11 - Records should be accurate:** records should correctly reflect what was communicated, decided or done. Business processes and systems should be designed to make it easy or if possible automatic to make accurate records of transactions. Falsifying information and removing records from files is illegal.
- 12 **Principle 12 - Records should be authentic:** Records must be what they are purported to be, it should be possible to show that the recordkeeping system operates normally on any given business day so that the records created by it are credible and authoritative with adequate security to preserve their evidential quality.
- 13 **Principle 13 - Records should be useable:** records must be identifiable, retrievable, accessible and available when needed. Council should know what records it has and where all records are kept. Records should be registered and classified to enable easy retrieval.
- 14 **Principle 14 - Records should be inviolate:** records should be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal.

Procedure

- 1 Recordkeeping is the responsibility of all Council Officers. All Officers should be fully aware of their recordkeeping obligations and ensure they comply with Council's recordkeeping procedures and policies.
- 2 All Council staff are accountable for the decisions they make and the basis on which those decisions are made. Records must be created which substantiate the what, where, when and why of any decision or action. Good recordkeeping is the responsibility of everyone employed by Council, not just the staff of the Records Section. Council staff, contractors and the users of Council records, have a number of basic obligations to meet in relation to records and recordkeeping practices.

- 3 These obligations are to:
- 3.1 Be fully aware of the recordkeeping procedures laid down and adhere to these at all times when using Council's recordkeeping system.
 - 3.2 Be mindful of the ethical issues and legislative requirements supporting the creation, use, maintenance and preservation and disposal of information and records at Narrabri Shire Council.
 - 3.3 Ensure all inward, internal or outgoing communications, from any source, both hard copy and electronic, which have anything to do with the business dealings of Narrabri Shire Council are captured into Infoxpert.
 - 3.4 Adhere to the procedures set down for the use of Council's electronic recordkeeping systems to ensure the adequacy, accuracy, authenticity, completion and useability of all records created.
 - 3.5 Ensure that outgoing correspondence is created in accordance with Council's policies, is dated and signed, and contains relevant reference numbers and that the recipient and subject matter are clearly identified.
 - 3.6 Ensure that documentation, including Minutes of meetings, outgoing correspondence, etc. once captured into the recordkeeping system is finalised when confirmed or posted out.
 - 3.7 Ensure that public access to Council's records is only provided in accordance with the policy for Access to Records, and in line with all necessary legislation including the Local Government Act, GIPA Act, PPIPA Act, HRIPA Act and Companion Animals Act.
 - 3.8 Ensure that all hard copy files are marked out appropriately when taken from their permanent location and returned promptly once no longer required.
 - 3.9 Ensure that all due care is taken with hard copy records to ensure they are not damaged, destroyed, or lost while in an employee's care.
 - 3.10 Ensure that no documentation contained within a hard copy record is damaged, destroyed or altered while in an employee's care.
 - 3.11 Ensure that private filing systems are not implemented and that Infoxpert is used at all times.
 - 3.12 Ensure that records in any format are only disposed of with the formal approval of the General Manager and the responsible Director, in line with approved disposal authorities, and procedures.
 - 3.13 Ensure that records are created which form an audit trail which documents any actions taken and decisions made and the reason for such actions or decision, which in turn can be used to support the decision-making process of Narrabri Shire Council.
 - 3.14 Ensure the accuracy of the recordkeeping system by reporting any inaccuracies, incorrect filing, titling, routing, etc. to the Records Section for correction..
 - 3.15 Contact the Records Department to:
 - a) Create a folder in infoxpert
 - b) Change a folder title
 - c) Unfinalise a finalised document

- d) Provide assistance on the use of the recordkeeping system
- 3.16 Notify the Records Department to change or amend your personal details on the recordkeeping systems, i.e. name, position, department.
- 3.17 Notify the Records Department if you or any of your staff are going to be absent for a period of time so that incoming correspondence can be redirected for actioning.
- 3.18 Report any breaches of security or unethical conduct which are directly related to the use of Council's records to the General Manager for investigation.

References

- State Records Act, 1998

Measure of Success

- To measure that all records that form part of Council business are captured into Council's Record System, Infoxpert.
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- To measure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities for good record keeping.

History

MINUTE NUMBER	MEETING DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
26/2012	21 February 2012	Adopted
75/2013	19 February 2013	Reviewed