

POLICY:	RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
DATE ADOPTED:	<p>Director Corporate Services & Finance’s Report #8.2.1 Policy 3 April 2024 Resolution No. POL2024-9</p> <p>Director Corporate Services & Finance’s Report #8.2.5 Council 18 August 2021 Resolution No. ORD2021/293 Council 15 September 2021 Resolution No. ORD2021/312</p> <p>Director Corporate Services & Finance’s Report #1 Policy 5 December 2012 Council 6 February 2013 Minute Book No. 11477</p>
ORIGINAL ADOPTION:	Director Corporate Services & Finance’s Report #1 Policy 6 April 2005, Council 20 April 2005 Minute Book No. 9518
FILE REFERENCE:	03.00038, 11.00039
OBJECTIVE:	The Policy establishes the governance framework for the creation, capture, control, use, maintenance, and disposal of records within Bathurst Regional Council.

1.0 Introduction

An information and recordkeeping program is fundamental to the Council’s commitment to transparency and accountability. It enables Council to account for decisions and actions by providing essential evidence in the form of records and ensures trust and collaboration across all Council’s business processes.

Council strives to deliver a high-quality recordkeeping service independent of the technology being used or the medium the record is in. This policy seeks to ensure that Council’s information and records, wherever possible, are managed digitally.

1.1 Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure Council information and records remain accurate, current, and accessible.
- Support our ongoing business activity and customer services.
- Meet legislative requirements and community expectations to manage records efficiently and effectively.
- Store records cost effectively and when no longer required disposed of them in accordance with approved disposal authorities.
- Ensure that records of longer-term value are identified and protected for historical and other research.
- Provide the framework for Council’s information management guidelines and procedural material and clearly identifies the responsibilities and accountabilities for recordkeeping.

- Maintain digital and other technology dependent records in an accessible format for as long as they are required.
- Comply with applicable State and Commonwealth legislation and International Standards.

1.2 Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- a) Providing the overarching framework for all corporate recordkeeping policies, practices, and procedures.
- b) Councillors and staff at Council and the information and records they deal with
- c) Anyone performing work on Council's behalf including casuals, volunteers, contractors, and consultants.
- d) Any information or corporate record in any format, created, received, or maintained by Council.
- e) Management of Council's records, in all formats and maintained on different media including hardcopy and electronic, created or received by Council in support of its business, activities and transactions.

2.0 Recordkeeping principles

2.1 Digital Records Management

Council has a legal obligation to manage its records and must be able to account for its actions and expenditure of resources. Information is a key Council asset and needs to be managed well to realise its value.

Digital management of records enables Council to make the best use of new technologies and innovative ways of doing business. It enables Council to implement information reforms more efficiently and effectively.

2.2 Creation and capture

Records are created every time someone in Council writes an email, drafts a brief, writes a report or records minutes, adds data to a spreadsheet or takes a photo. This information is created as part of a specific business process and needs to be managed so that it can be searched, shared, reused, and repurposed, increasing its value to Council. Records need to contain specific information to make them complete, accurate and reliable.

The information needs to reflect:

- What happened, the order of events.
- What was decided or recommended.
- What advice or instruction was given.
- When it happened and who was involved.

2.3 Access to Council Records

Council requires open access to information and records unless the record itself requires protection. Protecting our information and records is governed by:

- Council's Access to Information Policy
- Access to Information Guidelines for Local Government
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Government Information (Public Access) Act (GIPPA) 2009.

Many Council records are public documents and must be managed to provide easy access by our community.

2.4 Records Security

Records should be stored within approved recordkeeping systems to prevent unauthorized access, destruction, alteration, or removal. Council's approved recordkeeping systems have a full audit log, have security, and are managed and monitored.

Council records must be stored only in Council's official recordkeeping systems – for example Content Manager, Authority and Customer Response Management System

All staff must ensure they lock their computer prior to leaving their desk to ensure information and records are secure.

2.5 Disposal and Destruction of Records

General staff cannot destroy or dispose of Council records. Only Records staff may destroy or dispose of Council records following strict procedures and with the final approval of the General Manager.

Records can only be destroyed in accordance with:

- The General Disposal Authorities
- Council specific Disposal Authorities. Alternatively, State Records must be transferred to State Archives for permanent retention.

Council records must be protected, maintained and accessible for their total retention period and must be disposed of in accordance with the State Records Act 1998 and Council's disposal procedures.

Information and records, which staff deem as ephemeral, may be destroyed using a procedure called 'Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)'. This practice usually occurs because the records are duplicated, unimportant or for short-term use only. General staff do not have permission to delete information and records under NAP and all items deleted under NAP are undertaken by approved officers only.

2.6 Value of Records as a corporate asset

The records of are an essential resource for information as they:

- Are a vital asset which Council can use to make future decisions.
- Are crucial to continuous improvement, providing a baseline for change.
- Are the major component of the Council's corporate memory and knowledge and provide evidence of business transactions and decisions.
- Exist for a variety of administrative, functional, historical, and legal reasons.
- Support policy formulation and consistent and equitable decision making.
- Facilitate the effective performance of activities through an organisation.
- Provide continuity in the event of a disaster.
- Provide protection and support in litigation including the management of risks associated with the existence of or lack of evidence of organisational activity.
- Protect the interests of the organisation and the rights of employees, clients, and present and future stakeholders.

3.0 Policy implementation

3.1 Policy responsibilities

General Manager

- Responsible for ensuring Council's compliance with the regulations and requirements of relevant legislation and standards.

Manager Corporate Governance

- Accountable to the General Manager for the implementation of the Information and Records Strategy to ensure continued management of all Council records.

Records Team

- Responsible for the protection, safe custody, and management of all records, ensuring continued accessibility. Ensures the Information and Records Training and Education Program targets skills to support compliance with the Information & Records Management Strategy. Ensures that no records are destroyed except as authorised by the Retention and Disposal Schedule or Normal Administrative Practice (NAP).

Directors/Managers

- Ensure that records which are created and managed within their section comply with this Policy and any procedures are registered only in the approved recordkeeping systems and that staff attend the Information and Records Training and Education Program as required.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that effective recordkeeping practices within their department are performed in accordance with this policy. That their staff create and keep records as an integral part of their work, and in accordance with established policies, procedures, and standards and not within network, group or personal drives or using USBs. That information about Bathurst Regional Council recordkeeping policies, systems and procedures are communicated throughout their department.
- Ensure staff utilize Content Manager to capture official records and staff attend or request training associated with Content Manager and/or recordkeeping.
- The Records Team Leader manages the Information and Records Training and Education Program which sits under this policy.
- Council no longer supports the creation of hard copy records. All information and records must be created or captured electronically as per Council business processes.

All staff/Councillors

All Council staff must:

- Comply with this Records and Information Management Policy and its supporting procedures issued from time to time.
- Keep full and accurate records of Council business in the approved recordkeeping systems and not within network, group or personal drives or using USBs.
- Ensure by default open access to all records unless that record needs protection.
- Not dispose of or destroy any records.
- Maintain confidentiality of records,

Contractors and Volunteers

- Manage records that they create on behalf of Council according to this policy and its supporting procedures.
- Supply their appointed Council contact copies of records they create on behalf of Council for registering in the recordkeeping system.
- Maintain confidentiality of records,

3.2 Compliance and Breaches

- The Manager Corporate Governance is responsible for making and administering arrangements for the monitoring of the Records and Information Management Policy.
- Reports of noncompliance and breaches in policy will be reported to the respective Director. Sustained breaches, or breaches where in the opinion of Manager Corporate Governance are significant, will be directed to the General Manager.
- Council's Records Section must comply with relevant legislation and approved standards and procedures.
- The Records Team Leader is responsible for implementation of the Records and Information Management Strategy and the business owner of the recordkeeping system.
- Each Manager is accountable for the effective management of information and records and the effective implementation of the Records and Information Management Strategy across their business unit.
- All staff are responsible for the capture, maintenance and security of records related to their business transactions.
- All staff are responsible for ensuring continued and appropriate access to Council's information and records.

4 Document control

4.1 Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when changes to legislation occur.