

POLICY STATEMENT

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

POLICY ADOPTED: 19 March 2014

Policy Objective:

Records Management Program

A records management program is a planned, co-ordinated set of policies, procedures, people, systems and activities that are required to manage records.

The Council's Record Management Program seeks to ensure that:

- It has the records it needs to support and enhance ongoing business and customer service, meet accountability requirements and community expectations;
- These records are managed efficiently and can be easily accessed and used for as long as they are required;
- Records are stored as cost-effectively as possible and when no longer required they are disposed of in a timely and efficient manner;
- The Council complies with all requirements concerning records and records management practices;
- Records of longer term value are identified and protected for historical and other research;
- Maintaining digital and other technology dependent records in authentic and accessible form for as long as they are required in accordance with s.14 f the *State Records Act 1998*.

Corporate Asset

The Council recognises that records are a vital asset to:

- Facilitate information accessibility, and enhance business by supporting program delivery, management and administration;
- Deliver customer services in an efficient, fair and equitable manner;
- Provide evidence of actions and decisions and precedents for future decision making; and
- Protect the rights and interests of Government, the Council and its clients and citizens.

A small percentage of the Council's records will become archives, part of the cultural resources of the State.

Policy Statement:

This policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities and decisions of the Council are created, managed and retained or disposed of appropriately, and in accordance with relevant legislation. This will enable the Council to achieve information accessibility, business enhancement and improvement. It will also meet its obligations for accountability while ensuring that it protects the rights and interests of the Government, the organisation, its staff, clients and the community.

A Records Management Program has been established by the Council in accordance with s.12(2) of the *State Records Act 1998*. This policy provides a framework and outlines responsibilities for the operation of the Bland Shire Council's Records Management Program.

Definitions:

Glossary of Terms:

This glossary has been compiled from the *State Records Authority Glossary of Recordkeeping Terms*. Sources of terms include Australian and international standards on record management.

Access – Right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving information.

Appraisal – The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations.

Archives – Those records that are appraised as having continuing value.

Classification – 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.

Counter disaster plan – A plan for measures to be taken for disaster prevention, disaster response and recovery and virtual records protection.

Disposal – a range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions. These include the 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.

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

Recordkeeping requirements – Requirements arising from regulatory sources, business needs and community expectations that identify the types of records that should be created and the management framework needed in order to have, and accountably manage, all the business information that is necessary for an organisation.

Recordkeeping systems – Information systems which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time.

Records - 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. Any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means. *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*.

Records management – 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.

Records management program - A records management program encompasses the management framework, the people and the systems required within an organisation to manage full and accurate records over time. This includes the identification and protection of records with longer-term value that may be required as State archives.

Retention and Disposal Authority – Documents authorised by the Board of State Records NSW that set out appropriate retention periods for classes of records. There are two main types:

- Functional retention and disposal authorities authorise the retention and disposal of records unique to a specific organisation;
- General retention and disposal authorities authorise the retention and disposal of records common to more than one organisation.

State archive – A State record that the State Records Authority of New South Wales has control of under the *State Records Act, 1998 (NSW)*.

Thesaurus – A thesaurus is a controlled list of terms linked together by semantic, hierarchical, associative or equivalence relationships. Such tools act as a guide to allocating classification terms to individual records.

In a thesaurus the meaning of the term is specified and hierarchical relationships to other terms shown. A thesaurus provides sufficient entry points to allow users to navigate from terms which are not to be used to the preferred terminology adopted by the organisation.

Vital records – Those records that are essential for the ongoing business of an agency, and without which the agency could not continue to function effectively. The identification and protection of such records is a primary object of records management and counter disaster planning.

© *State of New South Wales through the State Records Authority, 2008.*
First published 2005.

Responsibilities:

This policy has been authorised by the General Manager and is available to all staff. Ownership of the policy rests with the Director Corporate, Community and Development Services who is responsible for reporting to State Records NSW regarding compliance with legislative requirements and recordkeeping standards.

The Director Corporate, Community and Development Services, Corporate Services Coordinator and Records staff are responsible for the management of the Records Management Program.

Council's records management program is centralised and record keeping activities are carried out by the records unit located in the Council Chambers.

All Councillors, staff, contractors and consultants must comply with this policy, and associated *Records Management Procedures*, in their conduct of official business for the Council. This policy applies to records in all formats, including electronic records.

General Manager

- Ensures that the Council complies with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998 and the standards and requirements issued under the Act. This includes the requirement for the public office to ensure that any records requiring technology to be read and understood remain readable and available for as long as they are required (section 14).
- Complies with other legislation relating to records management and recordkeeping.

Director Corporate, Community & Development Services

- Is the nominated Senior Officer for records management
- Ensures that the Records Management Program is adequately resourced
- Represents records management interests on the Executive
- Has ownership of the Records Management Policy
- Ensures the preservation of digital records is addressed in policy, planning and implementation of the public office's records management program
- Ensures that the essential characteristics of digital records are identified prior to any preservation process taking place
- Reports to the State Records Authority on the Records Management Program eg. Responds to records management surveys.
- Authorises the disposal of records, in liaison with relevant manager.

Corporate Services Coordinator

- Compiles *Records Management and Procedures* and standards in relation to all aspects of records management
- Monitors compliance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedures* and standards across the Council and makes recommendations for improvement or modification of practices
- Designs and advises on recordkeeping systems
- Establishes and maintains a customised recordkeeping metadata scheme and business rules regarding how metadata is to be managed (in liaison with information technology contractors)
- Assists with automated metadata capture, for example, ensuring that details of format are automatically saved in to the EDRMS with digital records (in liaison with information technology contractors)
- Ensures that all staff are aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities
- Develops strategic and operational plans for the Records Management Program
- Formulates and maintains thesaurus and retention and disposal authorities
- Formulates and maintains vital records lists and counter disaster plans
- Ensures the migration of digital records or digital control records/metadata is conducted carefully and in line with the conditions stated in the *General Retention and Disposal Authority – Source Records that have been Migrated* (in liaison with information technology staff)
- Responsible for the conduct of records management operations
- Ensures that contract with service providers contain records management clauses in accordance with this *Records Management Policy*.
- Ensures that information management policies and projects take into account the special nature of records
- Ensures routine and comprehensive system backups of data are undertaken
- Deploys organisational templates including for email
- Encourages or enforces the creation of email in plain text or HTML
- Implement software enabling staff to create records in open formats (eg Open Office)
- Ensures the migration of digital records or digital control records/metadata is conducted carefully and in line with the conditions stated in the *General Retention and Disposal Authority – Source Records that have been Migrated* (in liaison with the Records Unit).

Information Technology Contractors – InfoXpert

- Provides support and infrastructure to ensure that records kept in electronic form are managed so that they are accessible, readable, inviolate, complete, comprehensive, and authentic for as long as required
- Liaises with Corporate Services Coordinator and Records Unit regarding counter disaster planning for electronic records
- Establishes and maintains a customised recordkeeping metadata scheme and business rules regarding how metadata is to be managed (in liaison with records management staff)
- Ensures appropriately detailed audit logs are created and where necessary linked to records
- Implements information security measures.

Senior Records Officer

- System Administrator for Council's Electronic Document Records Management System – InfoXpert
- Ensures that records are created and managed within the Records Unit in a way which complies with the *Records Management Policy and Procedures*
- Provide feedback on the success of migration processes to help ensure records remain authentic, complete, accessible and useable
- Ensure that staff are trained in how to create and manage records
- Coordinates a records management training program
- Authorise the destruction of records, along with Corporate Services Coordinator

- Consult with the Corporate Services Coordinator when introducing new activities and systems to ensure that records are created, and that relevant terms appear in the thesaurus
- Determine legislative requirements for records relating to their specific activities.

All Staff

Under the State Records Act 1998, all staff is required to make and keep full and accurate records of their business activities. Staff is accountable to their supervisors for compliance with this policy, and with related policies, business rules and guidelines.

All staff are responsible for creating records that document:

- Decisions made
- Verbal discussions and instructions or commitments given, including telephone conversations
- Meetings
- Other events
- Business activities they are involved in.

All staff shall:

- Register records into the EDRMS in accordance with the protocols outlined in the InfoXpert Business Rules
- Handle hard copy records and information sensibly and with care, so as to avoid damage to records
- Not relinquish control over, damage, alter or destroy or lose records of Council
- Access records from within the EDRMS
- Make records that support the conduct of tier business activities
- Ensure all corporate emails are registered to the EDRMS
- Maintain confidentiality of records they have access to, in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct, and requirements of the GIPA and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act.

Funded Services

The Director Corporate, Community and Development Services is to ensure that all staff comply with the rules and responsibilities outlined in this policy document, and that records are kept in accordance with the following Acts, in addition to the *State Records Act 1998*;

- *Aged Care Act 1997*
- *Education & Care Services National Regulations (2011) under the Education and Care Services National Law.*

Children's Services: Responsible Officer – Director Corporate, Community and Development Services. *Including Family Day Care, Mobile Resource Unit, Vacation Care and Pre-School.*

Home and Community Care: Responsible Officer – Community Care Co-ordinator. *Including Older Men's Group and Day Care.*

Contractors and outsourced functions

All records created by contractors performing work on behalf of the Council belong to the Council, and are State records under the *State Records Act 1998*. This includes the records of contract staff working on the premises as well as external services providers.

Contracts should clearly state that ownership of records resides with Council, and instructions regarding creation, management, and access to the records created. The Corporate Services Coordinator should be consulted during the formulation of the contract.

Recommended Practices:

Creation of Records

All employees are obliged to create full and accurate records that adequately document the official business activities of the Council in which they take part, and to ensure that information and processing systems that support business activities create appropriate records as part of supporting those activities.

Staff are to ensure that they create official records of all decisions and actions made in the course of their official business. This includes letters, reports, file notes of conversations on the phone, interview or in-person, meetings publications etc.

Documentation for all business decisions must be maintained in the recordkeeping system regardless of format eg. verbal, written, electronic etc.

Records must be maintained regarding release of Council Information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

Storage

All records should be stored appropriately to allow for their retrieval, use and preservation. In doing so, the security, privacy and confidentiality of records should be maintained.

- Electronic records shall be stored in InfoXpert, with appropriate security applied to all folders created. Other electronic information is stored in all Council's online pathway eg: Practical; Chris21 (HR); Technology One; Harmony; Org Plus; Libero Insight Informatics; Centrecalc; Civilcad; Map Plan; Reflect; Cemetery Database.
- Hard copy records are housed in secure storage areas on site or at the Government Records Repository at Kingswood.
- Legal documents are scanned and stored electronically in InfoXpert. The legal documents hard copies are stored in the legal documents storage area contained within the strong room in the Administration Building.
- All Council records shall be stored in conditions appropriate to their format and use in accordance with the Australian Standards on Records Storage, to minimise their deterioration.
- Unauthorised alteration, distribution, removal or destruction of Council records is prohibited.
- Hard copy records must not be left unattended in unsecured area or vehicles, or when being viewed by members of the public. At no time shall Council records be left unattended in areas accessible to unauthorised personnel or members of the public.
- Personal computers must not be left unattended in unsecured areas without being locked to prevent unauthorised access to records and information.
- All electronic records are backed up systematically and the backup disks stored offsite at the Children's Services building.
- Measures will be taken to prevent the loss of records in the event of a disaster, including imaging of records, off-site storage, fire-proof containment and disaster planning.

Maintenance and monitoring

The Corporate Services Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that records and environmental conditions are monitored regularly to protect records. This will include checking temperature and humidity levels in dedicated record storage areas for paper records and ensuring that digital records are refreshed or replicated when scheduled, when new storage devices and media are being installed or when degradation is detected.

Maintenance of electronic records can also entail the migration of data. Migrations must be authorised by the Director Corporate, Community and Development Services and must produce complete, authentic, accessible and useable records.

The Council has implemented a number of security and counter disaster measures as part of its Business Continuity Plan for safeguarding its information assets. Staff should abide by these measures at all times.

Regular monitoring of compliance with this policy, relevant legislation and procedures will be undertaken.

Breaches of this policy are considered to be breaches of *Bland Shire Council's Code of Conduct* and therefore invoke the relevant sanctions outlined in that Code. Persons in breach of any legislation may be subject to fines and legal action.

Archiving, Disposal and Destruction of Records

The Council has authorised *Functional Retention and Disposal Authority (GA39)* covering records relating to its core functions and activities. Administrative records common to all or many public offices such as financial and personnel records are covered under general retention and disposal authorities complied by State Records NSW. The Council recommends that disposal actions are assigned to records in all formats on creation to ensure they are managed appropriately.

No records of Bland Shire Council can be disposed of unless in accordance with these retention and disposal authorities or Normal Administrative Practice. Any sentencing of records must be supervised by the Senior Records Officer. Approval and signed authorisation for retention, destruction or transfer of records must be sought from the Director Corporate, Community and Development Services before any disposal takes place.

Council records are classified using the State Records Keywords for Councils classification system. This is linked to the requirements of the General Disposal Authority- Local Government Records (GA39), which determined the need for archiving or disposal of all records.

To initiate the destruction of records, staff are required to contact the Senior Records Officer. Destruction of records is carried out in accordance with the provision of GA39 and GA36, under the State Records Act. A record is kept detailing records destroyed and the approval for their destruction.

Records that are no longer currently used, but because of the evidential or informational value have been selected for permanent retention, are to be archived. The archiving process for records should be organised in consultation with the Senior Records Officer.

Records to be destroyed are transported off-site in a secure manner and disposed of by either pulping or shredding.

Records that are classified as State records and are over 30 years old must be covered by an access direction which either opens or closes the records to public access.

Access

Records must be made available to all authorised staff that require access to them for business purposes. Access to confidential information contained in Personnel Files is restricted to the General Manager, Directors, Human Resources staff and designated Records Officers.

All access to Council's records by members of the public, including Freedom of Information requests, will be in accordance with Council's Access to Information Policy and Agency Information Guide, GIPA Act 2009; State Records Act 1998; Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998; Evidence Act 1995 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Requests to access will be determined by Council's Right to Information Officer.

Copying will be subject to legal requirements, including copyright restrictions, with charges applied as per Council's Revenue Policy.

References:

Legislative and government requirements for bookkeeping

Council's records management and recordkeeping practices comply with relevant Acts and Regulations and standards relating to records management.

Legislation Includes:

- Aged Care Act 1997 & Regulations
- State Records Act 1998 (NSW) – including standards and retention and disposal authorities issued under the Act.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) under the Education and Care Services National Law
- Evidence Act 1995
- Companion Animals Act 1998
- Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968
- Environmental Planning & Assessment (EPA) Act 1979
- Government information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)
- Health Records Information Privacy Act 2002
- Local Government Act 1993
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and regulations
- Pesticides Amendment (Records) Regulation 2002 (pt of Pesticides Act 1999)
- Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994
- Public Finance & Audit Act 1983 and Treasury Directions
- Roads Act 1993 & General Regulation
- NSW Public Sector Code of Conduct
- Good Conduct & Administrative Practice: Guidelines for Public Authorities and Officials (NSW Ombudsman)
- Premier's Memoranda and Circulations including: M1998-16, C2003-17, M20024-14, M2007-08
- Australian Standard. AS ISO 154-89-2002 *Records Management*

Other requirements for recordkeeping

- Bland Shire Council – Records Management Policy & Procedures
- Bland Shire Council – Access to Information Policy
- Bland Shire Council – Code of Conduct
- Bland Shire Council – Internet Email & Computer Usage Policy
- Bland Shire Council – Risk Management Policy
- Bland Shire Council – OHS Safety Management System Manual
- Bland Shire Council – Business Continuity Plan
- Bland Shire Council – Privacy Management Plan
- Bland Shire Council – Gathering Information Policy
- Bland Shire Council – Internal Reporting Policy

State Records Standards

- Appraisal and disposal of State Records (no. 9) – 2007
- Counter disaster strategies for records and recordkeeping systems (No. 6) – 2002
- Digital recordkeeping (no. 10) – 2008
- Full and accurate records (No. 7) – 2004
- Managing a records management program (No. 8) – 2004
- Physical storage of State Records (No. 11) – 2012

Note: This list is not exhaustive. It is the responsibility of managers to examine legislation and government directions which govern their activities, and ensure that records arising from these activities conform with recordkeeping requirements.

Authorisation:

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|--|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| Status | Committee | N/A | |
| | Manex | 19 March 2014 | |
| Owner | Director Corporate, Community & Development Services | | |
| EDRMS Doc. ID | 405222 | | |
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| 19 August 2003 | 0 | 12/8/03 | |
| 15 February 2011 | 1 | | |
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| Related Council Policy / Procedure |
| Records Management Procedure |
| Access to information Policy |
| Code of Conduct |
| Internet Email and Computer Usage Policy |
| Councillor's Recordkeeping Policy |
| Privacy Management Plan |
| Gathering Information Policy |