

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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RESPONSIBLE OFFICER			General Manager

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Objective

This policy determines the requirements for managing all records for Riverina Water County Council in both electronic and hardcopy formats in accordance with relevant legislation, standards and codes of best practice approved by the State Records Authority.

1.2 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to Councillors and staff of Riverina Water County Council.

1.3 Definitions

Archives-those records that are appraised as having continuing value

Records-“..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.”

Recordkeeping Systems-“..information systems which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time..”

State records-“..any record made or kept, or received and kept, by any person in the course of the exercise of official functions in a public office, or for any purpose of a public office, or for use of a public office..”

State Archive-A State record that the State Records Authority of New South Wales has control of under the State Records Act 1998(NSW).

1.4 Legislative Context

State Records Act 1998 and State Records Regulation 2010.

This legislation is supported by the following standards and guidelines;

- Australian Standard, AS ISO 15489-2002, Records Management
- Australian Standard AS5090-2003, Work process analysis for recordkeeping
- NSW Ombudsman, Good Conduct and Administrative Practice: Guidelines for State and local government2003

Other related legislation includes;

- Copyright Act 1968 (Commonwealth)
- Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Health records and information Privacy Act 2002
- Local Government Act 1993
- Privacy and Protection of Personal Information Act 1998

1.5 Related Documents

- Policy 1.1 Code of Conduct
- Policy 1.2 Code of Meeting Practice
- Policy 1.9 Councillor access to information and interaction with staff
- Policy 1.15 Public Access to Information
- Policy 1.20 Privacy Policy
- InfoXpert Workbench user guide

PART 2: POLICY CONTENT

As a public agency, Riverina Water County Council is bound by the regulations and requirements of the State Records Act 1998. The Act sets out codes of best practice to which Council must comply. Failure to do so could leave Council open to criticism in an investigation-whether by a Minister, a Royal Commission, an auditor or a law enforcement body. State Records legislation requires Riverina Water County Council to make and keep records that fully and accurately document operations and administration.

Why we need “full and accurate” records:

- i. Facilitate action by employees at any level, and by their successors;
- ii. Make possible a proper scrutiny of the conduct of business by anyone authorised to undertake such scrutiny, and,
- iii. Protect the financial, legal and other rights of the organisation, its clients and any other people affected by its actions and decisions.
- iv. To comply with all external requirements relating to record keeping practices.

To be a “full and accurate” record the Australian Standard requires that records possess the following attributes.

ATTRIBUTE	EXPLANATION OF ATTRIBUTE
Compliant	Complying with the recordkeeping requirements from the regulatory environment in which the organisation operates
Adequate	For the purposes for which they are kept
Complete	Containing not only the content, but also the structural and contextual information necessary to document a transaction, as
Meaningful	With links to other records documenting a sequence of transactions
Comprehensive	Documenting the complete range of the organisation’s business
Accurate	Reflecting accurately the transaction that they document
Authentic	Enabling proof that they are what they purport to be and their purported creators indeed created them
Inviolable	Securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration or

Records are a vital ingredient in support of Council’s ongoing business activities. Effective management and preservation of Council’s corporate memory is intrinsic to both the decision making process and productivity within Council.

Disposal of Records

Records must be protected, maintained, accessible, and useable for their entire retention period, as outlined in the General Authority 39 (GA 39), Local Government Records.

Records cannot be disposed of other than in accordance with the State Records Act 1998, GA 39. The approval of the General Manager or person/s delegated by him is also a requirement for records disposal.

The State Records Act 1998 (NSW) requires public offices to ‘make and keep full and accurate records’ of their business activities.

Poor record keeping practices within the public sector contribute to inefficiencies and poor decision making. Poor record keeping means that evidence may not even exist or may not be adequate to

meet Council requirements for accountability. Records are vital for ongoing business and for internal and public accountability.

The NSW Public Sector Code of Conduct requires that public officials should 'maintain adequate documentation to support any decision made in the performance of their duties.

Councillors

Councils are identified as public offices under the State Record Records Act 1998. When discharging functions of Council, Councillors are subject to the Act when they create or receive 'State Records'. It is recognised that in practice these circumstances are limited and include such items as:

- A petition received from a community group
- Written complaints, suggestions or enquiries by ratepayers about council services

Originals of such records are to be made available to the General Manager for inclusion in Councils official records.

Staff

All Council employees have a number of basis obligations regarding records:

- i. Make records to support the conduct of Council's business activities.
- ii. Create records that would not otherwise be created e.g. Meetings, telephone discussions, conference and oral decisions must be documented.
- iii. Register records into either paper or electronic recordkeeping systems. All official outgoing communications should contain reference to the Document ID number from infoXpert.
- iv. Learn how and where records are kept at Council.
- v. Do not destroy Council records without authority to do so from the General Manager.
- vi. Do not lose records
- vii. Be aware of records management procedures.
- viii. Council will support relevant staffing positions by providing training in the use of the Electronic Management System, InfoXpert. Other training in the management of council records will be provided by supervisors as part of "on the job" training.