
Records Management Policy

CONTROL:

Policy Type:	Administrative
Authorised by:	Council
Head of Power:	Public Records Act 2002
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Adopted / Approved:	Minute No. 2022.06.20-OM-6
Last Reviewed:	June 2022
Review:	<p>This policy is reviewed when any of the following occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • related information is amended or replaced; • other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Council; <p>Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than two years.</p>
Version:	3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE:

This Records Management Policy, and all associated standards, guides, references, practices, and procedures, form part of an ongoing commitment to records management governance.

This Policy establishes a framework for Council to fulfil its obligations and statutory requirements under the *Public Records Act 2002* and *Records Governance Policy*. It advises staff of their obligations in relation to the creation and maintenance of records within council in a manner that is compliant with the standards set out by Queensland State Archives.

The policy ensures that full and accurate records of the activities and decisions of council are adequately created, captured, managed and disposed of to meet council's organisational and operational needs and accountability requirements. Council will implement appropriate strategies, processes, applications and tools to ensure records of business activities are made and kept.

Council will develop, implement and maintain appropriate procedures that will ensure the execution of the *Records Governance Policy*.

The *Records Governance Policy* is mandatory and sets out the foundational principles of recordkeeping for council to meet recordkeeping requirements and mandatory obligations now and into the future, allowing us to work within existing structure and governance and strengthen our strategic goals and functions.

Council will take a creative and innovative approach to addressing all requirements in this policy – with a strong focus on collaboration with other agencies to develop and implement shared solutions to common records management problems.

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1.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:

This policy aims to ensure:

- consistent and aligned governance practices that provide a strong foundation for systematically and effectively managing complete and reliable records that provide evidence of decisions, support accountability and transparency, mitigate risk, help meet relevant legislative, administrative and business requirements across all functions of council;
- our commitment in developing and maintaining a records management framework based on the six (6) mandatory principles in the *Records Governance Policy*; by means of adopting policy methodology practices and principles to increase records management capability and maturity, in addition to maintaining compliant and accountable recordkeeping;
- records and information governance is aligned with broader frameworks and incorporated in business strategies and objectives;
- council embrace strategic records management that goes beyond compliance and actively contributes to the achievement of council's strategic goals;
- records management is supported across all areas and all levels of business; council will provide appropriate advice and guidance to ensure all council staff are aware of the value of records and information and how this relates to their obligations and responsibilities as an employee;
- council actively manages permanent, high-value and high-risk records and information as a priority and ensures that these records are appropriately managed and preserved;
- increased discoverability and accessibility of records and information within Council;
- council promotes high standards of data protection, integrity, and confidentiality and security practice to its staff through policies and training to safeguard sensitive information;
- the capture of all corporate information in all formats, into council's recordkeeping systems is consistent with the requirements of the *Records Governance Policy* and *Public Records Act 2002*
- council continue to define formalised standards, procedures, guidelines, systems and controls for the future expansion and business needs enabling council to continue to meet statutory requirements;
- council dispose of records in a planned and authorised way.

1.3 SCOPE:

This policy applies to all records and associated metadata from the time of creation or capture and covers:

- all council staff, regardless of employment type
- all councilors, consultants and Mayor
- all aspects of council's business operations
- all types and formats of records created to support business activities
- all business applications used to create records, including email, database applications and websites
- organisations and businesses, including their employees, to which council has outsourced its functions or activities, and therefore associated recordkeeping responsibilities.

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All practices concerning recordkeeping within Council are to be in accordance with this policy which provides the overall framework for any other corporate recordkeeping policies, practices or procedures.

1.4 COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY:

This Policy will commence on adoption. It replaces all other specific Records Management policies of Council (whether written or not).

2. POLICY

2.1 CONTEXT

Council record management policies, practices and strategic plans are integrated with Council's broader information management regime (*including business systems and knowledge management*).

Council will develop recordkeeping systems that capture and maintain records with appropriate evidential characteristics in accordance with its obligations under the legislation.

2.2 POLICY STATEMENT

Council records are its corporate memory and a vital asset that supports ongoing accountability. Good recordkeeping is critical to corporate governance and operational efficiency, it provides essential evidence of business activities and transactions, and demonstrates accountability and transparency in council's decision-making processes.

Council recognizes its regulatory requirements as a public authority under the *Public Records Act 2002*. It is committed to the principles and practices set out in the *Records Governance Policy* and other relevant Queensland State Archivist standards and guidelines.

All practices concerning recordkeeping within Council are to be in accordance with this policy and its supporting procedures.

3. STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

3.1 WHAT ARE RECORDS?

A public record is a record created, received or kept by Council in the course of its statutory, administrative or other public responsibilities.

A record provides evidence of activities. This is irrespective of the technology or medium used to generate, capture, manage, preserve and access those records.

3.2 WHAT RECORDS NEED TO BE KEPT, BY WHO, AND WHY?

All records about the proceedings, accounts or transactions of Council and all documents owned or held by Council that provide evidence of business activities and help us do business now and in the future.

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All Council employees are required to comply with recordkeeping policies and procedures; create and capture records of work activities.

To support the continuing conduct of business, comply with the regulatory environment, and provide necessary accountability, organisations should create and maintain authentic and useable records, and protect the integrity of those records for as long as required.

How do we know what to keep?

Ask the following questions: **what** is the ongoing **use** and **value** of these records; to **whom** and **why**.

Keeping things simple by reducing the criteria for knowing what records to keep down to **four key areas**:

3.2.1 Records That Capture Decisions

- policies/procedures
- file notes from telephone conversations
- notes from meetings (between individuals) or telephone conversations
- tape or digital recording of incidents
- meeting minutes & agendas
- discussion papers
- authorisations
- business cases
- finance approvals

3.2.2 Records That Capture Action Taken

- internal/external advice
- consultation reports, feedback requests, public enquiries
- invoices for payment
- interactions – rights and entitlements of individuals and communities
- research – reports and data
- drafts – at key milestones (e.g. consultation, approval), that show change in direction, significant feedback or comments
- legal agreements
- Rates Notices / Dog Registrations /Public Notices

3.2.3 Records Created, Received or Kept

- Human resources (recruitment / payroll / qualifications and training /leave applications/ illness & injury / advertising / certificates
- Plans including Hardcopy;
 - plans received electronically
 - microforms
 - maps, plans or drawings
- Technical Library including;
 - publications
 - Periodicals and Journals
 - CDs, DVDs, Videos and CDROMs

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- Books and other published documents
 - Internet – downloaded and emailed documents
 - Rates Notices / Dog Registrations / Public Notices
- Legal requirements - needed for future legal / disciplinary action;
 - licenses / permits
 - agreements and contracts
 - advice
 - leases
 - compensation
 - certificates
 - application assessments
 - titles and deeds
 - business requirements - support decisions and actions
 - governing documents - constitution, rules, trust deed
- Financial
 - financial reports (financial statements, annual budgets, reconciliations, audit reports, accounts payable and accounts receivable)
 - tax invoices and income tax records, debtors and creditors, stocktake records and fleet expenses
 - banking records - deposit books, bank statements, bank reconciliation, corporate credit cards
 - assets & liabilities
 - travel expenses and allowances
 - taxation records relating to employees, TFN declarations, pay as you go (PAYG) withholding, superannuation and fringe benefits provided
 - purchase orders
 - cash book records - daily receipts and payments
 - registration, certificates and accompanying documents to regulators (for example, ATO, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, and state regulators)
 - grant & subsidies documentation
 - contracts and agreements (insurance contracts, finance or lease agreements)

3.2.4 Records in all Formats, and Located in Business Applications

- emails inward/outward
- facsimiles inward/outward
- spreadsheets
- websites
- business applications/systems - infrastructure maintenance system (audit logs, data files, system change requests)
- Business requirements – infoXpert - eDRMS - below summarises the Schedule Contents
 - community relations / services / consultation / public health documents
 - council properties & management documents
 - development & buildings documents
 - emergency services documents
 - energy supply / telecommunications / technology documents
 - economic management documents
 - environment management documents
 - equipment & stores documents

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- fleet management records
- governance documents
- government relations documents
- industrial relations documents
- land use & planning documents
- laws & enforcement documents
- parks & reserves documents
- rates & valuations documents
- recreation & cultural services records
- risk management documents
- road documents
- sewerage & drainage documents
- strategic management documents
- traffic & transport documents
- waste management documents
- water supply documents
- work health & safety documents

3.2.5 Metadata – What Is Metadata?

Metadata is structured, descriptive information about a record. It includes the title of the record, author, date created, changes to the record, and applicable disposal or sentencing information. Recordkeeping metadata enables a record to be managed. It assists in identifying and retrieving records, and supporting long term record functionality, reliability, and effective preservation or disposal authentication.

3.3 FULL AND ACCURATE RECORDS

Council's recordkeeping practices, processes and systems assist in making full and accurate records. Full and accurate records should be:

- **Created** to document and facilitate the transaction of Council business.
- **Captured** into the corporate recordkeeping systems.
- **Adequate** for the purposes for which they are created and kept.
- **Complete** in content and contain the structural and contextual information necessary to document a transaction.
- **Meaningful** with regards to information and/or linkages that ensure the business context in which the record was created and used is apparent.
- **Accurate** in reflecting the transactions, activities or facts that they document.
- **Authentic** in providing proof that they are what they purport to be and that their purported creators did actually create them.
- **Inviolate** through being securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, removal or destruction.
- **Accessible** by being kept in a format that allows their continued use.
- **Useable** through being maintained so that they are identifiable, retrievable and available when needed.
- **Retained** for as long as they have administrative, business, legislative, historical and cultural value.
- **Preserved** by being stored, protected and maintained.

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3.4 STORAGE, PROTECTION AND SECURITY

In accordance with the principles of the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, council will take appropriate measures to ensure the security of all records and information, to protect it against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, and against any other misuse.

Council's Business Continuity Plan provides preventative actions and contingency plans for an event which could disrupt Council's business functions.

Council is accountable for ensuring that records are adequately stored to prevent physical damage and/or loss and to minimise the physical deterioration of the records.

Inactive/physical records will be retained in accordance with approved retention periods within councils established storage facilities to ensure security and accessibility.

The following seven principles will be taken into consideration when storing records.

- Location - sites, facilities and area for records storage will be located away from known hazards and be convenient to user needs.
- Environmental control - records will be stored in environmental conditions that are appropriate to their format and retention period. Permanent value records are stored in the best possible conditions and records older than 30 years must be stored in the council Strong Room.
- Shelving and packaging - the shelving, equipment and containers for records storage will ensure that records are secure, accessible and protected from deterioration.
- Maintenance and security - records storage facilities, areas and records will be maintained to safeguard their security, condition and accessibility.
- Protection from disaster - risks to records are minimised and managed appropriately.
- Careful handling - the retrieval and use of records in storage areas will be subject to controls that prevent damage and deterioration.
- Accessibility - records will be stored and controlled in facilities where they can be identified, located and retrieved easily.

3.5 DISCOVERABLE AND ACCESSIBLE RECORDS

All records received or created within or on behalf of Council are official records that belong to Council and, subject to the considerations shown in this clause, are to be discoverable and accessible as authorised, for use and re-use.

Discoverable records are those that are in business systems and applications approved for use by council. Accessible records are those that can be located and continuously used.

Council must ensure complete and reliable records are discoverable, accessible and are able to be used and re-used for their entire life by:

- keeping records in business systems and applications approved for use by council;
- being able to discover and appropriately access records, with confidence in sufficiency of search;
- actively monitoring the health of records;

An employee's level of access to records will be relevant to:

- Position responsibilities and requirements;

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- Level of delegated authority;
- Privacy considerations;
- Legal professional privilege;
- Commercial-sensitivity; and
- Other specific considerations where confidentiality restricts the normal right of access to records;

Council is required to comply with legislation that permits access to its records by members of the public and authorised external agencies, or as part of a legal process such as discovery or subpoena in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

3.6 RETENTION & DISPOSAL OF RECORDS, DISPOSAL FREEZE AND PERMANENT VALUE RECORDS

In general, it is an offence to destroy any public record without authorisation from the State Archivist. Unless otherwise authorised, all records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Local Government Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule: QDAN 480v.4 This Schedule is used in conjunction with the General Retention and Disposal Schedule (GRDS) authorisation under s.26 of the *Public Records Act 2002* for the disposal of common and administrative public records created by all Queensland Government agencies.

Disposal Freeze: A Disposal freeze overrides any pre-existing disposal authorisations given within retention and disposal schedules.

In response to recommendations 8.1 – 8.4 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA), Queensland State Archives has authorised and released the guideline for creating and keeping records for the proactive protection of vulnerable persons and related disposal authorisations.

With the release of the guideline and associated disposal authorisations, the State Archivist has revoked with immediate effect the disposal freeze issued on 1 June 2018 for all records which are relevant to, or may become relevant to, an allegation of child sexual abuse. The disposal freeze has been replaced by new disposal authorisations in the General Retention and Disposal Schedule (GRDS).

Records of Continuing (Permanent) Value; Council archives provide a record of the corporate memory of the council. Archives are inactive records that are deemed to have continuing value, either permanently or temporarily. A record may be considered permanent because of its evidential, fiscal, administrative, legal, informational or historic value. Council may identify records of cultural or historical significance that should be retained beyond the period set out in the approved retention and disposal schedules.

3.7 DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

Records must be appraised for possible continuing archival value. That is, records with legal, historical or cultural significance to council and the community will be retained permanently in council's archives or Queensland State Archives.

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Any records subject to legal processes such as discovery and subpoena or required for internal or external review or investigation or relevant to an application made under the *Right to Information Act 2009* must be protected and not destroyed even if the retention period has passed.

Council disposes of records in a planned and authorised way;

- ensuring the consistent and effective disposal of 'public records' held by, or under the control of council, in accordance with appropriate Government legislative requirements;
- adopting the relevant Disposal Schedule or Disposal Authority, as approved by the Queensland State Archives;
- maintaining a Records Disposal Register for the purpose of recording all authorised disposals of 'public records';
- promoting 'best practice' recordkeeping associated with authorised disposals of 'public records', and will provide appropriate information, guidelines and training of relevant staff;
- Council's preferred method of disposal is incineration;

All of the retention periods in the disposal schedules are the minimum period for which the sentenced records must be maintained. Council records cannot be disposed of prior to the expiration of the appropriate retention period. However, there is no requirement for council records to be destroyed as soon as the minimum retention period expires. Records may be kept for longer periods than specified in this document but no records may be destroyed any sooner than stipulated in both disposal schedules.

3.8 DISPOSAL OF RECORDS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO A RETENTION & DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

Ephemeral records (i.e. items of short-term temporary informational value that are not required to be kept as records) may be destroyed at any time without reference to the disposal authorities. These records which may include announcements of social events, duplicate copies or extracts of documents kept only for reference, copies of circulars, forms, etc. can be disposed of as part of normal office administrative practice.

Where the official version of a record is verified as being already maintained in council's recordkeeping system a copy may be destroyed/disposed of, in the appropriate manner, at any time without reference to the disposal authority.

3.9 RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS

Council's primary recordkeeping system is an electronic document and records management system (eDRMS). It's an automated software application designed to facilitate the creation, management, use, storage and disposal of a range of both physical and digital documents and records in an integrated way.

The eDRMS manages these records using a rigorous set of business rules, which are intended to preserve the records' context, authenticity and integrity.

In addition, council has a number of other systems that are considered an integral part of the records systems including, Finance, Plant Assessment and Workplace Health and Safety. These systems are dedicated to the creation and maintenance of authentic, reliable and usable

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records for as long as they are required to effectively and efficiently support Council's business functions and activities, they are considered an integral part of records system.

The recordkeeping system will manage the following processes:

- The creation or capture of records within the recordkeeping system;
- The storage of records;
- The protection of record integrity and authenticity;
- The security of records;
- Access to records; and
- The disposal of records in accordance with retention and disposal schedules.

It is mandatory for all council records (final version) to be recorded in one of the approved records management systems.

3.10 RECORDKEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES:

3.10.1 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for ensuring Council's compliance with the *Public Records Act 2002* and the principles and standards established by Queensland State Archives, and include: and overseeing the management and implementation of this Records Management Policy including:

- assigning formal records management responsibilities to key roles within the council to monitor and support the active implementation of the Records Governance Policy;
- providing appropriate advice and guidance to ensure council staff are aware of the value of records and information and how this relates to their obligations and responsibilities as an employee;
- providing appropriate resources to maintain recordkeeping systems and processes;
- ensuring that the recordkeeping systems are in place and produce full and accurate records;
- ensuring that recordkeeping requirements are included in all business undertaken by council;
- taking all reasonable steps to implement recommendations made by the State Archivist;
- providing executive oversight of records management across council, including leadership, strategic direction, policy development and training programs;
- actively promoting and supporting a positive recordkeeping culture throughout Council.

3.10.2 Information Technology

Council's IT shall:

- provide the technical infrastructure required for recordkeeping;
- provide technical support for the recordkeeping system;
- provide expert advice on information technology for recordkeeping strategies in an electronic environment;

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- in partnership with management and records staff and with regards to Council's Business Continuity Plan develop, manage, and monitor the technical aspects of;
- Disaster preparedness and recovery strategies and procedures;
- Records and systems migration strategies and procedures; and
- Regular backups for records and recordkeeping systems and business systems that create and store records;
- manage the security mechanism for the protection from unauthorised access to information in electronic form.

3.10.3 Managers and Supervisors

All managers and supervisors shall:

- ensure staff create and keep records as an integral part of their work, and in accordance with established policies, procedures and standards;
- foster and support a culture within the workgroup that promotes good records management practices;
- ensure recordkeeping systems underpin and support business processes and report any deficiencies to the CEO and Technology Services.

3.10.4 Records Officer

The Records officer shall;

- develop and implement recordkeeping processes and standards;
- identify recordkeeping requirements in consultation with other organisational units;
- develop and implement an active records training and awareness program, including inductions for new employees;
- train Council employees in relation to recordkeeping obligations, processes and procedures;
- make, keep and preserve full and accurate records that document business transactions within compliant and accountable recordkeeping systems;
- promoting and facilitating records management compliance;
- responsible for the conduct of day-to-day records management operations;
- monitor compliance with the Records Management Policy, system and procedures and makes recommendations to the CEO/Managers and Supervisors for improvement or modification of practices;
- ensuring that records and environmental conditions are monitored regularly to protect records;
- arranges for the disposal or destruction of records, in line with approved procedures;
- identify recordkeeping requirements in consultation with management;
- manage the retention & disposal of records in consultation with Queensland State Archives;
- register records in the eDRMS;
- ensure that strategies and procedures exist to identify and locate records;
- administer Council's eDRMS.

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3.10.5 All Employees

All Employees shall:

- Create full and accurate records of council business in accordance with the *Public Records Act 2002*.
- Council staff have a legal obligation to ensure at all times that high standards of data quality, data protection, integrity, confidentiality and records management are met in compliance with the relevant legislation. It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarise themselves with this Records Management Policy and adhere to the principles...
- comply with all records management policies and procedures;
- comply with all policy documents introduced to foster recordkeeping best practice throughout council in compliance with the *Records Governance Policy*;
- ensure that records in any format, including electronic documents and messages are captured into eDRMS in accordance with council's record keeping procedures and protocols;
- adhere to confidentiality principles when dealing with records;
- request assistance if unable to achieve these responsibilities.

3.10.6 Risks and offences of poor records management practices within Council

Risk factors

Poor records management practices can result in:

- Insufficient or inadequate recording of decisions
- Lost records
- Inappropriate destruction of records
- Inappropriate access to records
- Minimal visibility and access to records.

This can expose your Council to significant corruption risks:

- Lack of proper protocols in relation to recordkeeping means that staff are less likely to understand the importance of creating and capturing records of their business (actions and decisions) and keeping them safe and secure until they can legally destroy them or transfer them to Queensland State Archives. A lack of strictly followed protocols increases the potential and opportunity for corruption around decision-making and actions within public authorities.
- Inability of individuals to provide documentary evidence to account for their actions or decisions while carrying out the duties of a public authority may cause damage to the reputation of both the organisation and staff members. Insufficient or inadequate documentary evidence in an organisation is likely to result in ineffective or poor decision-making.
- Projects or activities may be put at risk when decisions cannot be validated through access to documentary evidence.
- An absence of public records significantly hinders Council's ability to provide a rationale for its position, especially when undertaking legal processes such as seeking or responding to a court order.

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- Inappropriate access to records may be for personal gain or to cause detriment to other people or the organisation.

Corruption offences

Inadequate management of public records can constitute corruption. It can also result in dismissal and/or civil legal action against the individual and organisation involved.

Consequences can include:

- Being charged with and convicted of a criminal offence under the *Public Records Act 2002* if an individual unlawfully disposes of (including destroying, damaging, abandoning, transferring, donating, giving away or selling) a public record or any part of a public record. The maximum fine is 165 penalty units (equating to \$20,814.75 as at 1 July 2017) ¹ for an individual.
- Being charged and convicted of a criminal offence under the *Right to Information Act 2009* if an individual cannot, without reasonable excuse, produce the requested public records. The maximum fine is 100 penalty units for an individual.
- Being charged and convicted of various criminal offences under the *Queensland Criminal Code* including official corruption, computer hacking/misuse, misconduct in relation to public office, abuse of authority and other offences. These offences carry various penalties of imprisonment for up to 10 years.
- Use a separation agreement that states the obligation of employees to maintain record confidentiality post separation.
- Immediately remove system access and other access tokens when employees, contract staff and third party service providers cease employment with your organisation.

4. REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 DEFINITIONS:

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions shall apply:

Word / Term	Definition
Council	means Diamantina Shire Council.

4.2 RELATED POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS:

Links to supporting documentation
Public Records Act 2002

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Right to Information Act 2009
Local Government Act 2009
General Retention & Disposal (GRDS)
Business Continuity Plan
Information Privacy Act 2009
Records Governance Policy
Limitation of Actions Act 1974
Local Government Sector Retention & Disposal Schedule QDAN 480v.4

4.3 VERSION CONTROL:

Previous Version Number	Adopted/Approved Date
1	November 19 2018; Minute No. 2018.11.19-OM-14
2	June 22 2020;Minute No. 2020.06.22-OM-20