



# BOULIA SHIRE COUNCIL

## Records Management Policy

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<b>Related documents:</b>	Records Management and Disposal Procedure Councillors Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct Boulia Shire Council's Privacy Plan Business Continuity Plan Employee Code of Conduct Employee Confidentiality Agreement
<b>Responsible Section:</b>	Director Corporate Services
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Records Officer, Senior Administration Officer
<b>Legislation:</b>	Public Records Act 2002 Information Privacy Act 2009 Local Government Act 2009 Planning and Environment Act 2016 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2005 Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1992 Building Act 1975 Criminal Code Act 1899 Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Act 2001 Evidence Act 1977 Health Records Act 2005 Protected Disclosure Act 2010 Australian Standard for Records Management Right to Information Act 2009 Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule Queensland State Archives Local Government Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule

## PURPOSE

Boulia Shire Council (Council) is committed to making and maintaining information and records that fully and accurately reflect its business activities and undertakes to provide its staff with appropriate guidance, tools, and services to ensure its record keeping commitments are achieved.

Public sector employees and Government Agencies must manage any records created or received at work in accordance with the *Public Records Act 2002*. This information must be managed in a way that ensures its integrity is maintained and accessible. Good record keeping ensures that the right information is available to the right people at the right time and is of key importance to good governance. Records are vital to Council's on-going business activities.

Council is committed to compliance with standards established by the Queensland Government, Queensland State Archivist, the *Public Records Act 2002* and the Australian Standard for Records Management, AS ISO 15489-2002.

The purpose of this policy is to provide framework and a guideline of practical assistance for the creation, management and disposal, when allowed, of records within Boulia Shire Council. All practices and procedures concerning information and records management within Council are to be in accordance with this policy.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Records Management and Disposal Procedure which provides further guidance on the making and disposal of records within Boulia Shire Council.

## POLICY STATEMENTS

- Council will only copy, store and/or communicate any third-party content once it has obtained permission for the rights holder.
- Council ensures that risk management and business continuity planning are considered as an integral part of information and records management service delivery practices.
- Council does not condone the falsification, alteration, or damage of records, except in accordance with QSA records management standards and Retentions and Disposal Schedules (RDA).
- Council addresses those issues specifically relating to electronic information and records management to ensure that it meets defined business needs and information and records management best practice and irrespective of format ensuring that they are managed systematically and cost effectively.
- Council follows sound procedures for the security, privacy and confidentiality of all information and records and ensures all recordkeeping systems protect the records' authenticity.
- Council ensures that records of longer-term value are identified and protected for historical purposes and those records identified as permanent are transferred to the Queensland State Archivist in due course to become part of the state archives.
- Council will follow sound standardised procedures for the creation, maintenance and control of all information and records, including those in electronic format as well as the retention and disposal of all information and records, and for the storage of all corporate information both hard copy and electronic.

## **BENEFITS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

Records management governs the practice of any person who creates or uses information and records during their business activities. Records management at Boulia Shire Council includes:

- Setting policies and standards
- Assigning responsibilities and authorities
- Establishing and communicating procedures and guidelines
- Providing a range of services relating to the management and use of records, including training
- Designing, implementing and administering systems for management of records
- Integrating records management into business systems and processes

## **SCOPE**

- This policy provides the overarching framework for all other corporate recordkeeping policies, practices and procedures.
- All aspects of agency business including any services that Boulia Shire Council has outsourced, implemented through inclusion of recordkeeping contractual clauses in the contracts of outsourced service provision.
- Applies to all aspects of organisational business, all records created during business transactions and all business applications used to create records including emails, database applications and websites.
- Applies to the management of records, in all formats and maintained on different media including hardcopy and electronic, created or received by Boulia Shire Council in support of its business, activities and transactions.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Staff (including consultants, contractors, volunteers and any delegated bodies authorised to act on behalf of Council) and Councillors, whether permanent or temporary, are responsible for creating, maintaining and managing full and accurate records of their business activities and are accountable for adherence to and compliance with this policy, and with related records policies, procedures, business rules and guidelines. This includes:

- Ensuring that all records, including corporate emails, are maintained by being captured into Council's Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS).
- Being aware of Council's records management policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that no records are destroyed unless authorised by the CEO.
- Maintaining confidentiality of records, they have access to in accordance with Council's Employee Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement and the requirements of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and Privacy Act.

Councillors are responsible for ensuring that full and accurate records of activities undertaken in the course of their official duties as Councillors are created, managed, and disposed of appropriately to meet Council's organisational needs and transparent governance practices and conduct. Councillors are also responsible for respecting the confidentiality of records and unauthorised access and release of information.

In accordance with the *Public Records Act 2002*, the Agency's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for carrying out, with the advice and assistance of the State Archivist, a program of efficient management of public records that is in accordance with all Standards issued by the State Archivist.

The CEO is also the accountable officer under the *Public Records Act 2002*. As the officer in charge of a public office, the CEO is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with regulatory framework outlined in this policy.
- Supporting record keeping at Bouliia Shire Council.
- Ensuring that corporate policies support the creation and maintenance of full and accurate records of functions and activities.
- Ensuring Council recordkeeping policies and procedures will meet QSA Standards and withstand external security.
- Ensuring that no illegal records disposal takes place.

Directors, Managers, Coordinators and Team Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring that effective recordkeeping practices within their department are performed in accordance with this policy.
- Ensuring that staff create and keep records as an integral part of their work and in accordance with established policies, procedures and standards.
- Ensuring that all new staff complete and receive EDRMS training.
- Ensuring that information about Bouliia Shire Council's recordkeeping policies, systems and procedures are communicated throughout their department.
- Ensuring that no illegal records disposal takes place.

The Senior Administration Officer is responsible for the development, implementation and on-going management of the records management program for Council. This includes:

- Development and implementation of a records management strategy, policies and standards which incorporate sound recordkeeping principles and records management best practice guidelines, including the effective management, monitoring, capture and disposal of Council documents and records.
- Monitoring and auditing compliance with strategy, policies and standards.
- Ensuring that information about Council recordkeeping policies, systems and procedures are communicated throughout the organisation.
- Conducting reviews of records and document practices.
- Management of the Administration Department.
- Appraising, archiving and disposal of records in accordance with the Public Records Act.
- Ensuring that no illegal disposal takes place.

The Records staff are responsible for the operations of the records management program for Council. This includes:

- Maintenance of corporate electronic and hardcopy records.
- Providing EDRMS training and record keeping advice to staff.
- File creation, storage and retrieval.
- Mail operations.
- Quality assurance checking and compliance monitoring.

Council ensures appropriate resources are allocated to the development, implementation, maintenance and improvement of the information and records management program.

Continual records support and training will be provided to assist Council staff, volunteers, Councillors and Contractors in successfully achieving their record management responsibilities, whilst employed at and engaged with Boulia Shire Council.

## **RECORDS SYSTEM**

A systematic approach to the management of records is essential for Boulia Shire Council to protect and preserve records as evidence of actions. A records management system results in a source of information about business activities that can support subsequent activities and business decisions, as well as ensuring accountability to present and future stakeholders. Records enable Council to:

- Conduct business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner.
- Deliver services in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Support and document policy formation and managerial decision making.
- Provide consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration.
- Facilitate the effective performance of activities through an organisation.
- Provide continuity in the event of a disaster.
- Meet legislative and regulatory requirements including archival, audit and oversight activities.
- 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.
- Support and document current and future research and development activities, developments and achievements, as well as historical research.
- Provide evidence of business, personal and cultural activity.
- Establish business, personal and cultural identity; and
- Maintain corporate, personal or collective memory.

Records Management Systems assist in making full, complete, accurate and reliable records, which include the following characteristics:

- Compliant with recordkeeping requirements arising from the regulated and accountability environment of Boulia Shire Council.
- Adequate for the purpose for which they are kept.
- Complete in content and contain the structural and contextual information necessary to document a transaction or describe an asset.
- Meaningful with regards to information and/or linkages that ensure the business context in which the record was created, and used, is apparent.
- Comprehensive in documenting the complete range of business for which evidence is required by the organisation.
- Accurate in reflecting the transactions that they document.
- Authentic in providing proof that they are what they purport to be and that their purported creators did indeed create them.
- Inviolable through being securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, removal or destruction.

Boulia Shire Council maintains a comprehensive Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS). Council's EDRMS, is used to capture, maintain, manage, and store all corporate administrative records (both hardcopy and electronic and regardless of format).

While the EDRMS constitutes Boulia Shire Council's preferred primary records system for all corporate administrative records, there are a number of databases and software applications that may generate records which operate outside of the EDRMS.

The following "systems/tools" do not provide adequate recordkeeping functionality and are prohibited for use to store public records:

- hard copy systems not controlled by Council's EDRMS.
- email folders.
- local PC Drives.
- portable storage devices.
- shared (network) drives.

## **RECORDS DISPOSAL**

As a public authority, Boulia Shire Council is required to comply with the *Public Records Act 2002* and any other appropriate legislation, standards, and guidelines to ensure the consistent and effective disposal of public records held by, or under the control of, Council. Council must dispose of records in a planned and authorised way.

The Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule (GRDS) defines three processes that can lead to the legal destruction of records:

- Destruction of records under the principle of Normal Administrative Practice (NAP).
- Destruction of records covered by Retention and Disposal Authorities (RDAs).
- Specific authorisation to destroy records not covered by NAP or an existing RDA.

Records disposal includes the transfer of records to the custody of Queensland State Archives and the destruction and deletion of records.

Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) - The destruction of some records is permitted under NAP. NAP is a process that allows organisations to destroy certain types of low value and short-term information in the normal course of business, and to also reduce the amount of unnecessary information it holds. It covers the destruction of ephemeral material of a facilitative or duplicate nature created, acquired or collected by public sector employees during the course of their duties and is an important tool to manage our information efficiently and accountably.

Retention and Disposal Authorities (RDAs) - Standards issued by the State Archivist that defines the minimum retention periods and consequent disposal action authorised for classes of records which are described in it. RDAs provide continuing authorisation for the disposal of these classes of records. RDAs may be specific to Council.

Council will ensure that:

- Disposal actions are based on an informed decision-making process.
- Disposal actions and retention periods for public records are justifiable.

- The destruction or transfer of public records in accordance with a disposal authority is undertaken using a secure method to ensure the content of the records is not released inadvertently.

To help ensure this, Council will implement a planned disposal program that:

- Is risk adverse and manages records through to the end of their lifecycle.
- Assists with legislative compliance.
- Makes for more efficient use of resources, reducing storage and maintenance costs.
- Enhances access to existing records by only retaining required records.
- Assists with identification of records required for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, subpoenas, and discovery in general.
- Ensures required records are kept for the correct period of time.
- Provides for the systematic management of Council records and reduces the risk associated with maintaining legislative compliance.
- Identifies permanent records, enabling appropriate management prior to transfer to QSA.

The Disposal Program will incorporate the following:

- All records irrespective of media or formats (e.g., hardcopy, digital documents, email and websites) and in all business systems.
- All staff whether permanent or temporary, including contractors, consultants, Councillors, students and the records of intermediaries.
- All business units (core and administrative).
- Any services that the organisation has outsourced.
- The overarching framework for all other corporate recordkeeping standards and retention & disposal schedules.

## **MONITOR, ASSESS AND REPORT**

Monitoring, regular assessment and reporting of compliance with this policy is a mandatory requirement for all staff as identified in staff responsibilities in this policy and in staff members work plans and job descriptions.

## **BREACH OF POLICY**

No exemptions exist from this policy. Where there is evidence of a breach of this policy, Bouliá Shire Council will investigate to determine the circumstances and extent of the breach.

Employees found in breach of this policy will be subject to relevant Disciplinary Action. Substantiated breaches of the policy will require the employee to undergo additional training in their obligations under this Policy. Depending upon the severity of the case, the consequences for breaching this policy may also involve termination of employment.

Any matters involving criminal conduct will be referred to the Police/relevant agency as required.