

1. BACKGROUND

Under the State Records Act 1998(NSW), Public Offices such as Coonamble Shire Council are required to establish and maintain a records management program in conformity with standards and codes of best practice approved by the State Records Authority.

Coonamble Shire Council is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the State Records Act and to implementing best practice in its information management practices and procedures. A records management framework has been adopted by Council and outlines legislative requirements, strategies, plans, manuals, processes and supporting guidelines specifically designed for managing its corporate information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent and compliant approach to the creation, capture, maintenance, and disposal of records across Council.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to:

- Ensure a framework for the implementation of a records management program at Coonamble Shire Council (Council) in conformity with standards and codes of best practice.

- Ensure effective information management and retrieval across Council and highlight the responsibilities of Council staff regarding compliance with the State Records Act 1998 (NSW).

- Ensure the preservation of Council's "Corporate memory" through sound record keeping practices and the accurate capture of information to meet legal, evidential and accountability requirements.

- Ensure that Council's Records management Program provides timely and comprehensive information to meet legal obligations, operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

4. LEGISLATION

Specific Records Management and Access to Information Legislation

State Records Act NSW 1998
State Records Amendment Act 2005
State Records Regulation 2024
Electronic Transactions Act 2000 (NSW)
Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA)
Privacy and Protection of Personal Information Act 1998 (PPPIA)
Local Government Records Authority – GA39 and GA45
FA 450 – Functional Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government
Australian Standard – ISO 15489.1 – Records Management – Part 1 – General
Australian Standard – ISO 15489.1 – Records Management – Part 2 –
Guidelines

Other Relevant Legislation

Local Government Act 1993
Local Government (General) Regulation 2021
ICAC Act 1988
Companion Animals Act 1998
Copyright Act 1968
Crimes Act 1900
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
Fringe Benefits Tax Act 1986
Insurance Act 1902
Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
Ombudsman Act 1974
Payroll Tax Act 2007
Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002
Roads Act 1993
State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989
Swimming Pools Act 1992
Trade Practices Act 1974
Workers Compensation Act 1987
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017

5. APPLICATION/SCOPE

This Policy applies to the General Manager, the Mayor, Councillors, contractors, volunteers, delegates, and all staff of Coonamble Shire Council.

This Policy applies to all Council business records including electronic and physical records. It includes records which are created, collected, processed, used, sentenced, stored and disposed of in the conduct of official Council business.

6. POLICY

Coonamble Shire Council is dedicated to managing records electronically wherever possible and will do so in compliance with the State Records Act, Electronic Transactions Act 2000 (NSW) and Evidence Act 1995 (NSW) requirements.

6.1. ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

1.1 General Manager

Under the State Records Act, the General Manager is responsible for ensuring that Council complies with the regulations and requirements of this Act.

1.2 Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor and Councillors are responsible for the adoption of and compliance with the requirements of the Records Management Policy by ensuring that full and accurate records of activities and decisions in the course of their official duties are created, registered, managed, and disposed of appropriately to meet the Council's organisational needs and accountability requirements.

1.3 Director Corporate Services

The Director Corporate Service is responsible for providing a strategic focus for record-keeping throughout Council including establishing best practice and ensuring compliance with the requirements of the State Records Act.

1.4 Manager Finance and Procurement

The Manager Finance and Procurement is responsible for the efficient management of Council's records (physical and electronic) incorporating sound record-keeping principles and records management best practice guidelines.

1.5 Records Management Team

The Records Management Team is responsible for the effective management and system administration of Council's Corporate Records System. The Information Records Team will assist staff to fulfil their record keeping responsibilities and will

provide advice and training as required. Operationally, the Records Management Team is responsible for the scanning, registration, and electronic distribution of incoming and outgoing records of Council. The team also provides and facilitates the sentencing, archiving, and destruction of Council records, and the monitoring and auditing of records management processes.

1.6 Managers

Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are trained, utilise the Corporate Records Management System and respond to correspondence within determined timeframes.

1.6 Staff

Under the State Records Act all staff are required to “make and keep full and accurate records of business activities” (section 12(1), State Records Act). Council staff have a number of basic obligations regarding records:

- Make records to support the conduct of their business activities.
- Create and maintain records electronically where possible.
- Do not destroy Council records without authority from the Records Management Team and the General Manager.
- Treat information as a valuable corporate asset and handle records with care and respect in a sensible manner to avoid damaging records with a view to prolonging their life span.
- Ensure that records regardless of format are captured into Council's official record-keeping system.
- Do not relinquish control of any records to any third-party organisations without the express knowledge and permission of the Records Management Team.
- Be aware of and proficient in records management procedures.
- Maintain the confidentiality of records in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct, Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) ('GIPA Act'), and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) ('PPIP Act').

6.2. ACCESS TO COUNCIL RECORDS

Access to Council records will be administered in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory authority guidelines and Council policy including the GIPA Act, PPIP Act, Information and Privacy Commission Information Access Guidelines and Council's Right to Information Policy.

6.3. STORAGE AND SECURITY OF RECORDS

All records will be stored appropriately to allow for their retrieval, use and preservation whilst maintaining their security, privacy, and confidentiality. Electronic records will be

stored in Council's Electronic Records Management System and will be backed up systematically. Physical records will be housed on-site and in compliance with the NSW State Records Standard on the Physical Storage of State Records.

Unauthorised alteration, distribution, removal, or destruction of Council records is prohibited.

6.4. ARCHIVING, DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Council records must be protected, maintained and accessible for their entire retention period as outlined in NSW State Records Authority Standards GA-39-General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records (FA 450) and GA-45-General Retention and Disposal Authority: Original or source records that have been copied ('GA-45').

All Council records will be archived and destroyed in accordance with GA-39, GA-45 and FA-450.

6.5. VITAL RECORDS & CORPORATE MEMORY

Vital records are those records, in any form, which contain information essential to the continued business of the organisation, which if lost, damaged, destroyed or otherwise unavailable could affect critical operations.

Vital records should be the main priorities for salvage when a disaster occurs. Vital records may include records that are needed to:

- Operate the organisation during a disaster,
- Re-establish the organisations functions after a disaster, or
- Establish and protect the rights and interests of the organisation and its clients.

Examples of vital records include (but not limited to) bank guarantees, contracts and agreements, insurance policies, legal documents, software programs and licenses, personnel register, and current financial records.

Corporate memory is the information an organisation needs to keep meeting operational, evidential, legal, ethical and historical requirements. It is the active and historical information that an organisation has that is worth sharing, managing and preserving to enable it to function efficiently. This includes all records, document files, videos, photos, plans and data that are captured to meet the operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations of the organisation.

1. Correspondence

All outward or internal correspondence (letters, e-mails (including attachments) or memorandums) from officers of the Council that are important to the corporate memory of Council **MUST** be captured in the Electronic Records Management

System. It is the responsibility of the originating officer to ensure that the records are correctly stored.

Any physical correspondence received by officers important to the corporate memory of Council which has not been cited by the Records Team, must be sent to the Records Team to capture into the Electronic Records Management System. This will ensure the integrity of the Council's corporate memory and information.

2. Working Documents, Records and Information

Staff are responsible for keeping a record of business transactions conducted as part of the duties at Council. These may be in the format of, Word, Excel, Power Point, Photographs, Videos, Models, Plans etc. These **MUST** be captured in the Electronic Records Management System. It is the responsibility of the originating officer to ensure that the records are correctly stored and usable by those with legitimate need across the Council. Shared network drives are not authorised for the storage and management of records. Records are not to be stored on shared network drives without approval of the General Manager. These drives and locations do not capture sufficient metadata to meet the legal recordkeeping retention and disposal requirements, and do not allow records to be widely searchable or accessible to all who need them and are not secure from alteration or deletion.

6.6. METADATA

For a record in digital format to be meaningful and to serve as admissible evidence of a business transaction, associated metadata needs to be captured or created with the record to provide adequate context and to support its authenticity and management over time. This will help to ensure that Council's business, accountability and archival requirements are met in a systematic and consistent way, and that digital records are described, reliable, meaningful, admissible as evidence, accessible, sharable and reusable for as long as they need to be retained.

6.7. MONITORING

The Manager Finance and Procurement will monitor and audit compliance with this policy and records management standards to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of record-keeping systems and processes. Regular planning for the records management program is to be undertaken through specific strategic and operational plans, which will be reviewed on a regular basis.

7. DEFINITION

Accountability: The principle that individuals, organisations and the community are required to account to others for their actions. Organisations and their employees must be able to account to appropriate regulatory authorities, to shareholders or members, and to the public to meet statutory obligations, audit requirements, relevant standards and codes of best practice and community expectations.

Business Activity: Umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of an organisation and its employees. Records that document business activity are vital for supporting informed decision making, corporate memory and ensuring accountability.

Documents: Document means any record of information, published or unpublished, in hard copy or electronic form, and includes: • anything on which there is writing, or • anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols, or perforations having a meaning for the person qualified to interpret them, or • anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else, or • a map, plan, drawing or photograph.

Retention and Disposal Authority: Records retention and disposal authorities identify those records created and received by NSW public offices which are required as State archives and provide approval for the destruction of other records after minimum retention periods have been met.

(Evidence Act 1995 (NSW), Part 1 Definitions)

Evidence: Information that tends to prove a fact. Not limited to the legal sense of the term. Record-keeping: Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.

Record: Recorded information, in any form, created or received and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organisation or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. (AS ISO 15489.1 2017 Part 1, Clause 3.15)

Records Management: The discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet legal obligations, operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

Vital Record: Electronic or paper record that is essential for preserving, continuing, or reconstructing the operations of an organisation and protecting the rights of an organisation, its employees, its customers, and its stakeholders.

Title: Records Management Policy		
Department: Corporate Services		
Version	Date	Author
Three (3) Review	July 2025	Deborah Tatton – Manager Finance and Procurement
Two (2) Review	February 2018	
One (1)	January 2017	
Review Date:		
Amendments in the release:		
Amendment History	Date	Detail
Review	2025	Adapted to include digitisation of records

Review	2018	management system and framework.
Review	2017	Included Policy Review details
		Included Protection or Records and Privacy and Confidentiality clause
Annexure Attached:		
General Manager  12/9		