

Records Governance Policy

Public Records Act 2002

1. Policy Statement

Townsville City Council (Council) views its records as being vital to ongoing operations and in providing valuable evidence of business decisions, activities and transactions, thereby meeting its legislative responsibilities of accountability and transparency. This policy enables all records to be captured in accordance with legislation and managed throughout its lifecycle through to disposal. This policy will uphold compliance requirements with the *Right to Information Act 2009*, Council's obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, *Public Records Act 2002* and the *Local Government Act 2009*.

2. Principles

Council is committed to providing a strong foundation for systematically and effectively managing complete and accurate records throughout their lifecycle. Integrity in Council's information will enhance discoverability and accessibility. This policy also guides, identifies and builds a compliant Suite of Programs thus embedding governance and guidance for all Workers and Councillors to follow in how and where to capture their records.

Council's Information Management Framework sets out the hierarchy of business artefacts including Policies, Administrative Directives, Procedures and required tools which assist in implementing robust records management across Council.

3. Scope

This policy is to be viewed in conjunction with the Information Management Policy (IMP), which together, become the umbrella policy that meets all regulatory requirements for managing Council's records and information assets. This policy must be followed by Councillors and Workers. This policy supports Council's records management strategy through improved maturity of its records and facilitates practices through consistent processes, people, technology and information integrity.

4. Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that this policy is understood and adhered to by all Councillors and Workers.

Councillors and Workers are responsible for ensuring their own adherence to this policy.

5. Definitions

Decision Rights Model - provides leadership, advice, and direction on records and information management for the whole of Council.

Disposal Freeze - a group of records covered by a disposal freeze issued by the State Archivist cannot be disposed of while the freeze is in place. Disposal freezes generally relate to a particular topic or event that has gained prominence or provoked controversy e.g., childcare services.

Disposal Freezes also relate to a subject to a request for access under the *Right to Information Act 2009*, the *Information Privacy Act 2009* or any other relevant Act and must not be destroyed until the action, and any applicable appeal period has been completed.

Information - a record, data and information created, sent or received in any format including discussions, document, electronic data or knowledge, are all part of Council's business operations.

Information Governance Structure - highlights roles and responsibility for making decision and delegation authority in reference to Information and Records Management practices.

Information Management - is how Council plans, collects, organises, governs, secures, uses, controls, disseminates, exchanges, maintains, and disposes of its information; as well as any means through which Council value of that information is identified and exploited to its fullest extent.

Information Management Framework - identifies and defines governing documents which contribute to effective information management and serves as an organising framework for ensuring policy coverage.

Integrity of Information - is the dependability or trustworthiness of information. More specifically, it is the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the information content, process and system.

Record - A record is evidence of a decision made; evidence of a transaction or an action taken; is created or received to meet legal requirements; and is captured in accordance with community expectations or business needs.

Records Management - focus on ensuring legislative and regulatory requirements are met surrounding Council's information, to fulfil business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

Retention and Disposal - includes:

- destroy, which refers to the complete and irreversible physical erasure of the record, ensuring it cannot be reconstituted, recreated, or reconstructed;
- transfer, which includes transferring permanent records to QSA;
- donate, giving records to a museum or historical society must be authorised by the State Archivist;
- loss or damage, records may be lost or damaged because of a disaster or other circumstances beyond Council's control, such as contamination; and
- abandon, neglect, which can lead to loss or damage to records, is a form of disposal.

Source Record - Documents or records that have been copied, converted, or migrated from one format or system to another e.g., physical record to digital record. The source records are those that remain following the successful conversion or migration.

Suite of Programs - An automated system designed to manage semi-structured or unstructured content including text, images, and video content. A subset of the documents managed in an electronic Document Records Management Solution (eDRMS) be declared to be records. The current eDRMS is the Enterprise Content Manager, hosted in CIAnywhere, which manages these records and preserves the record's context, authenticity, and integrity.

Vital Records - are records that enable Council to continue to operate in the event of a disaster and satisfy ongoing core business responsibilities. These records include:

- Permanent Records - records produced or received by Council that are of enduring value;
- High-Value Records - records that Council could not or would have great difficulty operating without; and
- High-Risk Records - records that pose a significant risk to Council if they were misused, lost, damaged or deleted prematurely.

Workers - includes employees, contractors, volunteers, and all others who perform work on behalf of Council.

6. Policy

Record keeping is the making and maintaining of complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business activities in the form of recorded information.

Managing Council's Records appropriately and systematically, regardless of their format, is integral to the effective and accountable conduct of Council's business activities.

Council requires Records to be fully digitised within its records management system, where reasonably practicable. This means the digital version of the Record becomes the Record while the source record (hardcopy) becomes the copy and is disposed of in accordance with the relevant disposal authority, as set out in the Queensland State Archives Digitisation Disposal Policy 2014.

6.1. Records Management

Council's Information is captured and archived in accordance with legislation in Council's record keeping system.

Appropriate management of Council's records will:

- provide effective and efficient performance of business activities;
- provide consistency, continuity and improved productivity in management and administration;
- meet accountability requirements by ensuring compliance with legislation;
- support and document policy formulation and decision making; and,
- provide protection and support in litigation, including the management of risks associated with business activities.

A systematic approach to Records Management is essential to:

- facilitate efficient and effective management of Council's records;
- establish timely access to accurate and useful information;
- minimises duplication of both information and effort; and
- minimises storage requirements.

6.2. Governance and Records

Council's Information is to be captured in accordance with legislation and prioritised through the Information Management Framework.

6.3. Complete and Reliable Information

Council's records of various formats are inclusive of surveillance footage, images and social media, which can be trusted as true and accurate representations of the transactions, activities or facts that they document.

Council's complete and reliable records must:

- contain not only the content, but also the structural and contextual information necessary to document the transaction and make sense of the content;
- be meaningful - the record can be understood because of the information it contains and/or the linkages that enable the context in which the records were created and used is apparent;
- contain only the amount of information or context it needs to be meaningful and does not include extraneous information;
- have context - the record includes metadata and information that shows the business, legal and social context, relationships to other records, record systems and those who create, manage and use records;
- be authentic - it can be proven and trusted to be what it says it is and to have been created, used, and transmitted in the way and by the person that it says it was created, used or transmitted by;
- be securely protected to prevent unauthorised access, alteration and removal;
- be accessible - can be located and accessed as required; and
- be recoverable - the digital version remains clear, complete and accurate and fit for purpose. You can store and manage the digitised versions as records for their full retention period through version control.

6.4. Vital Records: Permanent, High-Value and High-Risk Records

Council manages its Vital Records by identifying those records that Council would require to re-establish Council business in the event of a disaster and satisfy ongoing core business responsibilities.

Council manages this process by utilising the Vital Records Procedure, Vital Records Register and Vital Records Lodgement Form which together identify, capture, and isolate these records.

6.5. Records That Are Discoverable and Accessible for Use and Re-Use

Council values its corporate information, along with people, finances and infrastructure. Council's information assets will be complete and reliable records that are discoverable, accessible and proactively managed to enable the use and re-use over their entire lifecycle. Information Assets are managed through sharing, access and maintenance with appropriate security and governance to maintain and enable maximum value to be derived from its use.

6.6. Retention and Disposal of Records

Council is obliged to retain records for the minimum retention period specified in the Queensland State Archive (QSA) Retention and Disposal Schedules and those records that meet the criteria of a Disposal Freeze advised through notification also issued by QSA. No record can be disposed of unless appropriately authorised.

7. Legal Parameters

Evidence Act 1977

Information Privacy Act 2009

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Public Records Act 2002

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994

Right to Information Act 2009

8. Associated Documents

Complaints Management Policy

Confidentiality Policy

General Retention and Disposal Schedule

General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Digital Source Records: QDAN 678 v

Information Management Policy

Information Privacy Policy

Local Government Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule

Right to Information Policy

Water Retention and Disposal Schedule QDAN 738 v1