Central Coast Council

Information and Records Management **Policy**

June 2020

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Policy owner:	IM+T Assure, Information Management + Technology
Approved by:	Information Management + Technology
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Contents

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Policy is to:

   a. Ensure that Council's Records and Information Assets are created, managed, retained and disposed of in accordance with relevant legislation & Council's Records Management Program;

   b. Ensure full and accurate records of all activities and decisions of Council are created, secured and well maintained; and

   c. Enable information accessibility, business enhancement and improvement; and

2. This Policy is a key component of Council's Record Management Program (RMP) in accordance with s.12(2) of State Records Act 1998 by providing important rules, guidelines and other details to assure the most effective and compliant ongoing protection of Council's vital information assets. (*Council's Records Management Program is described at Appendix 2*)

Scope

3. This Policy covers personnel employed by Council; any person or organisation contracted to or acting on behalf of Council; and any person or organisation employed to work on Council premises or facilities and all activities of the Council.

4. This Policy applies to information and records:

   a. In all formats including (but not limited to) electronic or hard copy documents, structured data, emails, texts (SMSs), instant messages, handwritten notes, voice recordings, facsimiles, telephone messages, transmission reports etc;

   b. That are 'originals' or reproductions of those or other originals;

   c. Created by all parties internal and external to Council;

   d. For their entire lifecycle from creation or capture, through to storage and authorised destruction; and

   e. Whilst on Council premises or off-site in/on any location, platform or device.

How this Policy applies to you

5. In your role, you likely create, receive and/or work with Council information during your day to day activities. In doing so, you are required to save and appropriately secure some of that information according several laws, protocols, standards and guidelines (collectively "**regulations**").

6. This Policy contains the "rules" and other important information drawn from those regulations to help you do so.

General

7. Each person to which this policy applies must handle records and information (see Appendix 1) in accordance with the State Records Act 1998 and Council's Records Management Program (explained further at Appendix 2), and in particular:

   a. Create and maintain quality information routinely, as part of your work;

   b. Identify and secure official records in the authorised and applicable Council's record keeping systems;

   c. Handle Council information with due care and vigilance as valued Council assets;

   d. Never destroy Council records without appropriate authority;

   e. Protect all Council information from unauthorised access;

   f. Ensure Council's information is always retained on Council premises, or in the custody of authorised Council staff, contractors or vendors, or within authorised Council offsite storage facilities;

   g. Ensure the confidentiality and privacy of all Council information; and

   h. Act within the law and abide by Council's Code of Conduct when accessing, creating, sharing and working with Council information.

8. Specific recordkeeping responsibilities are outlined at Appendix 3.

The value of Council's Information Assets and Records Management Program

9. Council's information and Record Management Program is vital in:

   a. Ensuring business activities are conducted in a manner that complies with State Record Act 1998;

   b. Ensuring evidence of actions, decisions and precedents for future decision making is on hand and easily accessible;

   c. Enabling the delivery of services in an efficient, fair and equitable manner (efficient processes and fully informed);

   d. Enabling Council to operate responsibly by ensuring information creation, storage and disposal activities are performed in an environmentally considerate way;

e. Ensuring compliance with legislation with respect to the retention of information as failure to do so can result in criminal and civil sanctions for individuals and Council; and

f. Ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place and complied with enabling the most effective, compliant and quality management of Council information.

Need to know more?

10. Enquiries regarding this Policy and its application should be directed to the Section Manager IM+T Information Management.

Compliance, monitoring and review

11. Council's information and record management responsibilities are highlighted in the Council induction employees receive upon commencement.

12. Suspected breaches or misuse of this Policy are to be reported to the Chief Executive Officer. Alleged breaches of this Policy shall be dealt with by the processes outlined for breaches of the Code of Conduct, as detailed in the Code of Conduct and in the Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct.

13. This Policy is reviewed:

a) At least every four (4) years from its implementation; or

b) When relevant major Council changes occur to ensuring remains aligned with regulations, Policy and Council's requirements, strategies, values and activities; and/or

c) At times, this Policy may be revised for insubstantial, administrative reasons, or to make adjustments of a minor editorial nature. Such changes will not alter the purpose or intent of the policy, nor impact related policies.

Records management

14. Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this Policy in a recognised Council recordkeeping system. Specific responsibilities are outlined at Appendix 3.

Definitions

This policy uses the following definitions:

a. The Act: The State Records Act 1998 (NSW).

b. Council: Central Coast Council, being the organisation responsible for the administration of Council affairs and operations and the implementation of Council policy and strategies.

c. Evidence: Records of a business transaction that can be shown to have been created in the normal course of business activity and which is inviolate, irrefutable and complete.

d. Information: A collection of data in any form which may be transmitted, manipulated or stored. Records are a subset of information that constitutes the evidence of Council activities.

e. Information lifecycle: The progression of information via a series of stages from its creation to its lawful destruction.

f. Recordkeeping: Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.

g. Record(s): are those that are, (or may ever be), of value for administrative, business, fiscal, legal, evidentiary purposes, and those of historical value as State archives.

h. The State Records Act 1998 defines important terms including "records", "State record" and "State Archives". Refer to the definitions of Records and State Records in the State Records Act 1988 (NSW) Section 3. (See also Appendix 1 for examples of what is and is not a Council record).

i. Records Management Program (RMP) which is how Council manages its records at key stages in the information management lifecycle. (See also Appendix 2: Council's Records Management Program (RMP))

j. Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): The officer of Council delegated the corporate responsibility for the oversight of Information and Records.

Related resources

15. Legislation:

   a. Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA)
   b. Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
   c. Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
   d. State Records Act 1998 (NSW) and Regulation

16. Associated/Internal documents:

   a. Access to information (GIPA) webpage
   b. Code of Conduct
   c. Intellectual Property Policy
   d. Investment Management Policy
   e. IT Acceptable Use Policy
   f. Privacy Management Plan

17. State Archives and Records Authority resources:

   a. General retention and disposal authority: Local government records (GA39)
   b. Standards and codes of practice under the State Records Act 1998:
      I. Standard on records management
      II. Physical Storage of State Records
   c. AS ISO 15489.1: 2017 Information and documentation - Records management.

Appendix 1: What is and is not a "record"?

1. Some examples of information that **are records** and must be retained:

   d. It is now, or will ever be of interest or importance to others internal or external to Council;

   e. Any "transaction" document or data that has been approved by another person (internal or external to Council);

   f. Information that relates to or is evidence to support a decision that has been made, or demonstrates the decision-making process;

   g. Information that is likely to have an impact on another individual, department, Council, the Community or any other third party;

   h. Information that informs, supports, instigates, demonstrates and/or memorialises a change to policy, procedure, activity or methodology;

   i. Information that must create or keep for statutory reasons;

   j. Information with potential financial or legal implications that may come under scrutiny with respect to accountability, probity, or any other form of required Council governance;

   k. Information that supports or is included in a report for any internal or external body or third party;

   l. Draft, working documents or notes that were key to the development of a formal record (i.e. research or calculations that have informed the development of a final document or decision);

   m. Publicly available material where it forms part of a compound document such as an operating manual; or

   n. Master copies of advertising material created by Council for internal and/or external distribution (i.e. brochures, web pages etc).

2. Some examples of information that are **not records** and do not need to be retained for any longer than your purpose in creating or capturing it:

   a. Emails, texts or hand-written notes unrelated to Council activity, transactions or decisions (i.e. reminders, comments etc);

   b. Duplicates (exact copies) of documents, data or other information where the original record is held elsewhere (i.e. in the EDMS or other business system);

   c. Information needed temporarily of limited continuing usefulness and that is not required to meet legislation, policy or record keeping obligations;

   d. Draft, working documents or notes used for developing formal documents or decisions but does not contain information or calculations key to their content or decision;

   e. Published books, journals, magazines or other such reference materials;

   f. Unsolicited and unwanted "junk" mail offering goods or services to Council (i.e. brochures); or

   g. Publicly available material that is not part of a compound document such as an operating manual or report.

Appendix 2: Council's Records Management Program (RMP)

1. Council's Records Management Program ("RMP") is a planned, well maintained and coordinated set of policies, procedures, people, systems and activities that are required to capture, protect, secure and manage its records.

2. Key records management provisions of the State Records Act 1998 (NSW) require Council to:

   a. Make and keep records that fully and accurately document their operations and administration;

   b. Establish and maintain a records management program in conformity with standards and codes of best practice approved by the State Records Authority of New South Wales;

   c. Ensure that records are stored in conditions appropriate to their format and preservation requirements;

   d. Ensure that records held in digital or other technology dependent formats are accessible for as long as they are required.

3. In accordance with that Act, the objectives of the Council's Records Management are to ensure:

   a. Council has the records it needs to support and enhance ongoing business and customer service, and to meet accountability requirements and community expectations;

   b. Council records are managed efficiently and can be easily accessed and used for as long as they are required;

   c. Council records are stored as cost-effectively as possible and when no longer required they are disposed of in a timely and efficient manner;

   d. Council complies with all operational, legislative and commercial requirements concerning records and records management practices;

   e. Council records of longer-term value are identified and protected for historical and all other administrative and evidentiary purposes; and

   f. Digital and other technology dependent records are maintained in an authentic and accessible form for as long as they are required.

Organisation and Management of Council's RMP

4. Council's Senior Responsible Officer's (SRO) delegated role includes the overall strategic and managerial responsibility for whole of Council's information and record management who:

a. Is appointed by the Owner of this Policy;

b. Must be a direct report of either the CEO or Chief Information Officer (CIO); and

c. Is the Sponsor of Council's Record Management Program responsible for its sound, smooth and compliant operation.

d. Council's Records Management program is managed on behalf of the Council SRO by the Section Manager IM+T Information Management.

Scope of Council's RMP

5. This Program's scope and activity is to educate, direct and assure that:

   a. All staff and third parties working with Council information do so according to the Code of Conduct and requirements of this Program in accordance with Council policies, guidelines and procedures.

   b. Managers, supervisors and those engaging with third parties working with Council information ensure that their staff and all third parties have read this Policy, have received the required training and always actively meet Council and legislative requirements.

   c. All business applications, systems and other components of Council's information management digital ecosystem ensure that records:

      a) Are efficiently captured, created, and maintained at a high quality;

      b) Remain consistent;

      c) Are secure; and

      d) Are easily accessed and shared in accordance with the Code of Conduct, this Policy and legislation.

6. The Record Management Program remains effective in meeting business needs, ensuring compliance and providing effective service delivery.

Elements of Council's RMP

Creation and capture

7. All must ensure that they create records of all decisions and actions made during their official business. For example, if business is transacted by telephone, file notes of the key points in the conversation should be documented. Official meetings should include the taking of minutes.

8. To assist in promoting the responsible creation of records, the capture of essential information and the management of records over time, Council has developed and maintains templates, procedures and guidelines available on the intranet.

9. All records must be captured into the Council EDMS, so they can be managed appropriately. Procedures and other training materials on the Intranet describe how to do this, and what information is required for each record.

10. Records should be registered in the Council EDMS and given a unique number. All official outgoing communications with respect to those records should refer to that number.

System design and updates

11. The SRO and Section Manager IM+T Information Management should be consulted during the design, planning and changes to databases and automated systems to determine what records should be created and captured by the system and the recordkeeping rules and tools that must be accommodated.

Storage

12. "Current" hardcopy records should be stored in authorised storage areas with compliant access restrictions and according to the State Archives & Records Authority (SARA).

13. Records that are rarely used, or no longer required for official purposes that must be retained in accordance with the current Retention and Disposal Authority should be referred to the Section Manager IMT Information Management for action (See "Transfer").

14. Electronic records may either be retained online (on servers) or offline (on CDs, DVDs, magnetic disks or other removable media). Such records of short-term value will be disposed of at suitable intervals by the System Administrator by authorisation from the Section Manager IMT Information Management. Electronic records of long term or archival value must be retained online wherever possible and managed in accordance with the Records Management Procedures. Guidance and authority to destroy such records must be obtained from the Section Manager IMT Information Management.

Maintenance and monitoring

15. The location of each physical record must be recorded in Council's EDMS and updated each time it is moved. This ensures that records are accounted for in the same way as all other valuable Council assets.

16. The transfer of any records to another Council or third party, must be authorised by the Section Manger IMT Information Management prior to their transfer.

17. Council's Section Manager IMT Information Management is responsible for ensuring security and environmental conditions are monitored regularly to protect records. This includes regularly auditing access privileges to electronic records and the temperature and humidity levels in the storage areas for physical records.

18. The Chief Information Officer is responsible for ensuring that digital records are replicated when new storage devices and media are being installed and are refreshed when degradation is detected.

19. Maintenance of electronic records can also entail the migration of data. Migrations must be authorised by the Chief Information Officer and must produce authentic, complete, accessible and useable records.

20. Council has implemented and continually evolves security and business continuity measures and information security policies for safeguarding its information assets. All must always abide by these measures.

Disposal

21. Council has an authorised and legislatively required record Retention and Disposal Authority that informs and directs decisions regarding the disposal (i.e. permanent deletion or destruction), of records related to its core functions and activities.

22. That Authority recommends the disposal schedule and actions assigned to records in all formats on creation to ensure they are managed appropriately. The Records Management Procedures contain information on how this is achieved.

23. No Council records can be disposed of unless in accordance with this Authority. Any appraisal to determine if records can be destroyed ("sentencing"), must be performed in accordance with this Authority and have prior approval of the Section Manager IMT Information Management. Any such destruction of records must be supervised by an appropriately authorised Council officer and an official Certificate of Destruction filed in the EDMS referenced to that/those records.

Transfer

24. Council has several on and off-site storage facilities housing physical records no longer of immediate or short-term use or application but that must be retained in accordance with the Retention and Disposal Authority. The Section Manager IMT Information Management is responsible for transferring these records to any such facility and act as custodians until they are permanently destroyed or transferred.

25. Records categorised as State archives in the Retention and Disposal Authority will be transferred by the Council Archivist to archival custody at NSW State Archives when no longer in use for official purposes in accordance with Council's Records Management Procedures.

26. In the event of administrative change, e.g. the transfer of functions from Council to another organisation, the SRO must approve all record transfers. The Section Manager IM+T Information Management must ensure that the transfer is performed in accordance with required transfer procedures and compliance protocols.

Access

27. Records must be easily and securely accessible to all who are authorised to access and work with them for business purposes.

28. All access to Council's records by members of the public, including requests under the Government Information (Public Access) legislation, will be in accordance with the Records Management Procedures and applicable legislation.

Contractors and Outsourced Functions

29. All records created by contractors performing work on behalf of Council belong to Council and are State records under the State Records Act 1998. This includes the records of contract staff working on Council premises and all external service providers.

30. Contracts should clearly state that ownership of records resides with Central Coast Council, and instructions regarding creation, management, and access to those records. The SRO and Section Manager IM+T Information Management should be consulted during the formulation of such contract.

Definitions

Some key terms and definitions used in the course of Council's Records Management Program are as follows:

a. **Business Systems**: Information technology systems designed to support the undertaking of a specific business process or processes. Although they may create, receive, manage and maintain business information relating to business processes, their primary function is not concerned with the management of this information as records. They are distinct from electronic document and records management systems. Examples of business systems include e-commerce, client relationships systems (CRM), Finance and human resource management systems etc.

b. **Disposal**: The process by which records are either destroyed or retained within Council or State Archives. Disposal includes a range of processes associated with implementing the records retention, destruction or transfer decisions in accordance with the provisions of the State Records Act 1998 (NSW)

c. **EDMS**: "Electronic Document Management System" (also sometimes referred to as EDRMS being "Electronic Document and Record Management System") This is the authorised Council software application that stores, protects and applies required security to Council records and information of long-term value. The official EDMS of Council is "Content Manager".

d. **Information Life Cycle Management**: The consistent management of information from creation to final disposition. It is comprised of strategy, process, and technology to effectively manage information which, when combined, drives improved control over information in the enterprise. Effective management of records and information during their "life" underpins trustworthy, useful and accountable records and information which are accessible and retained for as long as they are needed. This management extends to records and information in all formats, in all business environments and systems.

e. **Metadata**: Structured information that describes and/or allows users to find, manage, control, understand or preserve information over time. Often referred to as "Data about data". Record keeping metadata describes the context, content and structure of records and their management over time.

f. **Retention and disposal authority**: A statutory framework that identifies the various types or categories of records held by Council, how long they must be kept, whether and when they can be destroyed, or must be retained permanently.

g. **RIA**: "Records and Information Assets" which like any other asset of an organisation, must be identified and managed so its maximum value can be utilised. Also, that they can always be appropriately accessed, used, shared and disposed of.

h. **IRM**: "Information and Records Management". The core role of Council's information and record management is to ensure the creation, maintenance, useability and sustainability of the Council's information assets.

i. **Sentencing**: The process of implementing appraisal decisions with respect to Council's records retention requirements in accordance with a retention and disposal authority approved by NSW State Archives and Records. Sentencing entails identifying and classifying records according to a retention and disposal authority and applying the retention period and disposal action specified in the authority.

Appendix 3: Information Management Responsibilities

All Staff

1. Comply with Information Records Management Policy and Procedures.

2. Create full and accurate records of their business activities, including records of all decisions and actions made during their business activities.

3. Ensure that all records are saved into Council's authorised record keeping systems.

Chief Information Officer

1. Has ownership of the Information and Records Management Policy

2. Ensures the preservation of digital records is addressed in policy, planning and implementation of the public office's records management program

3. Ensures that the essential characteristics of digital records are identified prior to any preservation process taking place

4. Reports to the Council Executive on the Records Management Program

5. Develops strategic and operational plans for the Records Management Program

6. Provides support and infrastructure to ensure that records kept in electronic form are managed so that they are accessible, readable, inviolate, complete, comprehensive, and authentic for as long as required

7. Ensures that information management policies and projects consider the special nature of records

8. Ensures appropriately detailed audit logs are created

9. Implements information security measures at the network level

10. Performs routine and comprehensive system backups of data

11. Establishes and maintains a customised recordkeeping metadata schema and business rules regarding how metadata is to be managed

12. Ensures the migration of digital records or digital control records/metadata is conducted carefully and according to this Policy and the retention and disposal authority approved by NSW State Archives and Records (in liaison with records management staff)

IM+T Assure Unit Manager (Senior Responsible Officer (SRO))

1. Holds the role of Senior Responsible Officer for records management matters, including responding to requests for information on conformity with legislative requirements (i.e. responding to records management audits, surveys etc).

2. Ensures Council complies with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998 and the standards and requirements issued under the Act. This includes the requirement for the public office to ensure that any records requiring technology to be read and understood remain readable and available for as long as they are required

3. Complies with other legislation relating to records management and recordkeeping

4. Ensures the preservation of digital records is addressed in policy, planning and implementation of the Council's Records Management Program.

5. Ensures that the Records Management Program is adequately resourced

6. Represents records management interests throughout the Directorates and on the Council Executive Leadership Team

Section Manager IM+T Information Management

1. Compiles Information and Records Management Policy and Procedures in relation to all aspects of information and records management

2. Monitors Council compliance with all Information and Records Management Policy and Procedures and makes recommendations for improvement or modification of practices for the Whole of Council

3. Ensures that the automated metadata capture for all Council applications, business systems, and libraries is compliant and enables the most effective and efficient findability of the information it is attached to (in liaison with information technology staff)

4. Manages the HP Content Manger records management application (EDMS)

5. Has responsibility for the conduct of records management operations

6. Ensures the compliant disposal of records.

7. Ensures that all staff are aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities and are competent in using Council's EDMS.

8. Assists in developing strategic and operational plans for the Records Management Program

9. Ensures the formulation and ongoing maintenance of Council's thesaurus and legislative retention and disposal authority

10. Ensures the formulation of compliant development and maintenance of vital records lists and counter disaster plans

11. Ensures the migration of digital records or digital control records/metadata is conducted carefully and in line with this Policy and the retention and disposal authority approved by NSW State Archives and Records (in conjunction with the Chief Information Officer)

12. Liaises with the Chief Information Officer regarding counter disaster planning for electronic information and records

13. Ensures user level information security measures are robust, effective and compliant

14. Ensures security and environmental conditions are monitored regularly to protect records. This includes regularly auditing access privileges to electronic records and the temperature and humidity levels in the storage areas for physical records.

Program and Project Managers

1. Ensure that records are created and managed within their programs and projects in compliance with Council's Information and Records Management Policy and Procedures.

2. Provide feedback on the successful migration processes to help ensure that records remain authentic, complete, accessible and useable.

3. Ensure that project staff abide by required information and record keeping compliance, Policy and Procedures.

Contractors

1. Comply with Council's Information and Records Management Policy and Procedures.

2. Create full and accurate records of their business activities, including records of all decisions and actions made during those activities.

History of revisions

Amendment history	Details
Original approval authority details	Chief Executive Officer / Council
	22/06/2020
	This policy replaces all previous information and record management policies including those of the former Wyong and Gosford Councils and Interim Central Coast Council draft.