



**CORANGAMITE
SHIRE**

Records Management Policy

Council Policy



Records Management Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Corangamite Shire Council (Council) records are our corporate memory, providing evidence of actions and decisions and representing a vital asset to support our daily functions and operations. They support policy formulation, decision-making and protect the interests of the Council. They help us to make good use of precedents and organisational experience. They support consistency, continuity, efficiency and productivity in program delivery, management and administration.

2. AUTHORITY

This policy has been approved and authorised by Council. It will be reviewed and amended as required in consultation with CEO, Directors, Managers and Staff of the Council.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the creation and long term maintenance of document and records evidence within Council, by establishing a Records Management Program and clarifying staff accountabilities for document and records management.

Council is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the *Public Records Act 1973 (Victoria)* and to implement best practice in its document and records management practices and systems (please see section 6 for more information on legislative compliance).

To achieve this, Council will comply with the legislative and administrative requirements for record keeping and follow sound procedures for the:

- creation, maintenance and control of all records that document the business of the Council, including electronic records
- retention and disposal of all records, including electronic records
- storage of all records, including electronic records;
- security, privacy and confidentiality of all records and ensure all recordkeeping systems protect the records' authenticity.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all records created, collected and held by Council, and all staff, consultants, contractors, the Mayor, Councillors, and volunteers employed or engaged by the Council.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be applied in conjunction with the following documents;

- Document and Records Management Procedures;
- Corangamite Shire Council Document and Records Classification November 2018;
- PROS 09/05 – General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Local Government
- PROS 07/01– General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Common Administrative Functions
- PROS 10/01 – General Retention and Disposal Authority for Converted Source Records
- Council Digitisation Plan September 2014
- Information Privacy Policy 2016
- Protected Disclosure Act 2012

6. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

State legislation and Australian Standards have been adopted as a code of best practice for the management of documents and records within Council.

They provide details of the conditions and standards by which documents and records management and recordkeeping practices in Council will be guided.

The following information provides an overview of key standards and legislation:

Public Records Act 1973 requires Victorian Government agencies to manage and control their records in accordance with the records management standards issued by the Keeper of Public Records. The Act requires staff to make and keep full and accurate records of the business of the Council.

AS:ISO-15489.1 – Information and Documentation – Records Management provides clear guidelines for the establishment and application of records management practices, procedures and systems that have been incorporated into the Council's Records Management Program.

Management of Electronic Records PROS 99/007 (Version 2) is the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) which prescribes the specifications and standards required for capturing, maintaining and transferring permanent electronic records to PROV.

Electronic Transactions Act 2000 facilitates and promotes business and community confidence in the use of electronic transactions. It recognises the legal validity of transactions carried out electronically, and so permits the "recording and retention of information and documents in electronic form". Recordkeeping practices should be applied to all records regardless of the format of those records.

Public Records Office Victoria Advices, as issued from time to time, provide guidance on records management procedures in accordance with the Standards.

Evidence Act 1958 describes the ways in which documents may be admitted as evidence into court. The Act describes the more acceptable formats and the features that would give more value or "weight" to records. Recordkeeping practices must ensure that the more appropriate format of the record is preserved.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1982 contains the key provisions governing aspects of government recordkeeping, disclosure and public accountability. The FOI Act gives everyone the right to make a request to access "documents" held by the Council. Recordkeeping practices need to ensure that records are accessible and managed.

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 creates a scheme for the responsible collection and handling of personal information across the public sector. Recordkeeping practices must ensure that personal information held by the Council is secure, accurate and only used for the purpose for which it was collected.

Health Records Act 2001 promotes fair and responsible handling of health information by protecting the privacy of an individual's health information in the public and private sectors; providing individuals with a right of access to their health information; and providing an accessible framework for the resolution of complaints regarding the handling of health information.

Protected Disclosure Act 2012 provides procedures to establish a system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the Council or its employees. The purpose of the Act is to encourage and facilitate the making of disclosures of improper conduct by the Council.

Local Government Act 1989 The purpose of this Act is to establish a legislative scheme that supports the system of Local Government, it provides procedures to ensure prescribed documents are available for inspection at all reasonable times; Council may fix reasonable fees for the inspection and copying of a prescribed document. Record keeping practices need to ensure that prescribed documents are accessible and managed.

7. RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The *Public Records Act 1973* requires Council to make and keep full and accurate records as evidence of business activities. Therefore Council is required to implement a Records Management Program based on legislation, standards and codes of best practice.

As an organisation we want our records to:

- support our ongoing business activity and customer services;
- meet accountability requirements and community expectations;
- to be managed as efficiently and effectively as possible;
- to be able to be retrieved and used to meet the above needs, and
- to comply with all external requirements relating to recordkeeping practices.

Council is responsible for the protection, safe custody and return of all State records under its control, ensuring accessibility to all equipment or technology dependant records.

Council uses TechnologyOne Enterprise Content Manager (ECM) as its document and records management system. The system is designed to be a compliant document and records management system which manages the lifecycle of documents and records regardless of their format.

Council documents and records must be saved in ECM and as prescribed by the Document and Records Management Procedures document.

8. RECORDS THAT MUST BE KEPT

A record can be folders, documents or data created, received or maintained as evidence and information of work done for or on behalf of Council in either hardcopy or electronic format.

Records received from an external source or generated internally within Council in the course of normal business practice either electronic or in hardcopy are to be registered and captured in ECM.

Examples of Council records include (but are not limited to):

- Agendas, minutes and papers
- Building Applications
- Capital Works documentation
- Care plans
- Complaint correspondence
- Contracts and agreements
- Correspondence received from members of the public
- Correspondence received from private and public sector organisations, requiring action
- Engineering drawings
- Financial Records
- Permits
- Personnel recruitment and appointment documentation
- Phone Text Messages
- Photographs
- Planning Applications
- Planning Permits
- Planning Scheme documentation
- Property documentation and correspondence
- Prosecution documentation
- Reports to Council
- Risk management registers and documentation

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- Streetscape plans
- Subdivision Certification
- Tender documentation
- WorkCover documents and files

Ultimately, if the document or record contains a business transaction or any decision that has been made on behalf of Council it must be kept for the required time as per PROS 09/05 – Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Local Government Functions, or PROS 07/01 – General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Common Administrative Functions.

9. RECORDS THAT DO NOT HAVE TO BE KEPT

The Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) permits the destruction of some documents under the principle of normal administrative practice (NAP), these documents include:

- Working papers consisting of rough notes and calculations used solely to assist in the preparation of other records such as correspondence, reports and statistical tabulations
- Advertising material and externally published newsletters
- Duplicate copies of any documents, preserved solely for reference and which do not contain individual comments
- Draft records when superseded by a “final” version;
- Published material preserved solely for reference.

10. DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

Records must be protected, maintained, findable, and useable for their entire retention period, as outlined in the PROS 09/05 - General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Local Government or the PROS 07/01 – General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Common Administrative Functions.

Records cannot be disposed of other than in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* and the abovementioned General Retention and Disposal Authorities. In addition to this, records cannot be disposed of without the concurrence of the Knowledge and Record Services Co-ordinator and the relevant owner location of the records.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

Specific responsibilities and accountabilities for records management at Council include:

11.1. Chief Executive Officer

The overall responsibility for document and records management within Council resides with the CEO;

Therefore the CEO is accountable for ensuring that Council’s Records Management Program satisfies its operational and legislative obligations.

11.2. Director Corporate and Community Services

The Director Corporate and Community Services is responsible for:

- Implementing and continually improving Council’s Records Management Program;
- Defining Council’s requirements for records management, recordkeeping and document management;

- Ensuring Council staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities; and
- Maintaining and reviewing these policies and relevant documentation as outlined in section 5.

11.3. Council Directors and Managers

The Council's Directors and Managers are responsible for ensuring that recordkeeping practices within their Department are performed in accordance with this Policy and the procedures outlined in the associated Document and Records Management Procedures.

11.4. Knowledge and Records Services Coordinator

The Knowledge and Records Services Coordinator is responsible for the efficient management, monitoring, capture and disposal of Council documents and records incorporating sound recordkeeping principles and records management best practice guidelines.

This involves initiating and maintaining control over daily document and records management activities and services in accordance with Document and Records Management Procedures, including:

- Processing all incoming correspondence;
- File Creation, Storage and Retrieval; and
- File Archiving and Disposal.

11.5. Council Employees

Staff members should take care to handle documents and records sensibly and with care and respect to avoid damage to the documents and records and to prolong their lifespan. Staff must not alienate, relinquish control over, damage, alter or destroy records of the Council, without authorisation.

Staff members are responsible for using, maintaining and managing all records in accordance with this Policy and the Document and Records Management Procedures.

This includes complying with these policies at all times by:

- Making records that document their activities and decisions;
- Registering electronic records in ECM;
- Forwarding scanned hardcopy documents to KaRS for quality control
- Attaching paper records to hardcopy files;
- Using official Council file covers;
- Recording folder movement information in ECM;
- Storing hardcopy files securely while they are in active use, within their control;
- Learning how and where records are kept within the Council;
- Not destroying records without authorisation and according to PROV Retention and Disposal requirements;
- Not losing records; and
- Being aware of and following records management procedures as outlined in the Document and Records Management.

Council will support staff by including document and record's management training in induction programs.

11.6. Mayor, Councillors and Volunteers

The Mayor, Councillors and volunteers should take care to handle Council records sensibly and with care.

They are responsible for using, maintaining and managing all records in accordance with this Policy and the procedures outlined in the associated Document and Records Management Procedures document.

This includes complying with this Policy at all times by:

- Providing copies of electronic council related records to Executive Support or Knowledge and Records Services for registration and processing and
- Providing council related mail or correspondence that is received directly to their home address or hand delivered to them to Executive Support or Knowledge and Records Services for registration and processing.

12. MONITORING THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Records Management Program will be monitored regularly by the Knowledge and Records Services Co-ordinator and Manager Information with results reported monthly to the Senior Officer Group.