

# Forbes Shire Council Records Management Policy

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## FORBES SHIRE COUNCIL RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

### Revision History

Version	Date	Amended	Authorised by	Approved by	Revision Date
V1			Director Corporate Services	Council	18/06/2017

### Change History

Version	Change Details
V1	Initial Policy

### Related Documents

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# FORBES SHIRE COUNCIL RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

## 1 INTRODUCTION:

### 1.1 Records as a Resource

Council recognises that records are a vital asset to:

- facilitate information accessibility and enhance business by supporting program delivery, management and administration;
- deliver customer services in an efficient, fair and equitable manner;
- provide evidence of actions and decisions, and precedents for future decision making; and
- protect the rights and interest of government, Council and its clients and citizens.

A small percentage of Council's records will become archives, part of the cultural resources of the State.

### 1.2 Definition

A record is any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form, on film, by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means, as defined by the *State Records Act 1998, Part 1*.

Examples include:

- records of formal decisions taken by staff under delegation that are documented in memorandum, letters, fax or email messages, etc;
- inwards and outwards communications from/to external persons and bodies;
- meeting papers of formally established Committees of Council (including agendas, minutes, reports and decision papers);
- financial transactions held electronically or in hard copy format;
- personnel transactions (including letters of appointment, performance reviews and other dealings between staff and Council);
- plans received or created by staff which provide evidence of the development of buildings, parks and reserves, roads, bridges, drainage or any other structure approved or constructed by Council;
- photographs taken by a staff member which provide evidence of an event or occurrence; and
- anything on which there are marks, symbols or notations having meaning for persons qualified to interpret them, and also includes a part of a document and copy, reproduction or duplicate of a document or a part of a document.

## 2 PURPOSE, AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY:

### 2.1 Purpose of this Policy:

The purpose of the Records Management Policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities and decisions of Council are created, managed, retained and disposed of appropriately, in accordance with relevant legislation. This will enable Council to achieve information accessibility, business enhancement and improvement. It will also meet its obligations for accountability while ensuring it protects the rights and interests of government, the organisation, staff, clients and the community at large.

A **record management program** has been established by Council in accordance with s. 12(2) of the *State Records Act 1998*. This policy provides a framework and outlines the responsibilities for the operation of Forbes Shire Council's records management program.



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## 2.2 Authority of this Policy

This policy has been authorised by the General Manager. Ownership of this policy rests with the Director of Corporate Services who is responsible for reporting to State Records NSW regarding compliance with legislative requirements and record keeping standards.

## 2.3 Application of this Policy

All Councillors, staff, contractors and consultants must comply with this policy, and associated *Records Management Procedures*, in their conduct of official business for Council. This policy applies to records in all formats, including electronic records.

## 3. RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### 3.1 Objective of the Records Management Program

A records management program is a planned, co-ordinated set of policies, procedures, systems and activities that are required to manage records.

Council's records management program seeks to ensure that:

- it has the records it needs to support and enhance ongoing business and customer service, meet accountability requirements and community expectations;
- these records are managed efficiently;
- records are stored cost-effectively and can be easily accessed and used for as long as they are required;
- records when they are no longer required are disposed of in a timely and efficient manner;
- Council complies with all requirements concerning records and records management practices including the NSW Government's objectives for records keeping;
- records of longer term value are identified and protected for historical and other research.

### 3.2 Elements of the Records Management Program

#### Creation and Capture

The formats endorsed by Council have been outlined in the *Forbes Shire Council InfoXpert Business Rules*. These formats have been chosen to streamline the ongoing management of Council's records and should be the only formats used for the creation of records.

Staff should ensure they create or capture official records of all decisions and actions made in the course of their official business. For example, file notes of the key points in the conversation and emails.

To assist in promoting the responsible creation of records, the capture of essential information and the management of records over time, Council have developed the following:

- paper and electronic templates;
- definition of recordkeeping requirements and business rules; and
- procedures, standard creation rules, other guidelines etc.

All records defined by the organisation as important must be captured into Council's recordkeeping systems so they can be managed appropriately. The information required to be recorded about each record is described in the *Records Management Procedures*.

#### Storage

Current hardcopy records must be stored in the Records Archives room with access restrictions as outlined in the *Records Management Procedures*. In some circumstances working files will be temporarily located in the various sections of Council's operations.



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Rarely used records or records no longer in use for official purposes that are still required to be retained should be forwarded to the Records unit for action.

Electronic records may either be retained online (on servers) or offline (on CD Roms, DVDs, magnetic disks or other removable media). Records of short term value will be disposed of at suitable intervals by the Records unit. Records of long term or archival value should be retained online wherever possible and managed in accordance with the *Records Management Procedures*.

Records are regularly stored on removable media, copies are made and kept with Council's Information Services Manager.

### Maintenance and Monitoring

The location of each record needs to be recorded and updated at every movement of the record. This ensures records, as assets, can be accounted for in the same way as other assets of Council.

### Disposal

Council disposes of records in accordance with the *State Records NSW General Disposal Authority – GA 39*. The *Records Management Procedures* contain information on how records are disposed.

No records of Council can be disposed of unless in accordance with the retention and disposal authority. Any sentencing of records must be overseen by the Records Officer, approval and signed authorisation for retention, destruction or transfer of records must be sought from the Director of Corporate Services in liaison with relevant Directors.

### Transfer

Records required as State Archives in the *Retention and Disposal Authority* will be transferred, in accordance with the *Records Management Procedures* to State Records NSW when no longer in use for official purposes.

### Access

Records must be available to all authorised staff that require access for business purposes. Reasons for restricting access are outlined in the *Records Management Procedures*.

All access to Council's records by members of the public will be in accordance with the Council's *Right to Information Policy* and the requirements of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

### Contractors and Outsourced Functions

All records created by a contractor performing work on behalf of the Council belong to Council, and are State Records under the *State Records Act 1998*. This includes the records of contract staff working on the premises as well as external service providers. Contracts should clearly state that ownership of records resides with Council, and instruction regarding creation, management, and access to the records created. The Senior Administration Officer should be consulted during the formulation of contracts.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring Council complies with the regulations and requirements of the *State Records Act, 1998*.

## 4.2 Director Corporate Services

- Has ownership of the records management policy;
- ensures that the Records Management Program is adequately resourced;
- represents records management interests at the Executive level;
- reports to the State Records Authority on the records management program eg. responds to records management surveys; and
- authorises the disposal of records, in liaison with relevant Directors.

## 4.3 Senior Administration Officer

- Monitors compliance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedures* and standards across Council and makes recommendations for improvement or modification of practices;
- establishes and maintains a customised recordkeeping metadata scheme and business rules regarding how metadata is to be managed (in liaison with information technology contractors);
- ensures all staff are aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities;
- responsible for the conduct of records management operations;
- ensures contracts with service providers contain records management clauses in accordance with this *Records Management Policy*;
- ensures the information management policies and projects take into account the special nature of records

## 4.4 Information Technology Manager

- Responsible for the maintenance of all servers and data storage equipment;
- ensures records management programs are operating correctly;
- responsible for the management of existing data; and
- ensures that data is regularly backed up.

## 4.5 Records Officer

- System Administrator for Council's Electronic Document Records Management System – InfoXpert;
- ensures that records are created and managed within the Records unit in a way which complies with the *Records Management Policy and Procedures*;
- provides feedback on the success of migration processes when required to help ensure records remain authentic, complete, accessible and useable;
- train staff in to create and manage records;
- recommends the destruction of records;
- Consults with the Records unit when implementing new activities and systems;
- determine legislative requirements for records relating to specific activities;
- ensures that the essential characteristics of digital records are identified prior to any preservation process taking place.

## 4.6 All Staff

- Comply with *Records Management Policy and Procedures*;
- create full and accurate records of their business activities including records of all decisions and actions made and location of work undertaken in the course of their official business;
- ensure that all records are captured into the organisation's recordkeeping systems.

## 4.7 Contractors

Manage records that they create on behalf of the Council according to the terms of their contract.



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### 4.8 Information Technology Contractors – InfoXpert

- Provide 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;
- liaises with Council regarding counter disaster planning for electronic records;
- establishes and maintains a customised recordkeeping metadata scheme and business rules regarding how metadata is to be managed (in liaison with Records unit);
- ensure appropriately detailed audit logs are created and where necessary linked to records;
- implements information security measures.

### References:

- The State Records Authority of New South Wales, *State Records Act 1998*
- The State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Standard on Records Management 2014*
- The State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Standard on Physical Storage of State Records*
- Forbes Shire Councils, *InfoXpert Business Rules #227211*
- Forbes Shire Council, *Records Management Procedure #254449*
- Forbes Shire Council, *Right to Information Policy #220547*