



DATE ADOPTED: 23 FEBRUARY 2016

VERSION: 3.0

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to:

- Establish a framework for the implementation of a records management program 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.
- Ensure the preservation of Council's 'corporate memory' through sound record-keeping practices and the accurate capture of information to meet legal, evidential & accountability requirements.
- Ensure that Council's Records Management Program provides timely and comprehensive information to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to the General Manager, the Mayor, Councillors, contractors, volunteers, delegates and all staff of Maitland City 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.

POLICY STATEMENT

Under the State Records Act 1998 public offices such as Maitland City 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.

Maitland City Council is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the NSW State Records Act 1998 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. This framework aims for best practice in information management practices and processes by:

- Providing the foundations for efficient, effective and responsible keeping of all records in traditional hardcopy or electronic format, and

- Ensuring that the business of the organisation is adequately documented and the resulting evidence, in the form of records, is effectively managed so business, accountability and cultural needs are met.

The records of Council are a vital asset and often cannot be easily reconstructed or replaced. They are the major component of corporate memory as they provide evidence of actions, decisions and document Council's transactions.

Maitland City Council is dedicated to managing records electronically wherever possible and will do so in compliance with NSW State Records Act 1998, Electronic Transactions Act 2000 and Evidence Act 1995 requirements.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

1.1 General Manager

Under the State Records Act 1998, the General Manager is responsible for ensuring that Maitland City 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.

1.3 Coordinator Information Services

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

The Coordinator Information Services 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 1998.

1.4 Information Services Team

The Information Services Team is responsible for the effective management and system administration of Council's Corporate Information System. The Team will assist staff to fulfil their record-keeping responsibilities and will provide advice and training as required.

Operationally the Information Services Team is responsible for the scanning, registration and electronic distribution of incoming and outgoing records of Council. The team also provides and facilitates archiving services and the monitoring and auditing of records management processes.

1.5 Managers

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

1.6 Staff

Under the State Records Act 1998 all staff are required to "make and keep full and accurate records of business activities"

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 Information Services Team
- 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 Information Services Team
- Be aware of records management procedures
- Maintain the confidentiality of records in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

2. ACCESS TO COUNCIL RECORDS

- Access to Council records will be in accordance with relevant legislation and Council policy including the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, Council's Agency Information Guide and Council's Right to Information Policy.
- The Public Officer is deemed responsible for the keeping of full and accurate records, compliance with external recordkeeping standards and internal practice.
- Use by the public of original records will be under the direct control of the Public Officer. Any original material must be viewed in a suitably defined area and must not be removed, destroyed, defaced or damaged by the public for any purposes.
- Copying of records will be subject to legislative requirements.
- Some records may be restricted to protect the privacy of individuals or because they are fragile and require conservation.
- Further information regarding access to Council's records can be found in Council's Right to Information Policy.

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 corporate information system and will be backed up systematically. Physical records will be housed on-site or at the Hunter Records Storage Facility 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.

4. ARCHIVING, DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Council records must be protected, maintained and accessible for their entire retention period as outlined in the General Disposal Authority No. 39. (GA39).

All Council records will be archived and destroyed in accordance with the General Disposal Authority No. 39 (GA).



5. VITAL RECORDS

Vital records are those, in any medium, which contain information essential to the survival of the organisation. If a vital record is lost, damaged, destroyed or otherwise unavailable, the loss is a disaster affecting 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.

6. MONITORING

The Coordinator Information Services and the Information Services Team 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.



POLICY DEFINITIONS

Accountability:	The principle that individuals, organisations & the community are required to account to others for their actions. Organisations & 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 & codes of best practice & community expectations
Business Activity:	Umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities & transactions of an organisation & its employees. Records that document business activity are vital for supporting informed decision making, corporate memory & ensuring accountability
Documents:	Structured units of recorded information, published or unpublished, in hard copy or electronic form, and managed as discrete units in information systems.
Evidence:	Information that tends to prove a fact. Not limited to the legal sense of the term.
Record-keeping:	Making and maintaining complete, accurate & reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.
Record(s):	Recorded information, in any form, created or received & maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business and conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity
Records Management:	The discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.



POLICY ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS GROUP:	Administration & Governance
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Group Manager Administration & Governance
COUNCIL REFERENCE:	Ordinary Council Meeting 23 February 2016 – Item 11.3
POLICY REVIEW DATE:	Three (3) years from date of adoption
FILE NUMBER:	118/1
RELEVANT LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Standard – ISO 15489.1 – Records Management – Part 1 – General • Australian Standard – ISO 15489.1 – Records Management – Part 2 – Guidelines • Companion Animals Act 1998 • Copyright Act 1968 • Crimes Act 1995 • Electronic Transactions Act 2000 • Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 • Evidence Act 1995 • Fringe Benefits Tax Act 1986 • Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 • Insurance Act 1902 • Health Records Information Protection Act 2002 • ICAC Act 1988 • Local Government Act 1993 • Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 • Local Government Records Authority – GA39 • Ombudsman Act 1974 • Payroll Tax Assessment Act 1991 • Privacy & Personal Information Protect Act 1998 • Public Sector Employment & Management Act 1988 • Roads Act 1993 • State Records Act 1998 • State Records Regulation 2010 • State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1966 • Swimming Pools Act 1992 • Trade Practices Act 1974 • Workers Compensation Act 1987 • Work Health & Safety Act 1987 • Work Health & Safety Regulation 2011
RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / PROTOCOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • Right to Information Policy • Privacy Management Plan



POLICY HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	10/12/2002	New policy adopted
2.0	29/1/2013	Review of policy & new guidelines adopted
3.0	23/02/16	Review of policy

