



# Gladstone Regional Council

## Council Policy

<b>Title</b>	<b>RECORDS MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>P-2019-26</b>
<b>Business Unit/s</b>	<b>FINANCE GOVERNANCE AND RISK</b>
<b>Date of Adoption</b>	
<b>Resolution Number</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Date Repealed</b>	

### 1.0 PURPOSE:

This Policy seeks to ensure that records generated in the conduct of Gladstone Regional Council business are adequately created, captured and managed through their life cycle in accordance with best practice and legislative requirements.

### 2.0 SCOPE:

This Policy applies to all records created, received and managed by Gladstone Regional Council elected members, employees and contracted service providers.

### 3.0 RELATED LEGISLATION:

- *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)*
- *Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Evidence Act 1977*
- *Electronic Transactions Act (Queensland) 2001*
- Other legislation as defined in Schedule 4 of the *Local Government Act 2009* as a 'Local Government Act'.

### 4.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- Council records: A guideline for mayors, councillors, CEOs and council employees, July 2019, Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland
- Your Social Media and You, A guide for elected council members in Queensland, accessed 29 August 2019, Office of the Independent Assessor
- Queensland State Archives, Records Governance Policy
- Gladstone Regional Council Defensible Process – Dispose of Physical Source Records after Digitisation
- Records Management Unit Reference Guides and Procedures

### 5.0 DEFINITIONS:

To assist in the interpretation of this policy the following definitions apply:

**Leader** means the Executive Team, Managers, Team Leaders and any other supervisory position that reports to a General Manager (i.e. Specialists) of the business.

**Metadata** means structured information that describes and/or allows users to find, manage, control, understand or preserve other information over time.

**Record** is as defined under Section 6 (What is a public record) of the *Public Records Act 2002*.

**Recordkeeping** means the act of making and keeping evidence and memory of Council business in the form of recorded information.

**Retention and Disposal Schedule** means a document which is issued by the Queensland State Archivist advising of retention periods for public records and when those records are considered appropriate for disposal. It defines the temporary or permanent status, retention periods, disposal triggers, and consequent disposal actions authorised for classes of records described in it.

## 6.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

### 6.1 Introduction

*Public records are the cornerstone of an accountable and democratic society. They allow scrutiny from the public of the decisions made by those who are elected or employed to act on their behalf.*

*Effective recordkeeping allows Council to:*

- *meet its legislative requirements and responsibilities*
- *protect the rights and entitlements of ratepayers*
- *protect and help defend against complaints or accusations of wrongdoing*
- *make robust and consistent decisions*
- *promote confidence in the authenticity and integrity of information*
- *support efficient and transparent business practices*
- *provide evidence of decisions and actions.<sup>1</sup>*

### 6.2 Responsibilities

#### 6.2.1 Mayor, Councillors, Employees

The Mayor, Councillors (elected members) and Employees of Council have the following responsibilities in relation to recordkeeping:

- ensure records relating to Council activities, actions and decisions which are created or received in the capacity as an elected member or employee are captured, described and stored in an approved recordkeeping or business system
- ensure that records created by contracted service providers or others (ie. volunteers, work experience students, etc) involved in Council activities are captured in an approved recordkeeping or business system
- ensure records are not destroyed relating to Council activities, actions and decisions unless it is authorised under an approval or authority from the Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> Council records: A guideline for mayors, councillors, CEOs and council employees, July 2019

- or other authorised person
- ensure the safe custody of records
- protect the privacy of personal information contained in Council records
- ensure all information contained in Council records is objectively expressed, correct, up-to-date and not misleading
- comply with Council's Records Management Policy and associated procedures, training and guidelines
- elected members are to follow Section 6.5 of this policy

### **6.2.2 Chief Executive Officer**

In addition to the obligations outlined in Section 6.2.1, the Chief Executive Officer has the following specific responsibilities for records management:

- ensuring compliant recordkeeping practices are established for the business
- ensuring the safe custody of all Council records
- ensuring the business makes and keeps full and accurate records of activities and have regard to relevant policies, standards and guidelines made by the Queensland State Archivist.

### **6.2.3 Leaders**

Leaders are to ensure that:

- all staff under their supervision are aware of and comply with their recordkeeping responsibilities
- establish internal processes for teams and individuals that require support and assistance in complying with recordkeeping responsibilities.

### **6.2.4 Records Team**

The Records team will provide the following support services to the organisation:

- register and distribute incoming records as required by management
- oversee the establishment, monitoring and maintenance standards for recordkeeping and records management across Council as a whole through regular audit and monitoring programs
- provide professional advice and assistance to those with recordkeeping responsibilities as required
- develop, review and deliver training for those who have recordkeeping responsibilities where directed by management
- Manage Council's records in accordance with the *Public Records Act 2002* and Retention and Disposal Schedules
- Arrange under sub-delegation disposal or transfer of records under *S.26 of the Public Records Act 2002*.

## **6.3 Approved Recordkeeping and Business Systems**

The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to approve the recordkeeping and business systems that will be used to manage the records of the business. Approved systems will be notified to those with recordkeeping responsibilities through training and awareness activities.

## **6.4 Identifying a Council Record**

A record of Council is any form of recorded information, created or received by the business

in the exercise of its statutory, administrative or other public responsibilities, or for a related purpose. It is any information that is:

- evidence of a decision or advice;
- evidence of a transaction or an action taken;
- created or received to meet legal requirements, community expectations or business needs.

Records can be created in digital, paper or other formats and include but are not limited to:

- information recorded on paper
- diaries
- videos
- images
- sound recordings
- text messages
- emails
- social media interactions
- data entered and held in business systems
- messaging applications
- film / microfiche / photographs
- other hardcopy and digital mediums.

Examples of a record include:

- ✓ minutes of Council meetings and the notes or recordings used to make those minutes
- ✓ decisions resulting from discussions between councillors about the administration or management of the local government
- ✓ rate notices
- ✓ dog registrations and renewals
- ✓ an email advising staff of a work health and safety meeting
- ✓ a text with a decision to approve funding for a project
- ✓ a post-it note with instructions to act on a report
- ✓ a Council facebook post with a complaint from a ratepayer or resident
- ✓ a video or audio recording of a meeting about progress on a Council project
- ✓ a Twitter or Instagram post talking about an upcoming Council event.

Information relating to the following activities are not records of Council:

- × personal activities and interactions with family and friends that do not involve Council business
- × political membership or activities.

## **6.5 Specific Recordkeeping Requirements for Mayor and Councillors (elected members)**

The following specific recordkeeping requirements apply to elected members as part of their responsibilities under Section 6.2.1:

- **Email:** elected members must use their Council email account for Council related business. Any emails regarding Council business received or sent from personal email accounts must be onforwarded to the elected member's Council email account. Alternatively, emails received or sent from personal email accounts relating to Council business may be onforwarded directly to the Councillors nominated support resource or to [info@gladstone.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@gladstone.qld.gov.au) for recordkeeping with an accompanying note if required (ie. for file only; for file and actioning please).

- **Elected Member Social Media:** elected members social media accounts (i.e. facebook, instagram, twitter, websites, messaging applications, and other emerging technologies) which contain Council related business must be captured for recordkeeping.

It is the elected members responsibility to manage their own official social media platforms. Elected members must comply with the business's processes on the capture of social media activity for recordkeeping. Appropriate training will be provided as required.

Posts by elected members related purely to personal activities, including political activities and election campaigning are not Council records and are not required to be captured under this policy.

- **Complaints and Requests:** requests for service or complaints concerning Council business must be referred to the [info@gladstone.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@gladstone.qld.gov.au) for recordkeeping and response.
- **Hardcopy Diaries:** if elected members maintain a hardcopy diary for Council related business, these diaries must be forwarded for retention in Council's recordkeeping systems within 12 months of the last entry in the diary being made or when the elected member leaves office. Elected members may also be asked to provide their diaries where a Right to Information or Information Privacy application seeks information related to these records.
- **Meetings and Other Verbal Exchanges:** Elected members who conduct meetings / discussions with individuals related to Council business should summarise or record an account of key issues and outcomes discussed where there are decisions or undertaking made on behalf of Council. These records must be forwarded to the nominated support resource or emailed to [info@gladstone.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@gladstone.qld.gov.au) for recordkeeping.
- **Other Records:** Elected members who directly receive any form of record related to Council business directly from an individual or organisation must ensure that they are forwarded to their nominated support resource or email to [info@gladstone.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@gladstone.qld.gov.au) for recordkeeping.

## 6.6 Audit and Compliance Program

The Records team will arrange for the periodic audit and review of its recordkeeping and business systems to ensure compliance with the business's legislative requirements. These audits will cover both macro and micro level activities as follows:

- Macro (by business unit) – review of business unit recordkeeping activities to ensure appropriate records are being captured, described and managed in accordance with legislative and business requirements.
- Micro (system orientated audits) – review of metadata entered into the recordkeeping and business systems such as document précis information, index assignment, document classification, security code, quality of digital images, date of registration and name of author, retention schedules.

## 6.7 Retention and Disposal of Records

The Queensland State Archive Retention and Disposal Schedules will be used in

determining the retention and destruction/transfer of Council records. In cases where Queensland State Archives retention schedules do not cover a particular business activity, the relevant business unit, in consultation with the Records team are to develop relevant schedules for approval by the Chief Executive Officer and Queensland State Archives.

**6.8 Public Access to Records**

Members of the public may apply for access to Council records under the provisions of the *Information Privacy Act 2009* or *Right to Information Act 2009*.

**7.0 ATTACHMENTS:**

Nil

**8.0 REVIEW MECHANISM:**

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related legislation or governing documents are amended or replaced; or
2. Other circumstances as determined by resolution of Council or the CEO; or
3. Three years from date of adoption.

<b>TABLE OF AMENDMENTS</b>			
<b>Document History</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Council Resolution No.</b>	<b>Notes (including the prior Policy No, precise of change/s, etc)</b>
Originally Approved	10 March 2009	09/131 (formerly Policy P-3.07.01)	
Amendment 1	18 March 2014	G/14/1926	
Amendment 2			

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**LEISA DOWLING**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**