



CORPORATE SERVICES

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RECORDS POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

Under Section 13 of the Public Records Act, 1973 (Act) the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that full and accurate records of the business are made. They are responsible for the establishment of a program of records management within the office in accordance with Standards as set by the Keeper of Public Records under Section 12 of the Act.

Good records management is of key importance to good governance. Records are vital to Council's ongoing business activities that are essential in meeting our obligations as administrators of public monies and services.

This policy provides protocols to enable Mitchell Shire Council to:

- Ensure records of irrefutable evidential quality are created, managed and disposed of in accordance with legal requirements.
- Manage records in conformity with standards and specifications approved by the Public Records Office of Victoria.
- Demonstrated accountability in decision making and action by maintaining appropriate records as evidence in accordance with the principles outlined in the Public Records Act, 1973.
- Maintain appropriate records for business continuity.

Council records are necessary and vital in facilitating effective administration and governance of the municipality and expected service delivery to the Community.

Consistent and sound records management processes and practices maintain reliability and authenticity of records from their creation or receipt, through their effective use, to preservation as archives, and finally disposal as noted in the Destruction of Records Policy in accordance with standards issued under Section 12 of the Public Records Act, 1973.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- Mitchell Shire Council's records are its corporate memory, and as such are a critical asset for its ongoing operations, providing valuable evidence of business activities and transactions.
- Council recognises its regulatory requirements, and is committed to the principles and practices set out in the Public Record Office Victoria, Standards.
- Council is committed to implementing best recordkeeping practices and systems to ensure the creation, maintenance and protection of accurate and reliable records.
- All practices concerning recordkeeping within Council are to be in accordance with this policy and its supporting procedures.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council employees, Councillors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and other authorised personnel of Mitchell Shire Council.

This policy applies to all aspects of Council business.

This policy also applies to any services that Council has outsourced, and is implemented through the inclusion of record keeping contractual clauses in the contracts of outsourced service provision.

This policy includes all records (both hardcopy and electronic, regardless of format), created during business transactions and all business systems used to create records including email, database applications and websites.

This policy provides the overarching framework for all other corporate recordkeeping policies, practices or procedures.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Mitchell Shire Council is the accountable officer under the Public Records Act, 1973. As the officer in charge of a public office, the CEO is responsible for:

- Ensuring that full and accurate records of the business of the department are made.
- Ensuring that the department's records management program is in accordance with the Public Records Office standards.
- Taking all necessary action for the recovery of any public records unlawfully removed from the department.

Directors are required to ensure that with the support of corporate resources:

- They publicly support compliance with records and document practices throughout Council.
- Departments and Units implement corporate processes and systems in line with the policy framework.
- Staff are educated, understand and meet their records management obligations.

Managers are required to ensure that with the support of corporate resources:

- They ensure staff create and keep records as an integral part of their work, and in accordance with established policies, procedures and standards.
- Foster and support a culture within the workgroup that promotes good records management practices.

The Records Coordinator is responsible for the development, implementation and on-going management of the records management program in Council. This includes:

- Development and implementation of a records management strategy, policies and standards.
- Monitor and audit compliance with strategy, policies and standards.
- Conduct reviews of records and document practices.
- Management of the Records Management Unit.
- Application of the Public Records Act.

The Records staff are responsible for the operations of the records management program for Council.

This includes:

- Maintenance of corporate records.
- Audit compliance, under the guidance of the Records Coordinator.
- Providing training and advice to staff.
- Mail room operations.
- Secondary storage management.
- Appraising and archiving records.

All staff (including, consultants and contractors) are responsible for good recordkeeping. Each staff member must comply with records management procedures and practices that relate to their position, this includes:

- Making records to support the conduct of Council's business activities.
- Seeking authority before destroying any records, as they represent accountability and Council's corporate memory.
- Capture electronic records, including e-mail, into appropriate systems.
- Register paper records into appropriate systems.
- Be aware of Council's records management policy and procedures.

5. LEGISLATION & REFERENCES

Mitchell Shire Council acknowledges the following laws that relate to records and information:

- Public Records Act, 1973.
- Local Government Act, 1989.
- Freedom of Information Act, 1982,
- Evidence Act, 2008.
- Crimes Destruction Act.
- Information Privacy Act, 2000.
- Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2001.
- Information Privacy Act, 2000.
- Mitchell Shire Council (Information Management Policy).
- Any other relevant legislation, policies or procedures.

Council has developed recordkeeping systems that capture and maintain records with appropriate evidential characteristics in accordance with its obligations under the legislation stated above.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The following Records Management policy statements have been helpful in the development of this policy:

- City of Wodonga (Vic).
- Greater Shepparton City Council (Vic).
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council.
- Banyule City Council.
- Victoria University.

- Executive Assurance.
- National Archives of Australia (How to Develop a Recordkeeping Policy).

7. REVIEW

This policy may be varied by Council and will be reviewed on 31 December 2013.