

Policy Type

Council

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and direction on the creation and management of records and to clarify responsibilities for recordkeeping within the City of Cockburn.

This policy and related recordkeeping procedures/guidelines are the framework for ensuring records are created and retained appropriately to meet accountability requirements, legislative compliance and adherence to best practice standards.

Policy Statement

Records are recognised as an important information resource within the City of Cockburn, and it is accepted that sound records management practices will contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.

The effective management of records will also:

- Protect the interests of the City of Cockburn and the rights of its employees, customers and stakeholders
- Support informed decision making
- Provide evidence of achievements
- Increase efficiency in administration and service delivery across the organisation

(1) Ownership

All records created or received during the course of business belong to the City of Cockburn not to the individuals who created them.

All contractual arrangements will ensure the City's ownership of records, including ongoing access to records by the City when required, and the return of all relevant records in a usable format to the City at the end of the contract.

(2) Creation of Records

All employees, contractors and Elected Members will ensure that full and accurate records are created to provide evidence of business transactions and decisions and that these records will be registered in the City of Cockburn's recordkeeping system.

(3) Capture and Control of Records

All records created and received in the course of City business will be captured at the point of creation (wherever possible), regardless of format, with required metadata into the recordkeeping system or appropriate business system.

Records created when using social media applications will also be captured in the City of Cockburn's recordkeeping system.

Records will not be maintained in email folders, shared drives, personal drives, Microsoft 365, external storage media or personal cloud services (such as Dropbox, Box, Google Drive), as these lack the necessary functionality to protect business information and records over time.

(4) Security and Protection of Records

Records will be maintained in a safe and secure environment ensuring their usability, reliability, authenticity and preservation for as long as they are needed.

Records will not be removed from the City's sites unless in accordance with the approved retention and disposal schedule, they are being transferred to the City's archive storage provider, or they are in the custody of an officer performing official business. It is preferred that wherever possible only copies of records are removed by those officers performing official business.

(5) Access to Records

Access to the City's records by staff and contractors will be in accordance with designated access and security classifications and in accordance with the requirements of their role.

Access to the City's records by the general public will be in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995, the Freedom of Information Act 1992 and the Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024.

Access to the City's records by Elected Members will be via the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995.

(6) Appraisal, Retention and Disposal of Records

All records kept by the City of Cockburn will be disposed of in accordance with the General Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government Records, published by the State Records Commission of Western Australia.

Staff and Elected Members must not personally undertake destruction of any records.

Records identified for destruction will be subject to review and approval by the Service Lead Information Management or Senior Records Officer, the manager of the business unit the records relate to, and the Chief Executive Officer.

Copies/duplicates may be disposed of after use by staff and Elected Members ensuring any such records that contain personally identifiable information or information that is not publicly available are placed into confidential destruction bins or given to Information Management to securely dispose of.

(7) Roles and Responsibilities

1. Elected Members

Elected Members will create and keep records of communications or transactions which convey information relating to the City's business or functions. These records will be forwarded to the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors to capture into the City's recordkeeping system. Refer to the Elected Members Recordkeeping Guidelines for detailed procedures.

2. Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer will ensure there is a system for the capture and management of records that is compliant with the State Records Act 2000 and best practice standards.

3. Executive and Managers

Executive and managers will ensure that all staff (and contractors) under their supervision comply with this policy, associated records management procedures/guidelines and the City of Cockburn's Recordkeeping Plan.

4. Executive and managers will also ensure that any City records not registered by staff who are leaving the organisation are identified and captured into the recordkeeping system before the staff member's departure, or where this is not possible, as soon as practicable and no later than 90 days after their departure.

5. All Staff

All staff (including contractors) will create and receive records relating to the business activities they perform and are required to:

- (a) Make records to document and support business activities.
- (b) Ensure that records are captured and registered into the recordkeeping system or appropriate business system
- (c) Ensure that records are secure at all times.
- (d) If artificial intelligence (AI) is used for City business, staff will ensure any records created are managed in accordance with this policy and the use of AI does not bypass recordkeeping, privacy, security and disposal obligations.

Refer to the Employees Recordkeeping Guidelines for detailed procedures.

(8) Legislation and Standards

Legislation and standards applicable to recordkeeping in Western Australian Local Government organisations include:

1. State Records Act 2000
2. Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003

3. Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913
4. Electronic Transactions Act 2011
5. Evidence Act 2025
6. Freedom of Information Act 1992
7. Interpretation Act 1984
8. Local Government Act 1995
9. Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024
10. State Records Commission: Principles and Standards
11. Australian Standard on Records Management: AS ISO 15489
12. WA Government Artificial Intelligence Policy and AI Framework

(9) Definitions

1. Record

A record is information recorded in any form that is created, received and maintained by an organisation in the course of conducting its business activities and kept as evidence of such activity.

A record may have any or all of the following attributes:

- (a) Information which is of evidentiary or historical value and is not recorded elsewhere;
- (b) Formal communications and/or transactions between officers or between an officer and another party; or
- (c) It may document the rationale behind organisational policy, decisions or directives.

2. Ephemeral Records

Ephemeral records are duplicated records and/or those that have only short-term value to the City of Cockburn, with little or no ongoing administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential or historical value. They may include insignificant drafts and rough notes, or records of routine enquiries.

3. Recordkeeping Plan

The Recordkeeping Plan ensures that records are created, managed and maintained over time and disposed in accordance with legislation. It is the primary means of providing evidence of compliance with the State Records Act 2000. All government organisations must have a Recordkeeping Plan that is approved by the State Records Commission.

4. General Retention and Disposal Authority (GRDA)

The General Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government records (the schedule) is designed to provide consistency throughout Local Government in disposal activities and decisions. It is a continuing authority for the disposal and archival of records which document a Local Government's operations.

5. Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

PII refers to information, or an opinion, that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual, whether the information or opinion is true or not; and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

An engineered system that generates predictive outputs such as content, forecasts, recommendations, or decisions for a given set of human defined objectives or parameters without explicit programming. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of automation. (Source: WA Government Artificial Intelligence Policy).

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