

COUNCIL  
POLICY

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

Under the State Records Act 1998 public offices such as City of Canada Bay 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.

The Australian Standard AS ISO 15489 (previously AS 4390-1996) has been adopted as a code of best practice for the NSW Public Sector.

The State Records Act and the Australian Standard are applicable to all records media in both physical and electronic formats and require Council to document business transactions fully and accurately in compliant recordkeeping systems.

The Records Management Policy provides the framework for the Council to effectively fulfil its obligations and statutory requirements under the legislation and other Government directives.

The policy will enhance effective information management and retrieval in Council and highlights the responsibilities and accountabilities of staff in complying with the Act.

## 2. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities, decisions and transactions of the City of Canada Bay Council are created and managed to meet organisational needs and accountability requirements. This includes electronic messages (E-mail) which are relevant to the information gathering, policy formulation or decision making processes of Council.

A systematic approach to records management within Council is vital to identify, protect and preserve the information contained in Council records. The regulation of records management practices ensures that uniform protection is given to all records and that information can be readily retrieved via standard identification and retrieval procedures.

## 3. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Provide continuous and integrated document and corporate information flow, and a customer oriented records and archives service.
- Ensure the capture and preservation of all vital records and other significant records of Council.
- Improve the availability of information across Council and provide reliable and efficient retrieval of those records (both physical and electronic).
- Manage and provide access to these records and to promote their research use.
- Ensure the preservation of the archives for future use.
- Assist in the smooth flow of information within the organisation.
- Ensure that Council is compliant with the State Records Act and manages its records in accordance with legislative requirements.
- Ensure that Council is able to identify and control records for evidential purposes.

## 4. Establishment of the Records Management Program

The Records Management Program entrenches formalised standards, procedures, recordkeeping systems and controls for future expansion and needs. Access to records based information is achieved by the provision of recordkeeping that supports business operations and enables Council to meet statutory and other requirements.

## 5. Accountability Requirements

### Councillors

The Mayor and Councillors are responsible for the adoption of and compliance with the requirements of the Records Management Policy.

## General Manager

The General Manager has a duty to ensure that City of Canada Bay Council complies with the requirements of the NSW State Records Act 1998 and Regulations.

## Corporate Services

The Manager, Governance & Risk and Records Supervisor are responsible for the management, protection and disposal of Council records in accordance with the State Records Act 1998.

## Directors and Managers

Each Director and Manager are responsible for ensuring

1. That their staff respond to correspondence and action requests in a timely manner and that this information is also recorded in the Corporate Electronic Document Management System (ECM).
2. That their staff who have access to information of a confidential nature, are instructed as to their rights and obligations when dealing with such matters.

## Staff

All staff are accountable to their supervisors for compliance with this policy and for related policies, standards and guidelines and have a responsibility to create records that document:

1. Decisions.
2. Oral decisions and commitments, including telephone discussions.
3. Meetings.
4. Other events.
5. Business activities in which they take part.

All staff are responsible for following Director and Manager requests to:

- Ensure that records in any format, including electronic documents and messages, are captured into the Corporate Electronic Document Management System (ECM) in accordance with procedures and protocols.
- Handle records and information sensibly and with care and respect so as to avoid damage to the records and prolong their life.
- Not alienate, relinquish control over, damage, alter or destroy records of Council without authorisation from the Manager Governance & Risk.
- Be given appropriate access levels to records and documents they require to enable them to perform their duties.
- Ensure that all paper documents received from external or internal sources relating to Council business are forwarded to the Records Team for scanning and registering into the Corporate Electronic Document Management System (ECM).

## 6. Access to Council Records and Information

1. Access will be in accordance with relevant legislation, this Policy and Council's Access to Information Policy.
2. The Manager Governance & Risk, as Public Officer is deemed responsible for the keeping of full and accurate records, compliance with external recordkeeping standards and internal practices. In complying with the requirements of the Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act, the Local Government Act, and the Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act (PPIPA) the Manager Governance & Risk also determines whether to authorise or withhold information.
3. Use by the public of original records will be under the direct control of the Manager Governance & Risk who can refuse to grant access if it is believed that the records might be damaged if used.
4. Copying of records will be subject to legislative requirements, payment of fees as per the Fees & Charges and copyright restrictions.
5. 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.

6. Some records may be restricted to protect the privacy of individuals or because they are fragile and require conservation.
7. In respect to staff personnel files, the following persons have access:  
General Manager, Human Resources Manager and Human Resources Staff, Manager Governance & Risk (as Public Officer), Records Supervisor & Document Management Officers for the purpose of processing access to information applications, Manager Information Systems & Information Systems Staff for the purposes of human resources system administration, Departmental Directors in relation to staff within their Departments, Managers in relation to staff within their section, Team Leaders/Supervisors in relation to staff under their control and individual employees in respect of their own files (with permission and accompanied by one of the abovementioned employees).
8. The Ombudsman Act provides for access to Council's records associated with an investigation by the Ombudsman in relation to a complaint against the Council. These requests shall be referred to the Manager Governance & Risk for consideration on receipt and registration.
9. No record of City of Canada Bay Council is to be removed or temporarily removed by any Councillor or Staff member excepting those required for on site inspections, without having first obtained the consent of either the General Manager, the Director Corporate Services or Manager Governance & Risk, unless the record is required in the normal course of duty and Records staff are advised accordingly.
10. The Records Team is to be notified whenever any physical files or records are being sent outside the organisation, ie. to Council's Solicitors, Courts, Consultants etc.

## 7. Storage and Security of Council Records

All City of Canada Bay Council records shall be appropriately stored to ensure their future conservation, retrieval and use. In doing so, the security, privacy and confidentiality of all records should be protected.

- All Councils records shall be maintained in appropriately secure storage. Paper based records shall be housed in secure storage areas on site or at the Government Records Repository.
- Legal Documents (e.g. Leases, contracts, deeds, certificate of title, licences, bank guarantees etc) are to be scanned and stored electronically in the Corporate Electronic Document Management System (Dataworks). The original of all Legal Documents are also to be filed and held in the Legal Documents file storage area contained within the locked strongroom. A cross-reference to where the physical document is held must be contained within the Corporate EDMS to ensure easy retrieval.
- To minimise deterioration of storage media, all Council records shall be housed in conditions appropriate to their format and use and generally in accordance with the Australian Standard on Records Storage.
- Unauthorised alteration, removal, distribution or destruction of Council records is prohibited.
- Hard-copy Council records must not be left unattended in unsecured areas or vehicles. At no time shall confidential records, such as personnel files or commercial contracts be left unattended in areas accessible to unauthorised personnel or persons.
- Personal computers must not be left unattended in unsecured areas without first logging out of the network, thus ensuring prevention of access by unauthorised users to Council information.
- All electronic records must be backed up systematically at appropriate intervals.
- Measures shall be taken to prevent the loss of records in the event of a disaster, including processes such as imaging, microfilming, off-site storage, fire-proof containment and disaster planning.

## 8. 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 for Local Government Records (GDA39) under the NSW State Records Act 1998.

Records cannot be disposed of without the approval of the Manager Governance & Risk and in accordance with the State Records Act 1998 and Council's Records Management Program. In accordance with the General Retention and Disposal Authority: original or score records that have been copied (GA45), originals of scanned copies are kept for a period of three months.

## 9. Vital Records

Vital records are those, in any medium, which contain information essential to the survival of an 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 organisation's functions after a disaster, or
- Establish and protect the rights and interests of the organisation and its clients

Vital Records will be identified and included in the Records Management Program. Council's Business Continuity Plan also addresses recovery of the records management system.

## 10. Canada Bay Computer Usage Policy

This Policy must be read in conjunction with Council's Computer Usage and policy and the requirements contained within that Policy in relation to electronic records.

## 11. Legislative Framework for Recordkeeping

As part of the NSW Public/Local Government Sector, records created by Council are also part of the State's records.

The records management and recordkeeping practices will comply with relevant Acts and Regulations of Parliament and standards relating to records management.

This includes, but not limited to:

- State Records Act 1998
- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
- Government Information Public Access Act 2009 (NSW)
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Copyright Act 1968
- ICAC Act 1988
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)
- Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- AS ISO 15489.1:2002 Records Management - Part 1: General
- AS ISO 15489.2:2002 Records Management - Part 2: Guidelines
- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System - Requirements
- AS/NZS ISO 14001:1996 Environmental Management System
- AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational Health and Safety Management System.