

POLICY

TITLE:	Records Management Policy		
DIRECTORATE:	Finance		
ADOPTED BY:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	29 Nov 2024	DATE OF REVIEW:	29 Nov 2026
POLICY NUMBER:	151		
LEGISLATIVE REF:	<i>Local Government Act 2019; Part 7.2</i> <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021; Div 3, 54-62</i> <i>Records Management Standards for Public Sector Organisations NT</i> <i>Records Disposal Schedule for Local Authorities NT</i> <i>Fair Work Act & Regulations 2009</i> <i>Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011</i> <i>Australian Accounting Standards</i> <i>AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines</i> <i>Information Act 2002 (NT); Part 9, Schedule 2</i>		

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

This Policy explains the records management framework for the creation and management of records of the business of Barkly Regional Council (BRC).

1.2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Council business involving records which are created, collected, processed, used, sentenced, stored and disposed of in the conduct of official business.

This Policy applies to all Council employees and Elected Members, referred to as 'record users'.

Outside of this Policy there are specific other record keeping requirements incurred through various legislation applicable to specific areas of Council as captured in relevant procedures.

1.3. Definitions

A **record** is a piece of information which has been created, received or used by Council to come to a decision, conduct a transaction, or in some way document government business. It includes:

- written, graphic or pictorial matter
- disk, tape, film or other object that contains information, or from which information may be reproduced (with or without the aid of another object or device)

The **primary records** of the Council are:

- the agenda and minutes of Council meetings, local authorities, Audit and Council committees;
- minutes of meetings of electors
- Council's by-laws
- Council's annual regional plan (including Council's annual budgets, long-term financial plans)
- Council's annual reports (including Council's annual financial statements)
- the Register of Annual Returns of Interests
- the Register of Declared Gifts and Benefits
- the Register of Declared Conflicts of Interests

- the Registers referred to in Regulation 55; and
- any other documents necessary for an understanding of Council's policies and operations.

Council's **secondary records** consist of other documents generated or received in the course of the Council's operations.

1.4. Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for ensuring:

- compliance with legislative requirements for record keeping
- that Council records are properly filed and indexed to facilitate access
- that this Policy and its associated procedures are implemented across Council
- that responsibilities are assigned for record keeping management
- approval of the destruction of records
- that Part 9 of the Information Act 2002 is met in terms of annual reporting requirements

The Chief Finance Officer has overall accountability for this Policy and is responsible for:

- Ensuring recordkeeping guidelines and procedures support the objectives of this Policy
- Establishing corporate standards for record keeping and records management
- Ensuring recordkeeping requirements are communicated throughout all areas of Council
- Ensuring employees are sufficiently trained in recordkeeping practices
- Monitoring and auditing compliance, and taking appropriate action as required

The Records Officer holds operational responsibilities which include:

- The efficient management of Council records (physical and electronic)
- Effective administration of Council's electronic and filing records management systems
- Assisting records users in fulfilling their record keeping responsibilities
- Provide advice and training through the implementation of this Policy
- Escalating concerns to the Director, Corporate Services as necessary
- Coordinating and undertaking the disposal requirements as approved by the CEO
- Records retention and disposal schedules in accordance with Part 9 of the Information Act
- preparation of records retention and disposal schedules.
- Carry out archive functions as required under relevant legislation

Team Leaders, Supervisors, Managers and Directors are responsible for:

- Supporting the application of this Policy throughout their functions and business units
- Ensuring that staff receive records management induction and training
- Ensuring record management responsibilities are captured within position descriptions
- Ensure record keeping practices within business units can withstand external scrutiny

All Council employees and Elected Members are responsible for:

- Complying with this Policy and its associated guidelines and procedures
- Creating and filing records to support the conduct of their business activities
- Forwarding records to Records for capture into paper or electronic records
- Ensuring that if records are in the possession of another person that arrangements are made for the safekeeping and proper preservation and return of the records
- Not losing, damaging or destroying records

Elected Members are responsible for ensuring that official correspondence is recorded within Council's electronic records system by the Executive Assistant to the CEO and Mayor.

1.5. Policy Objectives

- 1) This Policy outlines the responsibilities and obligations for all Council personnel in respect to the management of Council records.
- 2) Council must fulfil its obligations across records management under various pieces of significant legislation. Good record keeping is an essential element of achieving those obligations.

- 3) All practices, systems and procedures pertaining to record keeping must be consistent with the requirements of this Policy.
- 4) Council is required to keep Registers as records, and in accordance with the Act.
- 5) Council must also meet its obligations under the Information Privacy Principles contained within the *Information Act – Schedule 2*. Please refer to Council's *Privacy Policy* for further information on these requirements.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Policy

- 1) Council operates in an accountable and community orientated environment and is committed to maintaining a records management system that meets organisational and regulatory needs.
- 2) The establishment of an effective records management system ensures standardization, protection and retrieval of information, which improves levels of quality customer service.
- 3) Good records management is of key importance to good governance; as records may be required for legal purposes, courts, auditors and other people or bodies.
- 4) Council will maintain an electronic records management system for the management of all records. The following principles will apply:
 - a. Records management activities are supported by policies, systems and practices to suit the business, legal and public accountabilities and operational requirements.
 - b. Records security and access controls must be in place to minimise risks to the confidentiality, integrity, reliability and availability of Council records.
 - c. Records of Council are identified, classified, and registered into the approved electronic recordkeeping system (SharePoint), or into other business systems that interface with the records management system.
 - d. Records are not disposed of without a Records Disposal Schedule authorised by the CEO.
 - e. Records of legislative, audit or historical significance are preserved in a way that ensures they remain readable and accessible for future reference.
 - f. All Council employees and elected members are trained in record keeping practices requirements appropriate to their position.
 - g. All records created by employees or Elected Members are the intellectual property of Council.
- 5) It is a regulatory requirement that a record of all incoming and outgoing mail is retained in the records management system.

3. OBLIGATIONS OF RECORDS USERS

- 1) Records users are required to handle Council records with care and respect, and in a sensible manner to avoid damaging records with a view to prolonging their life span.
- 2) Records users must not intentionally damage, alter, dispose of or remove official Council records without the approved authorisation to do so.
- 3) Records must be readily accessible to meet business and accountability requirements.
- 4) The electronic version accessible on Council's intranet and Council's electronic record system is the controlled version.
- 5) Printed copies of documents are considered uncontrolled. Before using a printed copy, the individual must verify that is the current version.
- 6) Council employees should report breaches of this Policy to the Director, Corporate Services. Elected Members should report breaches of this Policy to the CEO.
- 7) Ensure that incoming and outgoing mail is recorded as required.

4. RECORDS SECURITY

- 1) Records users are responsible for the safe custody of all records allocated to them in accordance with the requirements of *Records Management Guidelines*.
- 2) If a records user believes that a record forwarded to the Records Team for incorporation into the record keeping system is of a highly sensitive or confidential nature, that person is responsible for notifying the Director, Corporate Services of that view. It will be at the discretion of the Director as to how the record will be restricted.

5. DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

- 1) Council may, not less than 6 years after the date of the last entry in a primary record, lodge that record with Northern Territory Archives.
- 2) Council may destroy or dispose of a secondary record if:
 - a. the record is no longer required for the conduct of the affairs of Council; and
 - b. the record is not required for audit purposes.
- 3) There are civil penalties for individuals who intentionally engage in conduct which results in the destruction, damage or removal from Council's custody, or the concealment of Council records.

6. BREACH OF POLICY

Breaches to this Policy and its guidelines may be subject to disciplinary or up to and including termination of employment; or other appropriate corrective action taken with Elected Members. Individuals may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings.

7. RELEVANT POLICIES

Policies and procedures to be read in conjunction with this Policy are:

- 1) Records Management Guidelines
- 2) Privacy Policy
- 3) Codes of Conduct
- 4) Fraud and Corruption Policy
- 5) Confidentiality and Business Information (Members & CEO) Policy

8. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

8.1. Implementation

Relevant personnel will be made aware of this Policy. It is not a requirement of the Act for this Policy to be published on the Barkly Regional Council website.

8.2. Review

This Policy will be reviewed on or before 29 Nov 2026.

9. VARIATIONS, REVOCATIONS AND/OR CHANGES

Barkly Regional Council reserves the right to revoke and/or amend this policy from time to time as is considered necessary to better manage its business and/or to comply with any legislative requirements. Employees will be given sufficient notice of any such revocations, amendments, or changes.

10. APPROVAL

This policy is approved.

Chris Kelly
Chief Executive Officer


Signature

29 Nov 2024
Dated

END