

POLICY NO.	A.16
POLICY SUBJECT	Records Management Policy
ADOPTION DATE	28 November 2002
LAST REVIEW DATE	26 November 2020 (C.05/1120)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the principles of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes' records management function and to document an orderly and efficient approach to the proper management of records. The policy incorporates applicable legislative requirements into standard Shire practices and enumerates basic records management requirements. This helps the CEO ensure that records and documents of the local government are properly kept for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1995 and any other written law (s.5.41(h)).

Records are recognised as an important information resource in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, and it is accepted that sound record management practices will contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Organisation. Due to legislative requirement, the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes is obliged to maintain a records management system that completely, accurately and reliably creates and maintains evidential records, and to dispose of those records only through an approved scheme.

The policy applies to all external and internal records, which are handled, received or generated by the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, regardless of their physical format or media type.

2. Policy Statement

The Shire's records are a corporate asset. Complete and accurate records of all business decisions and transactions are to be recorded and registered in the Shire's records management system both in respect to their content and context. They are to be managed in a cost-effective manner in accordance with records management and record keeping legislative requirements.

- ◆ All records are to be managed according to whether they are *significant* or *ephemeral* records, *vital* or non-vital records, and in accordance with their security classification
- ◆ All communications in the form of records, whether paper or electronic, and whether internal or external, are to be captured within the appropriate aspect of the record keeping system
- ◆ Registers are to be maintained of all records series and special categories, including but not limited to, registers of policies, databases, FOI applications, assets, tenders photographs, forms, vital records, files and contracts
- ◆ All contractual arrangements are to ensure the Shire's ownership of *significant* records
- ◆ Any records / files in the possession of individual staff are to be registered to them and, dependent upon security classification, kept accessible

- ◆ Only approved record formats are to be used in effecting the Shire's business
- ◆ All records within record keeping series maintained by the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes are to be disposed of in accordance with the State Records Office's *General Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records*
- ◆ Records are not to be removed from the Shire's sites unless in accordance with the approved retention and disposal schedule, or in the custody of an officer performing approved business.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is to ensure there is a system for the maintenance and management of records that is compliant with records management legislation and State guidelines and procedures. This includes the provisions of Section 5.11(h) of the Local Government Act 1995.

3.2 Executive Officers

Executive Officers are to ensure their staff are familiar with, and adhere to the Records Management Policy and any associated procedures endorsed by the CEO.

3.3 Staff

Staff are to ensure they retain records relating to the business activities they perform. They are to identify significant and ephemeral records, ensure significant records are registered in the records management system; and, protected and disposed of in accordance with the State Records Office's *General Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records*.

4. Statutory Obligations

In addition to the requirements of the State Records Act 2000, the relevant aspects of the following statutes should also be considered in managing Shire records:

- ◆ *Evidence Act 1906*
- ◆ *Limitation Act 1935*
- ◆ *Freedom of Information 1992*
- ◆ *Local Government Act 1995*
- ◆ *Financial Administration & Audit Act 1985*
- ◆ *Criminal Code 1913 (Section 85)*
- ◆ *Electronic Transactions Act 2000*
- ◆ *Privacy Act 1988*

5. Custodianship

The Shire's records are a government-owned asset. The records created during the course of business belong to the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes by virtue of their possession, and not to the individuals who created such records during their time as a public officer or elected member at the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes. Officers or elected members who acquire or create any records in the course of business

shall not retain proprietary interest. Ownership of these records is vested in the Shire.

6. Definitions

A Record

A record as defined in the State Records Act 2000 means any record of information however recorded and includes:

- ◆ Anything on which there is writing or Braille,
- ◆ A map, plan, diagram or graph,
- ◆ A drawing, pictorial or graphic work or photograph,
- ◆ Anything on which there are figures, marks, perforations, or symbols, having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them,
- ◆ Anything from which images, sounds or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else, and
- ◆ Anything on which information has been stored or recorded, either mechanically, magnetically, or electronically.

Records in the public sector are referred to as:

Government Records (or Public Records)

Records created or received by a public officer or elected member in the course of his or her duties regardless of whether the communication is between staff in the same agency, between different agencies, or between public officers and members of the community (both private and business).

Records may be categorised as:

Ephemeral Records

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

Significant Records

Significant records contain information which is of administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential or historical value and are not recorded elsewhere on the public record. They describe an issue, record who was involved, record why a decision was made, and may embody actual guidelines.

Important Note: Distinguishing between significant and ephemeral records is a matter of judgment and the above definitions can only act as a guide. Reference to “records” in this guideline document should be read as relating to significant public records unless otherwise stated.

Vital Records

Vital records are records which are essential to the continued business of the Shire. Vital records include those that protect the rights of individuals and the Shire, and are absolutely essential for the Shire’s reconstruction in the event of a disaster.

Non-Records

Non-records are documents that are generally available in the public domain and do not form part of a business process in respect to the Shire's activities. They are generally used for reference and information purposes, such as reports or plans from another organisation, a published directory, or a training manual of a third party.

Records Disposal

Disposal is by way of depositing records in the State Archives, managing the records as designated State Archives at the Council, or by destruction in accordance with *General Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records*.