
Guidelines for the Management of Elected Members Records

Policy Owner: Director Corporate Strategy & Performance
Contact Person: Manager Information and Business Improvement
Approval Date: 19 October 2010 (CS04-10/10)

OBJECTIVES

Provide records keeping principles that identify and protect local government records of continuing value.

Provide guidance on the disposal of local government records, particularly those that have no continuing value.

Define strategies that will support and document accountability and responsibility throughout local government.

Show elected members how to establish an audit trail tracing the justifications and authorisations for certain courses of action.

STATEMENT

Accurately created and maintained records are important and necessary because they serve as a history of the transactions and business processes of local government. They are a fundamental tool for providing evidence of local government accountability and responsibility. It is for these reasons that legislation exists to ensure that the local government record is properly maintained and preserved for future generations.

Some local government records created and received by elected members has continuing value to Council and should be incorporated into the Council's records keeping system. Conversely. Some of the records of elected members have no continuing value to Council, need not be incorporated into the Council's Record keeping system and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases.

DEFINITIONS

Council means the Council of the City (the elected body).

City means the City of Wanneroo (the administration).

GDALG means the General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records.

Local Government organisation employee means:

- a) a person who, whether or not an employee, alone or with others governs, controls or manages a local government organisation;
- b) a person who, under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, is a public service officer of a local government organisation; or
- c) a person who is engaged by a local government organisation, whether under a

contract for services or otherwise;

and includes, in the case of a local government organisation referred to in the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* Schedule 1 items 5 or 6, a ministerial officer assisting the organisation).

Local Government Records means a record created or received by or for a local government organisation or a local government organisation employee or contractor in the course of the work for the organisation.

Records means any record of information however recorded and includes:

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

State Archive: means a State record that is to be retained permanently.

GUIDELINES

1. Local Government Records of Continuing Value

Local government records of continuing value are records created or received which:

- Contain information that is of administrative value to the City and the Council. These records may be referred to for many administrative purposes, including the need:
 - to check an interpretation of Council policy or the rationale behind it;
 - to check the facts on a particular case or provide information to management;
 - to monitor progress and coordination of responses to issues;
 - to document formal communications and/or transactions (e.g. a minute, report or submissions) between elected members and another party; and
 - to document elected members' decisions, directives, reasons and actions.
- Contain information that is of legal value to the City and the Council on the basis that there are statutory requirements or court orders that stipulate the retention of records, which must be observed.
- Contain information of fiscal value to the City and the Council that includes original records documenting the receipt, expenditure and control of public money that must be left for a period of time, and will facilitate transparent accountability by the officers responsible.
- Contain information of **evidential value** to the City and the Council such as those that contain information about the legal rights and obligations of the local government including elected members, ratepayers, organisations and the general community.

- Contain information of **historical value** to the City and the Council and to the State.

2. Local Government Records of No Continuing Value

Local Government records of no continuing value are records which:

- Are considered ephemeral (short lived) in that they do not have the attributes stated above and only need to be kept for a limited or short period of time, for example, a few hours or a few days.
- Have only a facilitative or routine instructional value and are used to further some minor activity.

3. Types of Records created and received by Elected Members

The following descriptions and guidelines relate to records created in any format (e.g. paper, word-processed document, email) or received by any method (e.g. post, fax, email, hand-delivered).

3.1 *Appointment Books, Calendars and Diaries*

- 3.1.1 Diaries, appointment books and desk calendars are generally used to record appointments. They may also be used to record messages and notes, some of which may only be a note of a routine nature, and some of which may be of significance to the conduct of City or Council business.

It is strongly recommended that elected members maintain separate diaries or appointment books for personal and official use.

- 3.1.2 Elected Members' diaries or appointment books which have been used to:

- record basic information such as dates and times of meetings and other appointments; or
- record notes and messages, which have been recorded elsewhere and incorporated into the City's record keeping system;

have no continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases (GDALG ref: 1.10).

Elected members' diaries and appointment books, which have been used to record notes and messages of significance to Council business and are not recorded elsewhere; have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the City for incorporation into the City's record keeping system (GDALG ref: 1.10)

3.2 *Drafts*

- 3.2.1 A draft record is the preliminary form of any writing in electronic or paper formats. Draft records include outlines of addresses, speeches, reports, correspondence, file notes, preparatory notes, calculations

and earlier versions of the draft. Drafts may or may not be circulated to other elected members or staff of the Council for comment or revision.

3.2.2 Draft documents which are:

- addresses, speeches, reports, correspondence, file notes that are not circulated to other elected members or staff of the Council, and of which the final version has been produced and forwarded for incorporation into the City record keeping system; and
- circulated to other elected members or staff of the City, where only editorial or typographical changes have occurred, and of which a final version has been produced and forwarded for incorporation into the City's record keeping system

have no continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases (GDALG ref:1.116)

Drafts which document significant decisions, reasons and actions or contain significant information that is not contained in the final form of the records have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the City for incorporation into the City's record keeping system. Examples of such documents include drafts:

- which contain significant or substantial changes or annotations.
- relating to the formulation of legislation, legislative proposals and amendments.
- relating to the formulation of policy and procedures, where the draft provides evidence of the processes involved or contains significantly more information than the final version.
- of legal documents (contracts, tenders etc).

3.3 *Duplicates*

3.3.1 Duplicates are exact reproductions or copies of records where the original or authorised copy of the record is captured in the City's record keeping system.

For duplicates of records issued to an Elected Member for comment or revision, see **DRAFTS**.

3.3.2 Duplicates of:

- records issued to an elected member by the Council or the City for information or reference purposes only and where the original or authorised copy is captured in the City's record keeping system: and
- internal or external publications issues or received for information or reference purposes (e.g. annual reports, brochures, trade journals, price lists)

have no continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases (GDALG ref 1.11.1). Duplicates should be placed in the confidential destruction bins in the Council reading room when they are no longer needed.

Duplicates of records received by the elected member and sourced from outside the City that are relevant to furthering the business activity of the Council have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the City for incorporation into the City's record keeping system.

3.4 *Facilitating Instructions see Messages*

3.5. *Messages*

3.5.1 Messages and other facilitating instructions may be sent or received via a range of methods, such as telephone and voicemail, email, post-it or sticky notes, facsimile, pieces of paper, transmission reports.

Messages and facilitating instructions may be sent or received on a variety of matters. Some messages or facilitating instructions will have continuing value, as they are considered significant to the conduct of Council or City business. Others, such as those very routine in nature will only have a short-term value.

3.5.2 Messages that:

- are routine facilitative instructions, such as edit corrections, distribution lists for information purposes, simple administrative instructions and social invitations and messages;
- original messages that have been transferred or transcribed into appropriate formats for incorporation into the City's record keeping system; and
- do not relate to the business functions of the Council or the City;

have no continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases. (GDAL,G ref 1.11.5)

Messages or facilitating instructions that:

- contain information relating to the business functions of the Council such as directives, proposals, recommendations, definitions or interpretations from the Elected Member to another party or vice versa; and
- are part of an actual business transaction itself, or have policy/procedure implications, or otherwise identified as being significant to the conduct of Council business.

have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the City for incorporation into the City's record keeping system (GDALG ret: 1.11.5)

3.6 Working Papers/Records

3.6.1 Working papers / records are papers; background notes and reference material that are used to prepare or complete other documents. These documents become the official record and should be forwarded for capture into the City's record keeping system.

3.6.2 Working papers / records that are primarily facilitative and do not relate to:

- significant decisions, reasons or actions; and
- do not contain significant information; and
- where the final document has been forwarded for capture into the City's record keeping system;

have no continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases. (GDALG ref: 1.11.9)

Working papers / records which document significant decisions, reasons and actions OR contain significant information (even if that information is not contained in the final form of the document); have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the City for incorporation into the City's record keeping system. (GOALO ref: 1.11.9)

3.7 Correspondence

3.7.1 This section deals with local government records not covered under the previous headings and relates to correspondence or "mail" received and sent by elected members.

It covers correspondence received or sent by Elected Members' in any format (e.g. by post, fax, email, courier, hand-delivered) whether received or sent at the Council offices or at an elected member's private residence / post box.

3.7.2 Correspondence addressed to elected members at the City of Wanneroo, including that marked Private, Confidential, Personal, himself/herself, etc, should be opened by designated officers, and if of continuing value, incorporated into the City's record keeping system, before forwarding to the elected member.

Correspondence addressed to elected members at their private address/post box that is a local government record and is of continuing value, should be forwarded to the City for incorporation by Information Management into Council's record keeping system along with any response which the elected member may have made. Correspondence of no continuing value need not be incorporated into the City's record keeping system and may be destroyed when reference to it ceases.

RELEVANT POLICIES/MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS

Information Sheet from the State Records Office of Western Australia (Which Records to Capture — Attached)

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Director Corporate Strategy and Performance

Versions	Next Review	Record No
25 February 2003 - CE05-02/03		
25 February 2004 - GS04-04/05		
4 May 2010 – CS05-05/10	March 2012	TRIM: 10/1248
19 October 2010 – CS04-10/10	March 2012	TRIM: 10/52361