

## Information Management Policy

*Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.*

### 1. Objective

The objective of the Information Management Policy is to establish a Council wide consistency in the management of information and a framework for the creation, access, management, storage and disposal of information (including records) of all agency functions, irrespective of format, within the Yarriambiack Shire Council.

### 2. Requirements

A requirement under the *Public Records Act 1973* is for Yarriambiack Shire Council to make and keep full and accurate records of the business along with carrying out a program of records management with the assistance of the keeper of public records (PROV).

Information Management is necessary to conduct business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner to deliver services in a consistent and equitable manner to our community.

This Policy is accessible via the Yarriambiack Shire Council Website.

### 3. Purpose

The Information Management Policy and supporting Procedure provides information management guidance to deliver effective controls which supports and facilitates good business process across all departments.

Records are necessary to support management, administration and service delivery, to provide efficient customer service, to provide evidence of actions and decisions and set precedents for future decision making and, protect Council's rights and interests and that of its clients and community.

This Policy aims to:

- a) Protect, maintain and control Council information, including records.
- b) Ensure the capture and creation of full and accurate Council records.
- c) Provide evidence of accountability.
- d) Validate and support decisions and actions.
- e) Protect the rights and interest of Council, Residence, Elected Members and Staff.
- f) Meet legislative responsibilities by ensuring information including records are appraised and disposed of appropriately.

The Information Management Policy and Procedure applies to;

- a) All levels of Staff, Contractors, Committee Members and Consultants.
- b) All external and internal records, which are handled, received or generated by Yarriambiack Shire Council in the course of its business functions and activities.
- c) Properties managed and occupied by Council.
- d) Records in all formats, including electronic documents and hardcopy paper.

### 4. Policy

Yarriambiack Shire Council is committed to meeting its legislative obligations for information management which will be integrated with policies and strategies, including those regarding information communication technologies, Freedom of Information(FOI), information privacy, information security, procurement and risk management.

In order to fully meet its recordkeeping obligations under the Act, Council acknowledges that adequate procedures need to be in place. Yarriambiack Shire Council is committed to the underlying open and transparent management principles and practices set out in the Australian Standard for Records Management AS:ISO 15489 and the adherence to and application of Standards, Guidelines, Advice, Retention and Disposal Authorities and Forms established by the *Public Records Office Victoria (PROV)*.

This policy applies to records of all work done by or on behalf of Yarriambiack Shire Council and in all media or formats (i.e. paper, digital or audio visual) and in all business systems, whether registered files, working papers, electronic documents, emails, online transactions, data held in databases or on disc, maps, plans, photographs and video/voice recordings.

## 5. Responsibilities

**The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** is responsible for ensuring that the organisation complies with legislative requirements for recordkeeping and establishing a records management program which is appropriate to Council's needs, culture, legislative and technological environment and exposure to risk.

Section 13 of the Public Records Act provides that the CEO;

- a) Shall keep full and accurate records of the business of the office.
- b) Shall be responsible, with advice and assistance of the keeper of public records, for the carrying out within the office of a programme of records management in accordance with the standards established under the Act by the Keeper of Public Records.
- c) Shall take all action necessary for the recovery of any public records unlawfully removed from the office.

**Keeper of Public Records (PROV)** is responsible for the establishment of standards for efficient management of public records and for assisting public offices to apply those standards to records under their control.

**Information Management and Governance Officer** is responsible for the creation and storage of Yarriambiack Shire Council's recorded information; they are also in charge of retrieving and disposing of this data. This information can come in a number of formats including photos, film, paper or digital.

**Extended Leadership Team** in addition to their responsibilities as employees, are ultimately responsible for ensuring a successful records and information management system, including supporting management policies, procedures, standards and guidelines.

**Members of Staff** (including volunteers and contractors) have a responsibility to create, capture and manage appropriate and accurate records of Council's business, including work related decisions made or actions taken and transactions of daily business in accordance with Council's Policies and Procedures.

## 6. Storage and Security of Records

All records will be stored appropriately to allow for their retrieval, use and preservation whilst maintaining their security, privacy and confidentiality. Electronic records will be stored in Yarriambiack Shire Council's information management systems and will be backed up systematically. Previous physical and hardcopy records will be housed on-site in the Council's Record Storage Facility or alternately in the Central Record Filing System.

To ensure that the security, privacy and confidentiality of Council records is always maintained, the following practices are adhered to by all members of staff and management;

- a) Information/records must not be left unattended in unsecured areas, including vehicles, or when being viewed by members of the public.
- b) At no time shall Council records be left unattended in areas accessible to unauthorised personnel or member of the public.
- c) Any unauthorised alterations, distribution, removal or destruction of Council information and/or records is prohibited.

- d) Personal computers, laptops, mobile phones and iPads must not be left unattended in unsecured areas without being locked to prevent unauthorised access to records and information. These items should also be password protected.
- e) Measures will be taken to prevent the loss of information in the event of a disaster, including off-site storage (cloud based), fire-proof containment and disaster planning.

### **7. Disposal/Destruction of Records**

Records (electronic and hardcopy) should only be disposed of in accordance with the General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Local Government through the Information Management Officer.

Any records subject to legal processes must be protected and not destroyed. The Crimes Act and Evidence Act make it a criminal offence to destroy a document where it is reasonably likely to be required in the future as evidence in legal proceedings and where the destruction was done intentionally to prevent the document being available for the proceedings.

Staff (other than the Information Management and Governance Officer) are prohibited from destroying records. The illegal destruction of records could result in legal action, embarrassment or penalties to individuals and Council. All requests for destruction of records must be forwarded to the Information Management officer who will follow Council's procedures for storage and disposal.

Once permission has been granted for the destruction of records, great care must be taken not to destroy any information which has value to Yarriambiack Shire Council.

### **8. Risk Management**

Council must be able to provide evidence of its actions and decisions in order to manage the risk's associated with its business. Assessment of the Information Management Policy and Procedures will be undertaken each year to ensure it remains current with the Council's goals, processes, aims and requirements and as a means by which to reduce Yarriambiack Shire Council's exposure to risk.

### **9. References**

Council recognises its statutory recordkeeping requirements and will operate in accordance with the principles outlined in the following legislation and standards:

- a) *Public Records Act*
- b) *Privacy and Data Protection Act*
- c) *Freedom of Information Act*
- d) *Information Privacy Act*
- e) *Local Government Act*
- f) *Communications Technology Policy*
- g) *Crimes Act*
- h) *Electronic Transactions Act*
- i) *Evidence Act*
- j) *Health Records Act*
- k) *Australian Standards of Records Management AS ISO 15489. Records Management General*
- l) *AS ISO 15489. Records Management Guidelines*
- m) *Public Records of Victoria (PROV) Recordkeeping Standards for capture, control, storage, access and disposal*

And Council documents including;

- a) *Information Privacy Policy*
- b) *Business Continuity Plan*
- c) *Disaster Recovery Plan*
- d) *Information Communication Technology Acceptable Use Policy*

## 10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with its associated procedures every three years.

Council Approved Policy

<b>Policy Adopted:</b>	Ordinary Meeting 23 March 2022	Minute Book Page 16
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