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## Records Management Procedure

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The *State Records Act 1997* (the “Act”) governs the obligations and responsibilities of councils in relation to the management of official records. Under this Act, The Flinders Ranges Council (Council) has an obligation to maintain official records in its custody in good order and condition. Not only does this include obligations in relation to the capture, storage, maintenance and disposal of physical records but also records in electronic format.

An official record is a record made or received by the Council in the conduct of its business. This means that, because Elected Members and staff of the Council act as representatives of the Council, any record created, sent, received, forwarded or transmitted by Council staff and / or Elected Members in the performance and discharge of their functions and duties may be classified as official records. However, records that are merely transitory, ephemeral, personal or private in nature will fall outside the definition of “official records”.

Access to official records takes place in a managed manner using prescribed policies and procedures and is one of the Council's priorities with regards to the operation of its business needs.

The Council has selected MAGIQ as the corporate records management system. This system came into place in late 2020.

The records management system is viewed as part of an appropriate risk management framework based upon legal responsibilities and part of the totality of “*information management*”. Records management proceeds from the assumption that information is a resource that must be managed if it is to be used effectively.

The effective management and preservation of the Council's corporate memory is intrinsic to both the decision-making process and productivity within the Council. There are certain community expectations and cultural obligations associated with record keeping practices. The Council is committed to managing its records of continuing value and their timely transfer to the State Records Office.

This procedure provides the framework for the Council to effectively fulfil its obligations and statutory requirements under the Act. This Procedure will enhance effective information management and retrieval in the Council and highlights the responsibilities and accountabilities of staff and Council Members in complying with the Act. It is to be read in conjunction with the Council's Records Management Policy.

Council recognises that official records need to be reliable, evidential, secure and inviolate to meet business and accountability needs.

### 2. DEFINITIONS


**Continuing Value** - records of continuing value are those that contain information that is of administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential or historical value to the Council.

**Council Business** - may include the provision of services, delivery of programs, development of policies, making of decisions, performance of Council functions and other similar types of transactions.

**Council staff** – includes persons employed by the Council, Elected Members, volunteers, trainees, work experience placements, independent consultants and contractors and other authorised personnel offered access to the Council's resources.

**Dispose of** - to dispose of an official record means to:

- destroy or abandon the record;
- carry out an act or process as a result of which it is no longer possible or reasonably practicable to reproduce the whole or a part of the information contained in the record; or

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- transfer or deliver ownership or possession of or sell the record, or purport to do so; and
- does not include to transfer or deliver the record to the State Records Office or between the Council and another agency.<sup>1</sup>

**Email** - is a service that enables people to exchange documents or messages in electronic form. It is a system in which people can send and receive messages through their computers. Each person has a designated mailbox that stores messages sent by other users. You may retrieve, read and forward or re-transmit messages from your mailbox.

**Ephemeral / Transitory Record** - a record is transitory or ephemeral in nature if it is of little or no continuing value to the Council and only needs to be kept for a limited or short period of time, such as a few hours or a few days.

**Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)** - Normal Administrative Practice provides for the routine destruction of drafts, duplicates and publications, with the test that it is obvious that no information of more than transitory or ephemeral value to the Council will be destroyed. Material that can be disposed of under NAP comprises items of an ephemeral or transitory nature created, acquired or collected by Council staff or Elected Members in the course of their official duties. Such material has no ongoing value and is not usually incorporated into the Council's record keeping system.

NAP falls into six main groups:

- transitory or short term items, e.g. phone messages, notes, compliments slips, office notices and circulars;
- rough working papers and/or calculations created in the preparation of official records;
- drafts not intended for further use or reference, **excluding** official version drafts of agreements, submissions and legal documents;
- duplicate copies of material retained for reference purposes only;
- published material which does not form an integral part of a council record; and
- system printouts used to verify or monitor data, or answer ad hoc queries, that are not part or regular reporting procedures and not required for ongoing use.

**Record** a record means:

- written, graphic or pictorial matter; or
- a 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).<sup>2</sup>

**Official Record** - official records are considered the following and should be created in the following situations where:

- evidence of Council's functions, activities and transactions is required;
- there is the possibility that members of the public or other parties will have a requirement to know what activities have taken place, what decisions have been made, the order and time in which events occurred and the people involved;
- their absence could cause the inability of Council, Elected members or employees to defend themselves against legal action or accusations of impropriety or fraud; and
- there is a specific legislative requirement for a record to be maintained.


**Non-Official Record** - Non-Official records should not be incorporated in the Records Management filing system. These have been identified as:

- unimportant records – records which can be destroyed as part of normal administrative practice;
- reference material such as books or pamphlets;
- duplicates; and
- draft documents (except financial drafts).

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

<sup>1</sup> See definition in Section 3(1) of the *State Records Act 1997*

<sup>2</sup> See definition in Section 3(1) of the *State Records Act 1997*

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All staff acknowledge that access to records is a vital issue and internal and external requests will have the appropriate procedures undertaken.

All staff also acknowledge that the ability to track records is essential to maintaining an efficient records system.

### 3.1 Chief Executive Officer

The role of Chief Executive Officer of the Council, as prescribed by Section 99 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, includes ensuring that records required under any legislation are properly kept and maintained.

### 3.2 Director, Finance and Administration

The Director, Finance and Administration is the line manager of the Records Management Officer and is under the supervision of the Chief Executive Officer.

The role of the Records Management Officer is to provide a strategic focus for record keeping throughout the Council and responsibility for:

- ensuring that official records are managed and planned in accordance with the Act;
- establishing records management policies and procedures for the Council as a whole;
- establishing corporate standards for record keeping and records management;
- measuring performance of Council business units against these standards;
- providing consulting services to Council staff and Elected Members;
- developing corporate electronic records management strategies;
- working with other managers of information resources to develop coherent information architecture across the Council;
- working with other accountability stakeholders, including FOI officers and executive management staff, to ensure record keeping systems support organisational and public accountability;
- providing Council staff and Elected Members with appropriate training and tools to allow them to meet their records management responsibilities; and
- ensuring access to internal and external stakeholders, in compliance with the relevant legislation acts.

### 3.3 Council Staff and Elected Members


All Council staff and Elected Members need to be aware of record keeping requirements that affect the performance and exercise of their duties and functions. The record keeping obligations on Council staff and Elected Members include:

- making records to support the conduct of their business activities;
- creating records that would not otherwise be created;
- forwarding records to the records staff for capture into paper or electronic record keeping systems;
- learning how and where records are kept within Council;
- not destroying Council records without authority from Records staff;
- not losing records;
- not altering records without authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer; and
- being aware of records management procedures.

### 3.4 Manager, Governance and Tourism

The Manager, Governance and Tourism reports to the Chief Executive Officer and is Council's Senior Records Management Officer and works with other staff to ensure the efficient management of Council records (physical and electronic) incorporating sound record keeping principles and records management best practice guidelines.

The Manager, Governance and Tourism and the Director, Finance and Administration are also responsible for the effective management and system administration of the Council's primary record keeping system, MAGIQ.

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The Manager, Governance and Tourism will assist Council staff and Elected Members in fulfilling their record keeping responsibilities and provide advice and training throughout the implementation of this policy, procedure and strategies, and will maintain these policies and procedures. The Manager, Governance and Tourism is also responsible for locating any records requested.

#### 4. DESTRUCTION METHODS

Official records must be disposed of in accordance with the General Disposal Schedule Number 21 for Local Government Authorities in South Australia. Transitory or ephemeral records, or records that are personal or private in nature, may be destroyed in accordance with Normal Administrative Practice.

Only records that have been identified as non-official and of no continuing value to the Council can be destroyed by individual Council staff or Elected Members. Council staff and Elected Members should contact records staff for advice regarding the destruction of their non-official records.

The destruction of records must be complete destruction so that no information is retrievable. Records in physical format should be destroyed by shredding or pulping or through a registered document destruction company. Records in electronic format should be destroyed by reformatting, rewriting or degaussing. The use of the “delete” function in software packages is **not** sufficient to destroy electronic records, as data may still be recovered.

#### 5. GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING WHAT ARE OFFICIAL RECORDS

The following guidelines relate to some common records which Council staff and Elected Members may create, send, receive, forward or transmit. This is not an exhaustive list, they are simply provided to assist in assessing whether information in any format constitutes an official record under the *State Records Act 1997*.

##### 5.1 Diaries / Appointment Books / Calendars

Diaries, appointment books and calendars are generally used to record appointments. They may also be used to record messages and notes, some of which may only be an aide memoir of a routine nature, but others may be of significance to the conduct of Council business.

Council staff and Elected Members’ diaries, appointment books and calendars should be forwarded to the relevant officer for incorporation into the Council’s records management system at the end of the calendar year to which they pertain.

##### 5.2 Drafts


A draft record is the preliminary form of any writing in electronic or physical format. 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 Council staff for comment or revision.

Drafts will be of NO continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases if they:

- contain addresses, speeches, reports, correspondence, file notes that are not circulated to other Elected Members or staff; or
- are circulated to other Elected Members, where only editorial or typographical changes have occurred.

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 Administration Officer for incorporation into Council’s records management system. For example:

- drafts which contain significant or substantial changes or annotations (other than editorial changes);

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- drafts relating to the formulation of legislation, legislative proposals and amendments;
- drafts 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; or
- drafts of legal documents (contracts, tenders etc).

### 5.3 Duplicates

Duplicates are exact reproductions or copies of records where the original or authorised copy is contained within the Council's record keeping system.

Duplicates of records will be of NO continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases where they are:

- issued to a staff member or Elected member by the Council for information or reference purposes only; or
- of internal or external publications issued or received for information or reference purposes (eg annual reports, brochures, trade journals, price lists).

Duplications of records received by a staff member or Elected member and sourced from outside the Council that are relevant to furthering the business activity of the Council have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the Administration Officer for incorporation into the Council's records management system.

### 5.4 Messages

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

Messages may be sent or received on a variety of matters. Some messages will have continuing value, if they are considered significant to the conduct of Council business. Others, such as those very routine in nature, will only have temporary value. For example:

- routine or simple administrative instructions, such as edit corrections, distribution lists for informational purposes, file creation requests, and social invitations and messages;
  - information only messages, duplicates or working copies/memos;
  - private messages or personal comments between officers which would not provide evidence or be required for accountability purposes;
  - original messages that have been transferred or transcribed into appropriate formats for incorporation into Council's record keeping systems; and
  - messages that do not relate to the business functions of Council,
- have **NO** continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases.

Messages that will have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the Administration Officer for incorporation into Council's records management system include those which:


- contain information relating to the business activities of the Council such as directives, proposals, recommendations, definitions or interpretations from a Council member to another party or vice versa; and
- messages that are part of an actual business transaction itself, or have policy / procedure implications, or are otherwise identified as being significant to the conduct of Council's business, including :-
  - a directive or approval for a particular course of action;
  - formal communications between internal officers or external agencies;
  - final versions of reports;
  - policy documents and statements; or
  - formal minutes of Council Committees,

are of continuing value to the Council and must be printed and recorded in hard copy format or captured into the records management system.

### 5.5 Working Papers

Working papers are documents, background notes and reference materials that are used to prepare or complete other documents. Those final documents become an official record and should be forwarded for capture into Council's record keeping system.



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Working papers that do not relate to significant decisions or actions, or contain significant information, and where the final document has been forwarded to the Administration Officer for capture into the Council's record keeping system have NO continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases.

Working papers 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 Administration Officer for incorporation into the Council's records management system.

#### 5.6 Telephone and Other Verbal Conversations

Council staff and Elected Members may have telephone or other face-to-face conversations at any time on a variety of matters. Some conversations may involve the relay of information, or involve matters of significance to the conduct of Council business. These conversations should be documented in an appropriate format (e.g. a file note).

Other conversations may only be very basic or routine in nature, such as the issuing or receiving of basic instructions or information, and need not be documented.

Documentation of conversations which involve the exchange of routine or simple administrative instructions or information or that do not relate to Council business has NO continuing value and may be destroyed when reference to them ceases. Original notes of significant conversations that have been transferred or transcribed into appropriate formats for incorporation into

Conversations will have continuing value and should be documented in an appropriate format and forwarded to the Administration Officer for incorporation into Council's records management system are those which:

- relate to the business functions of Council involving the issuing of directives, proposals, recommendations, definitions or interpretations from the Council or staff member to another party or vice versa or that are part of an actual business transaction itself; and
- have policy / procedure implications, or otherwise identified as being significant to the conduct of Council business.


#### 5.7 Lobbying

Lobbying is the activity of ratepayers or members of the community attempting to influence the Council through representations to Elected Members, and may include one or more Council Members lobbying other Elected Members. Records, such as correspondence or petitions, relating to lobbying matters, regardless of whether the lobbying itself is of Council or community interest, have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the Administration Officer for incorporation into Council's records management system.

#### 5.8 Election Material

Election materials or records created or received by an Elected member in regard to electioneering **are private records of the Elected member**, and do not need to be forwarded to the Council. Any records created or received by the Council that relate to the preparation of elections have continuing value and are to be forwarded to the Administration Officer for incorporation into Council's records management system. Such records include:

- public notification;
- nominations;
- ballot papers;
- vote cards;
- postal votes;
- how to vote cards;
- arrangements;
- requests, e.g. postal votes;
- declaration of eligibility; and
- polling stations.

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## 6. RECEIPT, REGISTRATION AND DELIVERY OF MAIL

The Administration Officer will be responsible for the receipt, registration and distribution of all incoming mail.

### 6.1 Sorting

The Administration Officer will ensure that the the day's mail is sorted prior to opening. Confidential Elected Members items will not be opened.

All measures are taken to ensure this type of mail is not opened but should mail be opened in error the records management staff will sign the envelope to inform the person concerned that the error has taken place in the records management section and that the correspondence has not been read, then the envelope will be resealed.

### 6.2 Privately Addressed Mail

Privately addressed mail usually falls into two categories – that which is purely personal, and that which is personally addressed Council mail. (Officers should be discouraged from using the Council facility for private correspondence, as it slows the processing of official mail, and places an unfair responsibility upon the administration staff.) Unless the envelope declares the correspondence to be of a private or personal or confidential nature, the envelope will be opened. If indeed, the contents are personal, they will be replaced in the envelope, and forwarded to the addressee.

### 6.3 Confidential Mail

Mail marked confidential will be date stamped on the envelope and passed directly on to the appropriate manager where it will be opened and the Administration Officer or the appropriate manager handling the correspondence will ensure it is registered on records management system (minimal details to maintain confidential nature) and place details on appropriate file. If the letter is not confidential the appropriate manager will return the letter to the Administration Officer to register and file.

### 6.4 Elected Members

Mail addressed to the Mayor, unless marked confidential, can be opened and directed to the Chief Executive Officer.

### 6.5 Collection

The incoming mail will be collected each morning from the Post Office by 9.00 am. The mail for the day, with the exception of items received across the counter during business hours, should be completed and distributed by 10.00 am.

### 6.6 Opening the Mail

On opening the correspondence, the mail will be stamped with the circulation stamp and date stamp on each item at the top right hand side of the first page, or other position which does not render illegible the text of the correspondence.


**Essential Documents e.g. legal contracts, agreements, indentures, debentures, certificates of title, etc should not be stamped or marked in any way.** Care must be taken to ensure that damage to legal documents is avoided. Separate procedures for the handling of these vital papers are to be found at Section 13, "Legal / Essential Documents".

The Administration Officer must ensure that another officer is immediately notified of any unusual mail items, or if cash is received through the post, and a check is made of the amount. Any cash amounts to be registered as per normal correspondence.

### 6.7 Division of Mail

The mail can be divided into two main categories:

- Correspondence not requiring records processing – these include the following:  
Promotional material / advertising;

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Accounts;  
Statements;  
Magazines;  
Newsletters / bulletins;  
Interstate conference / training material;  
Government Gazettes;  
Other council's / government departments annual reports; and  
Elected Member's travel allowance claim forms.

- Correspondence requiring records processing – the Administration Officer must process anything not covered by the previous section.

No official correspondence will be forwarded to action officers before it is registered.

Development applications are to be date stamped and then forwarded to the Development section.

#### 6.8 Cheques

Cheques are receipted immediately. Those with correspondence attached, receive a date stamp and are then registered with the receipt attached. (All cheques are to be receipted before close of that day's business.)

#### 6.9 Invoices/Statements

Invoices and statements must be date stamped and placed in the Chief Executive Officer's incoming mail tray.

#### 6.10 Searches

Searches are to be date stamped and cheques receipted. The receipt will be stapled to the back of the Search Request then the search will be forwarded to the rates section for completion.

#### 6.11 Development Applications

Development Applications will be date stamped and forwarded to the development section for processing.

#### 6.12 Emails

These should be treated as incoming correspondence. Emails from the [council@frc.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@frc.sa.gov.au) address are received by the Administration Officer who will arrange for registration if necessary.

All emails sent directly to individual officers of a work nature should either be actioned and forwarded to the Administration Officer once complete for assessment or printed and given to the Administration Officer for registration. These will then be attached to files the same as incoming mail.

#### 6.13 Tenders

Tenders should be date stamped and immediately placed in the safe in accordance with Council's Procurement and Disposal Policy 4.5 Tendering Process.

Following the expiry of the tender date the Chief Executive Officer will open the tender in accordance with the Procurement and Disposal Policy.


Following the opening and allocation of the tender the tenders will be registered with a new file number for each tender.

#### 6.14 Registration of Mail

Incoming mail is registered in MAGIQ. The following information will be recorded for each piece of correspondence:

- the date received;
- the correspondent;
- record number;



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- short title/contents;
- internal correspondent (action officer);
- action status;
- file number; and
- record type.

## 7. OUTWARDS CORRESPONDENCE AND MAIL DESPATCH

It is the responsibility of all staff drafting a letter to ensure that adequate referencing to the appropriate subject, such as the file number and record number, is included in the letter. The Manager, Governance and Tourism is responsible for sending acknowledgement letters.

### 7.1 Outgoing Letters

All letters relating to an existing file or incoming mail item **must** have the file number and record number on the letter before it is placed in the outgoing mail tray. This is to ensure that the link is captured between the incoming and outgoing letter when entered into records management system.

All generated letters created by officers **must** have the file number on the letter before it is placed in the outgoing mail tray.

**No** correspondence will be entered into the records management system unless the file number and registration number (if applicable) are entered on the letter or where the letter is already sealed.

Process for outgoing mail:

- print and sign / gain signature;
- make a copy of the signed letter and print the envelope (where a file number exists);
- place the letter, copy and the envelope unsealed in the outgoing mail tray; and
- letters relating to development applications will require users to file copies in development application file.

All outgoing mail must be placed in the outgoing mail tray each day for delivery to the Post Office before 11:00 am each Monday to Thursday and by prior to 3:30 pm each Friday to ensure it is mailed on that day.

### 7.2 Emails

Any outgoing emails should include a file number. It is the responsibility of ALL staff to provide either a soft or hard copy to the Administration Officer of outgoing emails (internal included) that form part of Council's corporate business or where evidence of a decision or business transaction has been made on Council's behalf, for registration and filing in the system.

If the email relates to another document, it should be numbered, printed and filed with the other document. If the file is all electronic, save as PDF, rename with document heading and file number and file into MAGIQ (add in details electronic only).


## 8. ACCESS

Access to official records takes place in a managed manner using prescribed policies and procedures.

Any access to a request for an official record from an external source is required to lodge a Freedom of Information Application unless it is listed as a public document (*Local Government Act 1999*). A list of these documents is contained in "Public Access to Council Documents" which is available at the front counter. The accredited FOI officer will then assess any requests for information.

The following items have been listed as specific sensitive records and they are all securely locked:

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- Income Protection files – Director, Finance and Administration filing cabinet;
- Workers Compensation files – Director, Finance and Administration filing cabinet;
- Personnel files – Director, Finance and Administration filing cabinet; and
- Other confidential files – Director, Finance and Administration filing cabinet or sealed and stored in Records Section.

Requests for access for any of the below files should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer:

- Income Protection files;
- Workers Compensation files
- Personnel files
- Other confidential files
- Access Determinations have been placed on records that are kept at State Records. These have been determined by the “Public Access Determinations Guidelines” available from State Records.

## 9. CREATION OF NEW FILES

It is the **responsibility of the Administration Officer to create**, register and index **all new correspondence files**, and new volumes of those files. Other files series include Development Applications, Workers Compensation Files and Personnel Files with responsibility for these files held by other officers within Council. All official correspondence must be housed in an official file.

### 9.1 Classification

The classifying of incoming mail is undertaken after the opening of the mail. This process establishes the officer responsible for actioning and responding to a particular item of incoming correspondence.

It is the responsibility of the Administration Officer to create new files, either from correspondence received, or at the request of an Action Officer. This, from the information, organisation, and retrieval point of view, is the single most important task of the Administration Officer.

The GDS21 (General Disposal Schedule) and Local Government Thesaurus of Terms developed by State Records for the use of Local Government, provides the framework for the Council file classification system. It is a numerical system where:

Example: 9.3.2.1

The first number relates to one of the 21 Primary Functions of Council.

E.g. Governance

The second number (Secondary Heading) relates to one of the 87 Activities within that particular Primary Function.

E.g. Advice

The third number refers to the subject related to that Activity.

E.g. Circulars.

The fourth number represents a file relevant to The Flinders Ranges Council.

E.g. Commonwealth Government


Please refer to the File Index.

### 9.2 Creating a File Title

A file title must reflect the true nature of the document / subject to ensure that the title becomes the criteria for deciding whether documents should be attached to that particular file.

A file title which is too broad can result in “bucket” files which contain so much information that considerable searching must be undertaken to locate specific documents. One is also confronted with the uncertainty as to whether the file actually contains the information or not. Conversely, one that is too narrow can result in the fragmentation of information.

The GDS21 and Local Government Thesaurus of Terms states the format required for developing file titles. Each file has a function, activity and then free text utilising the Thesaurus.

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It is the Administration Officer's role to choose the appropriate free text name that corresponds with the function and activity.

In creating a file title, the Administration Officer must try to envisage the likely course of events to follow, and should try to take into account the following rules:

- do not be led solely by the subject heading of the document – these are often misleading. The full text of the document must be evaluated;
- the title must include some reference to the function e.g. Quorn Cemetery;
- the title must be so specific as to differentiate the file from all others; and
- efforts to devise a good title must not be limited by the notion that the title can be "altered" during post-action examination.

### 9.3 File Construction

Having decided upon a file title that reflects the content of the file, and which forecasts the development of the subject matter of the tile, the file itself is physically created.

The Administration Officer uses numerical labels to enter the file number in the spaces allocated. Care must be taken in classifying the information and allocating the file to the relevant subject grouping.

### 9.4 Inserting Correspondence into Files

In order to construct and maintain files neatly, all new folios (documents) must be fastened to the file cover by attaching a file fastener to the inside of the file. Consistent methods should be utilised in hole-punching documents to be attached to the file, e.g. A4. This will assist in keeping the file "square".

Files can easily become wedge-shaped, with the attachment of short folios such as B5 paper. Such folios should be centred and pasted on a full A4 sheet to avoid this occurrence. Paperclips also contribute to this problem. All paperclips and staples must be removed from the corners of documents before attachment to files.

### 9.5 Information Retrieval Using MAGIQ

The Central Records system allows any user to retrieve information regarding any correspondence received and processed by Council.

## 10. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF FILES


It is the responsibility of the Administration Officer to attach items of inwards mail and internally generated folios to the relevant file for that subject matter. The task is very important because the principle that **no official record is to be distributed for action separate from the appropriate file** is to be adhered to at all times. Especially urgent and important documents should be brought under proper records office control at the earliest possible time. **Under no circumstances must STAFF remove documents from a file without referring to the Administration Officer.** This action will contribute to the lack of integrity of information.

### 10.1 Attaching Folios

Where a document is to be attached to a file and that file is not located in the compactus, the Administration Officer remains responsible for the attachment of that document.

In all cases, once the location of the file has been ascertained, the Administration Officer should take the document and attach it to the file. Files should never be recalled for the attachment of documents. It is the responsibility of the officers holding files to assist Administration Officer in their duties and to produce files when requested for the attachment of documents.

### 10.2 Numbering Folios – Record number

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All folios attached to files must be numbered. This facility serves as an inventory purpose, revealing whether documents have been removed, and also provides a quick reference to particular documents referred to the user. The number is generated by MAGIQ. Once details are entered into MAGIQ a computer generated number is attached to the file. Write this number on the top, right hand corner of the document.

If it is a single folio, i.e. sheet of paper, it may be marked with the folio number 1 in the top right hand corner. It should also be noted that all pages are to be numbered, i.e. double sided. The movement record on the front cover is completed, showing folio number, initials of action officer/s and date. See also Section 9.3 – Notation of Files.

Before attaching a folio to a document, the Administration Officer should first check to see that:

- the folio has a logical relation to the file title;
- the file number endorsed on the folio agrees with the number on the file cover;
- all pages of a multi-paged document are secured;
- no attachments are missing from the file; and
- the folio or document does not have legal implications, which should be subject to specific procedures.

The Administration Officer and Staff Must Remember:

- Loose papers are more easily mislaid than files and are always difficult to trace;
- Incomplete records can affect decisions on actions and lead to embarrassing situations for you or your department;
- Multiple copies of documents should not be placed on file unless such copies contain information not shown on the file copy; and
- Any action undertaken to a hard document must be replicated in MAGIQ and visa versa.

### 10.3 Notation of Files

The file cover has the facility for referring particular folios to a responsible Action Officer. When a new piece of correspondence is placed on the file, the relevant folio number, designation of the Action Officer/s responsible for the matter, and the referral date are to be entered on the cover. If more than one officer requires action then a separate line is used for each stating the same folio number.

This action record serves the dual purpose of recording responsibility for carrying out action on correspondence, and also notifying staff that items have been actioned, or are outstanding. If the Administration Officer receives the file back for filing, and the Action Initials / Date column is not completed, the Administration Officer can presume it has not been completed and the file will be returned to the appropriate Action Officer.

### 10.4 Referring Files to Action Officers

The action record on the file cover also enables Action Officers to refer an item on file to another officer. Having examined the item themselves, they may consider that either the item needs to also be seen by another officer, or that another section is responsible for dealing with the matter.


In the first instance the officer can refer to the file by notating the cover in the usual way. If they wish to have the file back again, the resubmit record can refer it back on a particular date. A procedure is applicable to files that are being transferred to another officer.

Resubmit procedure can be found as Attachment 6.

Likewise, if the file has been recorded to the incorrect person it should be returned to the Executive Assistant to refer the item to the relevant officer.

### 10.5 Circulation of Files

**NO FILE IS TO BE TRANSFERRED OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL OFFICES WITHOUT ADVISING THE GOVERNANCE OFFICER.**

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If any file goes **MISSING**, the **OFFICER** to whom the file is marked out to will be held **RESPONSIBLE** for its **RECOVERY**.

Every time a file changes its location, a record of its new location should be entered into MAGIQ.

Any officer who fails to undertake this task will contribute to delays for themselves or others.

#### 10.6 Removal of Folios

Action Officers should not remove documents from files under any circumstances. Files are to be kept intact at all times - no correspondence or documents are to be removed from any file.

If an Action Officer deems it is necessary to transfer a document from one file to another or that the document is on the wrong file, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Administration Officer who will take the necessary action, making sure that if it is altered that MAGIQ is updated.

Occasionally the Administration Officer will need to transfer papers from one file to another usually because a transaction is not developing as originally considered and it has become apparent that it should be placed on that new file. When this occurs it will be necessary to follow these instructions:

- amend the record of incoming mail to reflect the new file number; and
- must be updated in AMAGIQ.

#### Please Remember:

Papers must not be removed or transferred from files by any Action Officer. This must be done only by the Administration Officer to ensure that computer data is updated.

#### 10.7 Hoarding of Files

The Records file storage area is the correct storage for a file not in active use. This includes files on which action has been completed, action is pending or suspended.

Hoarding large numbers of files can cause difficulties to other Action Officers and the Administration Officer wishing to consult or use files. There is also an increased risk of action being overlooked or files being lost or mislaid.

All files not in immediate use (that is, all files not being used within 5 days) should be resubmitted and returned to the records filing tray. This will assist in overcoming these problems and ensure a more efficient and accurate file retrieval system.

#### Please Remember:


- Do not leave files locked in cupboards or drawers during your absence from the office.
- If you are waiting on a reply to correspondence, carry out a Resubmit Action and then return the files to the Records filing tray.
- Hoarding causes delays in locating files and makes it difficult to oversee the development of the file.
- **Officers should not retain files for longer than 5 days.**

#### 10.8 Raising a New Volume

A new volume will need to be raised when the file reaches maximum thickness. This is indicated and dictated by the scorers in the file cover (3/4" to 1"). Failure to raise a new volume can result in deterioration of the cover and loss of protection of the papers contained therein.

When raising a new volume the file creation process is repeated. All of the initial information recorded on the cover of the first volume must be transcribed to the cover of the new volume.

The first volume will be notated "1" on the front of the file cover, and the new volume, similarly with a "2". A "File Closed" sheet will be placed on the first volume as the top folio. This will require a new entry into MAGIQ as it will carry a new bar code number although the file number remains the same.

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## 11. FILE MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

All files must be stored in the shelving provided in the compactus when not in use. Officers should return files to Records filing tray when not in use. Prior to leaving the office, all files should be put away and desks tidied.

The Administration Officer should be advised if a file requires any repair and maintenance including the need for a new part.

### 11.1 Care of Records

The care of records is an important duty of every officer who uses them or handles them.

Files which are thrown into trays or on desks will easily become damaged. Stacking files on the floor also contributes to the deterioration of the files and possible removal by the cleaner.

#### Please Remember:

- Handle bundles of files carefully.
- Thick files are easily damaged. Please refer to Records Officer when new volumes are required.
- Do not fold the file covers back 360° as this assists in “breaking the back” of the file.
- Proper use of the file retrieval system will ensure that file maintenance can be undertaken quickly and at a time more convenient to you.
- Do **not** write on the files.

It is the task of the Administration Officer whilst conducting post-action examination to attend to files requiring repair. Files should be repaired when needed.

Appropriate fire precautions should be observed at all times. Specific care should be taken to protect records from exposure to prolonged periods of sunlight.

When files are returned to the Records Section, the Administration Officer will undertake an examination of the files in accordance with the procedures listed below, before the files are rehoused in the compactus.

## 12. ARCHIVAL DISPOSAL

The Administration Officer is responsible for storage and disposal of all records. The State Records Act was established in 1997. State Records is the official repository for records and no public record may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without reference to the ‘State Records of South Australia’s Destruction of Official Records – Agency Approval Process Guideline’, unless the document comes under the definition of NAP (Normal Administrative Practice). (Refer definitions for examples.)

### 12.1 Transfer of Permanent Records to State Records

All permanent records need to be forwarded to State Records. To undertake this process will involve doing an access determination, series registration, consignment list cover sheet and consignment list excel spreadsheet.


### 12.2 Destruction of Temporary Records

Records that are not covered under NAP and are not permanent are classed as temporary records. When temporary records are due for destruction the procedures need to be adhered to.

### 12.3 Retrieval from State Records

Records may be returned to the Council on request and for a fee. Retrievals will be controlled through the Administration Officer as the authorised person, to ensure the appropriate update of the movement of records, and also to maintain statistics on retrievals. The appropriate form must



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be supplied to State Records. If retrieval is requested by a member of the public an administration fee will be charged.

### 13. OTHER RECORD SERIES

The Manager, Governance and Tourism is responsible for the referencing of Council minutes, and the clippings of the Government Gazette.

#### 13.1 Government Gazettes

There will be references to The Flinders Ranges Council in the Government Gazette from time to time. Those items that concern the Council should be photocopied to an A4 sheet.

These clippings will have the relevant file reference notated, and will be attached to the appropriate file. This practice maintains the integrity of the appropriate file.

#### 13.2 Council Agenda and Minutes

Individual officer reports which appear in the agenda are filed within the agenda for the Council / Committee. When the minutes are prepared, the minute relating to that file will be indexed by the responsive officer with the page noted for easy reference. A copy of the agenda item and a copy of the relevant minute page will be placed in the appropriate correspondence file.

#### 13.3 Newspaper Articles

There will be many references to the Council in the local newspapers from time to time. Some of these are at the instigation of Action Officers and some are not. Items should be photocopied on an A4 sheet with the relevant file reference notated, and will be attached to the appropriate file. This practice maintains the integrity of the appropriate file.

#### 13.4 Diaries – Mayor, CEO, Works Manager and Authorised Officer

All diaries will be returned to the Manager, Governance and Tourism for filing on completion. Electronic diaries are to be printed every three months and registered

### 14. LEGAL / ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

All legal documents must be lodged with the Records Section for registration, copying and enveloping.


These documents can be accessed by a request to the Manager, Governance and Tourism.

Copies of the documents should be used within the office, as replacement of damaged or lost original documents is expensive.

Some of the documents received or created by Council are considered to be of legal value because of the evidence provided that an agreement has been reached, land purchased or contract made. This type of document is considered to be “essential” and should be given appropriate treatment to ensure preservation of the document. The following types of documents are regarded as essential:

- Certificates of Title (received copies);
- Order to Open or Close a Road;
- Insurance Policies;
- Leases;
- Debentures;
- Any document to which the common seal of Council has been affixed, including deeds, conveyances, agreements, contracts, by-laws, instruments of delegation, notices of objection, apprenticeship indentures, encroachment guarantees and constitutions; and
- File Plans.

**None of the above documents should be stamped, hole-punched or defaced in any way upon receipt or creation.**

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In most cases a working photocopy will be made of the document for preservation purposes and placed on the appropriate file. The original will not be made available for general use and will be stored in the compactus or safe.

Other Relevant Council Documents:

- Council's Codes of Conduct for Council staff; and
- Council's Records Management Policy.

## 15. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for ensuring the proper operation of this Procedure.

## 16. LEGISLATION

[Local Government Act 1999](#)  
[Communities Title Act 1996](#)  
[Freedom of Information Act 1991](#)  
[State Records Act 1997](#)  
[Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968](#)

## 17. REFERENCES

Australian Standards

## 18. REVIEW

To be reviewed within 12 months after a General Election, in line with legislation and any legislative changes or by resolution of Council.

Adopted by Council      14 August 2012  
Resolution 164/2012

Review Date	Version Number	Change	Resolution
13 August 2013	1	Nil	180/2013
15 September 2015	2	Amendment to reflect LG Systems Incorporated Legislative changes Amendment to destruction reference to reflect current obligation with State Records of SA (Reviewed by Policy Review Reference Committee and recommended for public consultation – Minutes endorsed by Council)	215/2015
17 November 2015	2	Nil - Adopted	278/2015
15 August 2017	3	Positions updated, Records Management program updated	148/2017
19 October 2021	4	Positions updated, Records Management program updated, minor formatting	246/2021
17 October 2023	5	Minor formatting and grammar changes	283/2023