Policy A4 – Records Management

1. Policy Intention

To ensure that records of all activities and decisions of Council are created, accessed, managed and retained or disposed of appropriately, and in accordance with relevant legislation.

2. Policy

The Shire of Murray (Shire) is committed to creating and maintaining full and accurate records of its business transactions and official activities. In accordance with legislative requirements, the Shire is obliged to maintain evidential records. Records created and received by Shire personnel and contractors are to be managed in accordance with the Shire's Approved Record Keeping Plan, this Policy and the associated Procedure Manual.

2.1 Ownership

The Shire's records are a Government owned asset. The records created during the course of business belong to the Shire by virtue of their possession, not to the individuals who created such records during their time as a public officer or Council Member at the Shire. Officers or Council Members who acquire or create any records in the course of business shall not retain proprietary interest. Ownership of such records is vested in the Shire.

2.1.1 Creation

It is the responsibility of all staff, contractors and Council Members to ensure that full and accurate records are created of the Shire's business, operational and administrative activities in accordance with legislative requirements.

2.1.2 Capture and Control of Records

All records created and received in the course of Shire business are to be captured at the point of creation, with required metadata into appropriate record keeping and business systems, which are managed in accordance with sound record keeping principles.

2.1.3 Security and Protection of Records

All records to be categorised as to their level of sensitivity and adequately secured and protected from violation, unauthorised access or destruction, and kept in accordance with necessary retrieval, preservation and storage requirements.

2.1.4 Access to Records

Access to the Shire's records by individual staff and contractors will be in accordance with designated access and security classifications. Access to the Shire's records by the general public will be in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. Access to the Shire's records by Council Members will be through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995.*

2.1.5 Appraisal, Retention and Disposal of Records

Records will only be destroyed or otherwise disposed of in accordance with the General Disposal Authority (GDA) for Local Government Records issued by the State Records Office, and following authorisation from the Records Manager and the Chief Executive Officer.

2.1.6 Council Member Records

Council Members records must be created and kept which properly and adequately record the performance of the Council Members functions arising from their participation in decision making processes of all meetings where they represent Council on Committees or external bodies. This requirement should be met through the creation and retention of records of meetings of local government and other communications and transactions of Council Member which constitute evidence affecting the accountability of Council and the discharge of its business. Electioneering (or party-political information) and personal records which are not related to a Council Members official duty are exempt. Any correspondence received as part of their duties should be periodically returned to the Shire for registering into the appropriate record keeping system.

2.1.7 All staff Including Contractors

All staff are to create, collect and retain records relating to business activities they perform. They are to identify significant records; ensure those records are registered into the record keeping system and that all records are handled in a manner commensurate with legislation and the Shire's policies and procedures for record keeping.

2.2 Definitions

'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, 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/or
- anything on which information has been stored or recorded, either mechanically, magnetically or electronically.

Records may be categorised as:

- ***'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 draft's and rough notes, records of routine enquiries;

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

Note: Distinguishing between significant and ephemeral records is a matter of judgement and the above definitions *can only act as a guide. Reference to "Records" in this document should read as relating to significant public records unless otherwise stated.*

- ***'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'*** 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 public directory or a training manual of a third party; or
- ***'Records 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 the "General Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records".

Policy Detail		
Responsible Directorate	Corporate Services	
Responsible Department	Information Services	
Responsible Officer	Manager Information Services	
Next Policy Review / Schedule	2026 (3-yearly)	
Council Adoption	**Date / Resolution**	18 December 2003 (OCM03/239)
Amendment Record	**Date / Resolution**	26 July 2012 (OCM12/149)
		25 July 2015 (OCM15/155)
		22 February 2018 (OCM18/008)
		23 June 2022 (OCM22/070)