



Records Management Policy

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Applicable Legislation	<i>State Record Act 1997</i> <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1991</i> <i>Australian Records Management Standard AS ISO 14589-2002</i>

1. Purpose

The Records Management Policy is a guide to establish a framework for the implementation and maintenance of an appropriate records management system. Eastern Health Authority (EHA) operates in an accountable and community orientated environment and is committed to maintaining a records management system that meets its business needs as well as its legal and accountability requirements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all EHA business, including electronic business. It concerns records which are created, collected, processed, used, sentenced, stored and disposed of in the conduct of official business. It applies to all EHA staff and EHA Board Members

3. Principles

The *State Records Act 1997* ("the Act") governs the obligations and responsibilities of EHA in relation to the management of official records. Under this Act, EHA has an obligation to maintain official records in its custody in good order and condition. This obligation applies not only to the capture, storage, maintenance and disposal of physical records, but also to records in electronic format.

An official record is defined in section 3 of the Act to mean a record made or received by EHA in the conduct of its business. This means that, because EHA Staff and Board Members variously act as representatives of EHA, any record created, sent, received, forwarded or transmitted by EHA Staff or Board Members in the performance and discharge of their functions and duties may be classified as an official record. However, records that are merely transitory, temporary, personal or private in nature will fall outside the definition of “official records”.

The establishment of an effective and efficient record keeping environment ensures standardisation, protection and retrieval of information improving levels of quality customer service.

Good records management is of key importance to good governance. Records are vital ingredients in the support of EHA’s ongoing business activities. EHA is committed to managing its records of continuing value and their timely transfer to the State Records Office in accordance with the Act, and best practice standards.

In addition to its record management obligations under the Act, EHA is obliged to keep adequate records in order to fulfill its responsibilities under other Acts such as the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*, as well as fulfilling legal processes, such as discovery and subpoenas. Records may also be required by Royal Commissions, the Ombudsman, the Courts, auditors and other people or bodies.

This Policy provides the procedural framework for EHA to effectively fulfill its records management obligations and to meet the statutory requirements upon it.

4. Definition

Definitions for the purpose of this policy are:

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

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
- transfer or deliver ownership or possession of or sell the record, or purport to do so

EHA Business includes (but is not limited to) the provision of services, delivery of programs, development of policies, making of decisions, performance of EHA functions and other similar types of transactions.

EHA staff includes persons employed by EHA, volunteers, trainees, work experience placements, independent consultants and contractors and other authorised personnel offered access to EHA’s resources.

EHA Board Member includes persons nominated by Constituent Councils to the EHA Board of Management.

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.

Electronic Document Records Management System: EDRMS

An automated system used to manage the creation, use, management and disposal of physical and electronically created documents and records for the purpose of:

- Supporting the creation, revision and management of digital documents
- Improving an organisations workflow
- Providing evidence of business activities

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 temporary value to EHA will be destroyed. Material that can be disposed of under Normal Administrative Practice comprises items of a temporary or transitory nature created, acquired or collected by EHA staff or EHA Board Members in the course of their official duties. Such material has no ongoing value and is not usually incorporated into EHA's record management system.

Official Record

A record made or received by EHA in the conduct of its business, but does not include:

- a record made or received by an agency for delivery or transmission to another person or body (other than an agency) and so delivered or transmitted; or
- a record made by an agency as a draft only and not for further use or reference; or
- a record received into or made for the collection of a library, museum or art gallery and not otherwise associated with the business of the agency; or
- a Commonwealth record as defined by the *Archives Act 1983* of the Commonwealth or an Act of the Commonwealth enacted in substitution for that Act; or
- a record that has been transferred to the Commonwealth.

Record

A record as defined by the *State Records Act, 1997* means:

- written, graphic or pictorial matter

- 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).

Temporary/Transitory Record

A record is transitory or temporary in nature if it is of little or no continuing value to EHA and only needs to be kept for a limited or short period of time, such as a few hours or a few days.

5. Legislative Requirements

5.1 The Policy is to be read and implemented in conjunction with relevant legislation, standards, policies and strategies, including: *State Records Act 1997*

5.1.1 The State Records Act 1997 governs the obligations and responsibilities of Council in relation to the management of official records. Under the Act Council has an obligation to ensure that all official records in its custody are maintained in good order and condition.

5.2 Local Government Act 1999

5.2.1 The Local Government Act 1999 assigns the overall responsibility and accountability for the proper management of official records to the Chief Executive Officer of the agency. All defined local government agencies under this Act have a statutory responsibility to enforce the State Records Act 1997.

5.3 Freedom of Information Act 1991

5.3.1 The Freedom of Information Act 1991 defines the rights of the public to obtain access to information held by Council and to ensure that records held by Council concerning the personal affairs of members of the public are not incomplete, incorrect, out-of-date or misleading.

5.4 Australian Records Management Standard AS ISO 15489-2002

5.4.1 The Australian Records Management Standard AS ISO 15489-2002 provides best practice guidance on managing records.

6. Objectives

EHA uses a compliant EDRMS to store, distribute and archive corporate records. The objectives of this records management system are to ensure:

- that the management of EHA's information resources and records management system provide timely and comprehensive information to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

- the preservation of EHA's "*corporate memory*" through sound record keeping practices and the accurate capture of information to meet legal, evidential and accountability requirements.

7. Obligations of Record Users

EHA staff and Board Members must not intentionally damage, alter, dispose of or remove official records of EHA without authorisation to do so. EHA staff and Board Members are required to handle EHA records with care and respect in a sensible manner to avoid damaging records and with a view to prolonging their life span. EHA staff and Board Members must not eat or drink near EHA records or in records storage areas.

EHA Staff and Board Members must ensure that EHA records in any format, including electronic documents and electronic messages, which they personally receive or send are to be captured into EHA's record keeping systems. Records must be readily accessible to meet business and accountability requirements. Staff members are required to follow authorised procedures in carrying out records management functions.

Electronic records are to be captured and maintained as functioning records by preserving their structure, context and content. In order to maintain their value as evidence, electronic records must be inviolate. That is, they cannot be altered or manipulated for as long as they are retained.

Personal record keeping systems for the capture of official records are prohibited. Records must be readily accessible to meet business and accountability requirements.

EHA staff or Board Members who do not comply with this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the relevant Code of Conduct Policy, and/or subject to criminal or civil proceedings. EHA staff and Board Members should report breaches of this Policy to the Chief Executive Officer of EHA.

8. Confidential Records

If an EHA staff member or Board Member believes that a record is of a highly sensitive or confidential nature, he or she should advise the Chief Executive Officer of that view. It will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer as to whether such information will then be treated as confidential and access to those records restricted.

9. Records Security

The security of all EHA records is crucial, as records provide evidence of business transactions, support management decisions and ensure public accountability requirements are met. Records in all formats should be stored securely to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal.

EHA staff are responsible for the safe custody of all files and documents that are allocated to them. Sensitive or confidential information should be placed in a secure storage area when not in use.

EHA records are not to be stored at home or left in cars unattended as they could be lost or damaged or stolen.

10. Responsibilities

10.1. Chief Executive Officer

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

10.2. Team Leader – Administration and Immunisation

Responsibility for EHA's records management system is assigned to the Team Leader – Administration and Immunisation, under the supervision of the Chief Executive Officer. The Team Leader – Administration and Immunisation is directly accountable to the Chief Executive Officer.

The role of the Team Leader – Administration and Immunisation is to provide a strategic focus for record keeping throughout EHA and responsibility for:

- ensuring that official records are managed in accordance with the *State Records Act*;
- establishing records management policies and procedures for EHA as a whole;
- establishing corporate standards for record keeping and records management;
- measuring performance of EHA business units against these standards;
- providing consulting services to EHA staff and EHA Board Members;
- developing corporate electronic records management strategies;
- working with other managers of information resources to develop coherent information architecture across EHA;
- working with other accountability stakeholders, and management staff, to ensure record keeping systems support organisational and public accountability; and
- providing EHA staff and EHA Board Members with appropriate training and tools to allow them to meet their records managements responsibilities.

10.3. Records Administrators of EHA

The Records Administrators are operationally responsible for supporting the Team Leader – Administration and Immunisation in relation to records management and the efficient management of EHA Records (physical and electronic) incorporating sound record keeping principles and records management best practice guidelines.

The Records Administrators of EHA are responsible for the effective management and system administration of EHA's EDRMS.

The Records Administrators will assist EHA staff and Board Members in fulfilling their record keeping responsibilities and provide advice and training throughout the implementation of this policy, procedures and strategies.

10.4. EHA Staff and EHA Board Members

All EHA staff and EHA Board 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 EHA staff and EHA Board Members include:

- making records to support the conduct of their business activities;
- creating records that would not otherwise be created;
- capturing records into paper or electronic record keeping systems;
- learning how and where records are kept within EHA;
- not destroying EHA records without authority from the Team Leader - Administration;
- not losing records; and
- being aware of records management procedures.

11. Destruction Methods

Records and official records must only be disposed of in accordance with authorised disposal schedules for Local Government Authorities in South Australia. Transitory or temporary records, or records that are personal or private in nature, may be destroyed in accordance with normal administrative practice.

The Records Administrators are responsible for the destruction of EHA's official records in accordance with the *State Records Act, 1997* and relevant disposal schedules. The only records that can be destroyed by EHA staff or Board Members are those that are identified as non-official records in accordance with this policy.

The Records Administrators will coordinate a robust approval process for the authorisation of the destruction of 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. 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 "deleted" data is still able to be recovered. With the consent of the Team Leader – Administration and Immunisation, use may be made of electronic file shredding software to ensure the complete destruction of electronic records.

12. Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed at least once every two years. However, EHA may revise or review this Policy at any time (but not so as to affect any process that has already commenced).

13. Statement of Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of the Eastern Health Authority on 26 February 2020.