
Policy Title:	Records Management – Emails
Policy No:	237
Policy Subject:	Records Management
Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Records
Responsible Officer:	Director of Corporate Services
Authorised by:	North Burnett Regional Council
Adopted Date:	Planning & Policy Meeting – 03/07/2012
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Authorities:	

1 Introduction

Email is an important communication mechanism for North Burnett Regional Council and a fundamental tool for conducting business. Emails, like public records in other formats, must be captured and appropriately managed to preserve evidence of Council activity.

1.1 Authority

This policy has been issued by the Chief Executive Officer of North Burnett Regional Council and is effective from adoption date.

1.2 Review

Review of this policy will take every two years, or as required. The next scheduled review date is 3 July 2014.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to advise all staff of North Burnett Regional Council of their obligations in relation to managing emails that are public records.

1.4 Scope

This policy applies to emails, created internally and externally, that are public records, as defined by the Public Records Act 2002. It also applies to anyone employed by North Burnett Regional Council, including councillors, casual and temporary staff, contractors and consultants.

This policy will assist in the creation, capture and management of emails that are public records. This includes emails that provide evidence of conducting business activities, making decisions and/or carrying out transactions.

Best practice recordkeeping ensures that service delivery is of high quality, that business continuity is maintained and that North Burnett Regional Council remains accountable to its clients.

North Burnett Regional Council uses infoXpert to capture and manage records. As with records in other formats, emails that document any business activity or transaction must be captured into the recordkeeping system. This is the responsibility of all North Burnett Regional Council staff.

1.5 Regulatory and legal framework

This document has been created in accordance with Queensland Government recordkeeping legislation, policy, procedures, standards and guidelines which define best practice recordkeeping for Queensland public authorities. This direction complies with the following key documents:

- Public Records Act 2002
- Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping (IS40), and
- Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records (IS31).
- Local Government Act 2009
- Right to Information Act 2009
- Information Privacy Act 2009

Section 7.1.1 of the *Best Practice Guide to Recordkeeping* also lists all legislation and regulations that directly relate to public recordkeeping in Queensland.

The *Best Practice Guide to Recordkeeping* can be found at:

<http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Architecture%20and%20Standards/Information%20Standards/Current/IS40%20Best%20Practice%20Guide.pdf>

2 Direction Principles

In compliance with Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping (IS40), management of emails that are public records should not occur in isolation from the management of paper-based or electronic records. Emails that are public records must be captured into infoXpert as soon as they are created or received, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Failure to maintain and preserve emails that are public records can result in emails becoming inaccessible, which poses a risk to North Burnett Regional Council's requirements to keep full and accurate records. North Burnett Regional Council also needs to ensure that emails are secure from alteration or modification in order to maintain their value as evidence.

Under section 13 of the Public Records Act 2002, it is unlawful to dispose of Council business related emails without approval under a Retention and Disposal Schedule authorised by the State Archivist.

2.1 Definitions

Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms can be found at:

<http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/government/Publicationsbytype.asp>

An email is a **public record** if it was made, sent or received in the course of conducting business and:

- documents a business decision, or
- documents advice given or received in the course of business, or
- is required by legislation or another regulatory instrument to be kept as evidence of a business transaction.

Emails that are not public records have short-term informational value and are only required to be retained for a short time, while they are needed for reference purposes; These are referred to as **ephemeral documents**. Examples of ephemeral documents include:

- Duplicate emails that are used only for reference and not as a public record
- Emails that are part of a distribution list or listserv
- Team meeting notifications
- Spam and unsolicited advertising material
- Duplicate or cc (courtesy copy) emails that are used only for reference or information purposes and not as a public record

Section 6 of General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records (GRDS) also includes information on ephemeral documents.

2.2 Creating and capturing

North Burnett Regional Council must ensure that emails that are public records are captured as full and accurate records into an identifiable and authorised recordkeeping system. (infoXpert)

2.2.1 Creating emails that are public records

North Burnett Regional Council requires staff to ensure emails that are public records include all necessary details for a record to be full and accurate; This means any record must contain content and context and it must have structure.

For more advice regarding the creation of full and accurate records, please see the Queensland State Archives' Public Records Brief *Creating Full and Accurate Records*, found at: <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/government/Publicationsbytype.asp>

2.2.2 Capturing emails that are public records

infoXpert - Electronic Document and Records Management System (eDRMS)

All staff at North Burnett Regional Council are responsible for capturing emails that are public records. The following actions will ensure all emails that are public records are captured, and that they meet the requirements of the Public Records Act 2002 and Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping.

1. All internally and externally created emails that are identified as public records should be captured as soon as possible, into infoXpert.
2. Attachments should be captured with the email, as the transmission data provides important context for the record (even if there is no text in the body of the email).
3. It is up to the first person on the recipient list to capture an email that has been sent to multiple recipients
4. Thread emails are emails that extend over a period of time regarding the initial subject. It is up to the person who receives the final communication to capture this thread.

Storing emails in network drives or in private drives does not ensure accessibility. Therefore staff are required to capture emails that are public records into infoXpert. As stated previously, all staff are required to capture emails that are public records as soon as they are sent or received (or as soon as possible). However, all staff exiting North Burnett Regional Council are required to check their email inbox before they leave to ensure all emails that are public records are captured into infoXpert. This is in accordance with North Burnett Regional Council's exit procedure.

Ephemeral emails

Ephemeral emails are not to be captured into infoXpert as they are not public records (see Section 11, Definitions). They may be deleted from your email inbox when they are no longer required for reference.

2.3 Maintaining, preserving and disposing

2.3.1 Maintaining accessibility

For a public authority to be compliant with IS40, emails that are public records must be available to review and use over their lifetime. Staff at North Burnett Regional Council can access emails that are public records in accordance with access rights outlined in North Burnett Regional Council Security Policy.

2.3.2 Maintaining integrity

Emails assessed as a public record cannot be altered after they have been sent or received. If an email that is a public record is forwarded or amended and sent to someone else in the course of business, it must be captured as a new public record.

2.3.3 Deletion and disposal

Deleting emails from an inbox

When an email that is a public record has been captured into infoXpert, staff are permitted to delete that email. If there is uncertainty or confusion about whether to delete an email or not, please consult the Records Coordinator.

Disposing of emails from a recordkeeping system

Records may only be disposed in accordance with *Local Government Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule* and the *General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records*. This includes emails that are public records.

For more information about retention and disposal, *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records (IS31)*, can be found at:

<http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/QGCIO/ARCHITECTUREANDSTANDARDS/INFORMATIONSTANDARDS/CURRENT/Pages/index.aspx>

2.4 Responsibilities

- Anyone employed by North Burnett Regional Council, including casual and temporary staff, contractors and consultants are responsible for identifying and capturing or initiating the capture of emails that are public records and for complying with this policy and other associated recordkeeping policies and guidelines.
- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring a recordkeeping culture is established in each work team and that staff understand their responsibilities.
- The Records Coordinator is responsible for providing advice and assistance in developing policies, procedures and tools for managing emails. They are also responsible for contributing to the provision of training in relation to managing emails that are public records.
- The IT department is responsible for maintaining the email system technology, as well as implementing security controls and protection. It is also responsible for ensuring email system backup.
- The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that full and accurate records of North Burnett Regional Council business are made and kept in accordance with the Public Records Act 2002.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Hyperlinks to useful sites

Queensland State Archives provides an online training module, entitled Managing Emails that Are Public Records, which can be used by all North Burnett Regional Council employees. The module can be accessed here:

http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/learning/html_nonflash/

All Information Standards can be accessed through the Queensland Government Chief Information Office's website.

- IS31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records:
<http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/QGCIO/ARCHITECTUREANDSTANDARDS/INFORMATIONSTANDARDS/CURRENT/Pages/index.aspx>
- IS40: Recordkeeping:
<http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/QGCIO/ARCHITECTUREANDSTANDARDS/INFORMATIONSTANDARDS/CURRENT/Pages/index.aspx>

The QSA Publications for Government page provides resources for all public authorities. The page is found at:

<http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/government/Publicationsbytype.asp>

The *General Retention and Disposal Schedule*, plus other information on retention and disposal can be found at:

<http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/government/InformationStandard31.asp>