

QCN

qsa client news

Local Government Councils special edition – July 2020

A Message from Queensland State Archives

Hello everyone

Welcome to our special Council edition of QCN! (QSA client news)

QSA has released so much information over the last few months aimed at local governments we thought we'd release a special edition just for you!

We've worked with our colleagues at the Crime and Corruption Commission and the Office of the Independent Assessor to release useful advice which we hope will give you the information you need to implement effective recordkeeping in your Councils.

Local government has a long history in Queensland with the first Council in Brisbane proclaimed in 1859. Queensland State Archives holds over 35,000 records for Queensland Councils that provide insight into the amazing work that Councils do.

People from around the world can access these records both online (if they have been digitised) or physically at our facility at Runcorn in South Brisbane. We recently launched our new online system ArchivesSearch which will make searching for the 3.5 million items we hold (that's 67km!) much easier!

Effective recordkeeping underpins everything that we do and provides accessible, trustworthy information that helps to improve service delivery, improve decision making and deters wrongdoing.

If you'd like more advice on how this could be implemented in your Council please drop me a line at Josephine.marsh@archives.qld.gov.au.

Please feel free to share this special edition QCN with your colleagues if they haven't seen it already, and if you'd like to hear more about the work we are doing please [subscribe to QCN](#).

Josephine



~ Josephine Marsh (Director Government Records & Discovery)

“As a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information.”

Benjamin Disraeli

Why is good recordkeeping important?

Joint QSA / Crime and Corruption Commission publications



Are you receiving our email updates? www.forgov.qld.gov.au/recordkeeping

In the last year we've partnered with the Crime and Corruption Commission to develop two new publications focusing on the **creation and management of public records**.

Council records: A guideline for mayors, councillors and council employees

The first is [Council records: A guideline for mayors, councillors and council employees](#) and it was released in mid-2019.

You may have read this one already, but if you haven't ... it goes through the requirements around how you should **manage council records**, and how **everyone working for council** (CEO, elected officials, council employees) can **fulfil their recordkeeping responsibilities**.

It also looks at why good recordkeeping is important, what a public record actually is, and how good recordkeeping can **prevent and reduce the risk of corruption**.

We worked with the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs on a **webinar** for councils to **talk through the guideline** and give councils the **opportunity to ask questions**... and there were some great questions asked!

If you didn't get to see the webinar (or want a refresher), you can [watch the webinar](#) on the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs website. Just **enter your details**, click the **play** icon, it's that simple.

Public records: Advice for all employees of a public authority

The second joint publication with the CCC was an update to [advice on public records for all employees of a public authority](#).

This short **guide** is a quick and easy read and **explains the requirements and benefits of effective recordkeeping** for everyone working in government.

It goes through **what** is a public record and **who** should keep them, **why** good recordkeeping is **important**, and **how poor recordkeeping** can put you and your **agency at risk**.

It also contains the **key elements** you (and your agency) should **consider** when **creating, storing** and **disposing** of public records.

Both of these publications and a link to the webinar can be found under the [Legislation, policies and standards section](#) of the publications page on our website. You can also access both of the CCC publications on the [Publications](#) section of their website.

What's in your shed?

Section 10 survey on records older than 25 years.

Last year we asked government agencies to tell us **what records they held** that were **over 25 years old**.

Why? Because under section 10 of the *Public Records Act 2002*, government agencies have to tell us about any records they have over 25 years old.

We also needed to know because many **permanent value records** are in a **physical format** and one day will **end up at QSA**. If we know what's out there, we can plan ahead and prioritise what we want to add to the QSA collection.

The survey **included quite a few councils** and you guys definitely delivered! Here's what we know so far:

- The **oldest record** you told us about was from **1858**
- 27 councils hold **records from before 1900**, most of which relate to the provision of significant community services
- Councils hold over **11 km of physical records**, more than **22,000 registers** and **millions** of records in **other formats** like plans, photographs and maps
- 3 councils told us they **already provide access** to their records through their own **archive or local history collection**.
- And 6 councils have a total of **1,200 GBs of digital records over 25 years old**. You guys certainly took up the digital stuff early.

So, what's next? Since more than half of local councils in Qld hold permanent and historical records, we're planning to **focus on these records** as part of an **upcoming proactive transfers program**. Look out for more from us on this soon!

Also, if haven't already heard, we have recently implemented the [new ArchivesGateway agency portal](#) that gives you full visibility of all your records at QSA as well as streamlined access to our services, such as File Issue and transfers. So, if you have records with us – register now to find out more.

Councils & recordkeeping

Additional advice on local government records

We know that sometimes recordkeeping can seem difficult, burdensome and have multiple layers of complexity. Even we feel that way sometimes but **having the right information** and **knowing where to find it is important** and that's what good recordkeeping is all about.

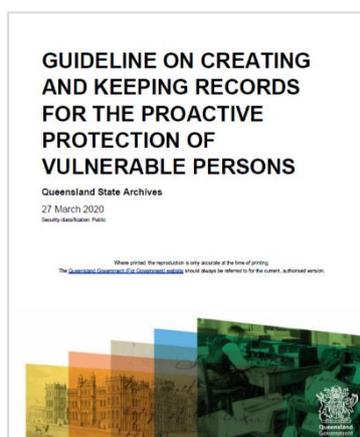
So, to help you out, we have developed **some additional advice** specifically on records created and received by councils and added it to our webpage on [Local Government Records](#).

In addition to the advice that was there (election records & diaries), the page now covers responsibilities, mayor's and councillors' notebooks, social media (including for elected officials), council meetings and minutes, the different registers you have to keep (interest, conduct, delegations etc), and even transferring records to a local library.

Take a look – you might find your answer there!

Help protect the vulnerable in your community

Creating and managing records relating to vulnerable persons



An important publication we've released is the [Guideline on creating and keeping records for the proactive protection of vulnerable persons](#)... and the 3 new disposal authorisations that go with it.

We all have a responsibility to **protect the vulnerable in our community** – our children, the elderly, and anyone with an illness, disability or other condition that makes them vulnerable to abuse.

The guideline is for all government agencies **including councils**, as all agencies, however large or small, have **interactions with vulnerable people**. For Councils this might include aged care facilities, libraries, public swimming pools and school holiday programs for children.

The main purpose of the guideline and the disposal authorisations is to help you **protect the vulnerable** through **good recordkeeping** and who wouldn't want to do that? The Royal Commission into Institutional Child Abuse found that a lack of records often led to the re-traumatising of abused people when no evidence of their abuse could be found. It's our responsibility to ensure that this doesn't happen again.

You can find more information, resources and guidance on how to manage [records relating to vulnerable persons](#) on our website, including FAQs, background information and short videos explaining the new guideline and disposal authorisation and why it's important. Please take a look if you haven't already.

Public records in private accounts

Did you know that **emails, social media** posts and interactions, **text messages** and conversations (including ones in **messaging applications**), **photos** and **videos** can all be **public records**?

Most of the time these types of records will be **created in official work accounts** or on work devices. But then there are times when **private accounts are used** for official work purposes.

Sometimes it's necessary, and sometimes it's just more convenient to use private accounts. Either way it isn't ideal, and it does **increase the risks** for everyone (mayor, councillors and council employees).

What are some of the risks?

Some of the main risks of using private accounts and devices can include:

- **public records** are **not created** and captured into a council's recordkeeping system
- public records may be **unlawfully destroyed** or **lost**.
- **information security** may be **compromised** (e.g. information inadvertently shared, malware).
- **breaches** to other **legislation, rules or guidelines** (e.g. *Criminal Code Act 1899*, *Right to Information Act 2009*, *Information Privacy Act 2009*, *Code of conduct for Councillors in Queensland*).
- actual or perceived **misconduct** or **corruption**.

Good recordkeeping is one of the most important things you can do to show that your council is open, transparent and accountable. If you do sometimes use personal accounts and devices, make sure you have processes and rules in place to reduce the risk and so that everyone knows when and where they can and can't use them.

Check out our advice on [public records in private accounts](#) to find out everything you need to know about your recordkeeping responsibilities and what to do if you do use a personal account.

Councillors and the use of messaging apps

Joint QSA / Office of the Independent Assessor publication



We've been busy partnering with other agencies and have partnered with the Office of the Independent Assessor to develop [advice on the use of messaging applications \(apps\) for local government councillors](#).

We all know that the use of messaging apps such as Signal, WhatsApp, WeChat, LinkedIn Messenger, Telegram and Facebook messenger are commonplace across many areas of government, including councillors.

However, councillors can be accused of **misconduct, inappropriate conduct** or **offences related** to the *Public Records Act 2002* if they use them, especially if they **fail to keep proper records** when **using these apps** for council business.

This **new guide** outlines the **recordkeeping rules** and obligations councillors should follow if they do **use these apps** to discuss council business, and also **highlights some pitfalls** (aka risks) to avoid.

Check out the new [guide on the use of messaging applications \(apps\) for local government councillors](#) on the OIA website or on our updated [local government records](#) page.

Councils and community health

A treasure from the collection

Supplement to the Newsletter of the Queensland Branch of the A.M.A. — February, 1969

AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL AGENCY OF QUEENSLAND PTY. LTD.

Wholly owned by the Queensland Branch, Australian Medical Association

Telephone: 56 0696 Postal Address: 88 L'Estrange Terrace
Telegrams: "Medico," Brisbane c/o Red Hill P.O., Brisbane, 4059 Kelvin Grove, Brisbane, 4359

MEASLES AND INFLUENZA INJECTIONS

Following numerous inquiries we are now able to supply the new JELCO Disposable Tuberculin Syringe 0.2 ml for Measles vaccination as well as the standard JELCO Syringe 2.5 ml for Influenza vaccination.

Respective prices are as follows:—

JELCO DISPOSABLE TUBERCULIN SYRINGE 0.2 ml without Needle	
Packed 100 per box . . .	\$5.26 per 100
JELCO DISPOSABLE TUBERCULIN SYRINGE 0.2 ml with 25 gauge Needle	
Packed 100 per box . . .	\$8.50 per 100
JELCO DISPOSABLE STANDARD SYRINGE 2.5 ml with 25 gauge Needle	
Packed 250 per box . . .	\$8.75 per 100
	\$20.83 per 250

As we expect the demand to be heavy we suggest you place orders for forward delivery NOW.

Queensland State Archives holds a lot of records (over 35,000) from Councils all over Queensland. So, we did some digging to see what we had in the collection that we could share with you and we've found some good ones that are particularly relevant right now.... And well, it seems history really does repeat itself!

We're heading back in time (1958-1972) and visiting Nebo Shire Council thanks to [3 batches of health correspondence and circulars](#).

We know that Councils have always been involved in **community health issues**, and these circulars covered immunisation against a range of dangerous diseases such as poliomyelitis, smallpox and tetanus, which must have worked as both polio and smallpox are now eradicated globally.

The circulars also show how way back in 1968, Nebo Shire Council, along with other Councils, was invited to participate in the free distribution of the Measles vaccine. The vaccine was available through the local authority for children aged between 1 and 9 years.

Lastly, during the 1967 health week promotion, you might have heard this message on the radio:

"Invest in your health by taking time to cover coughs and sneezes and seeing that every member of your family washes hands ALWAYS."

Hmmm, yes, that does sound familiar...

More information

Resources and advice from other agencies



There's a lot of information published for Councils on a range of issues so we thought we'd

pull some together in the one place which you might find useful:

Office of the Information Commissioner

- [Updated resources for local government](#)

Resources for new and returning elected officials designed to give simple and quick guidance around how to comply with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs

- [Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland](#)

Sets out the principles and standards of behaviour expected of Councillors and Mayors when carrying out their roles, responsibilities and obligations as elected representatives for their communities.

- [Councillor Induction Training](#)

Provides new and re-elected mayors and councillors with information about accountability, decision-making and other matters.

- [Register of Interest](#)

Provides guidance around the requirements for making and updating registers of interest for Councillors.

Office of the Independent Assessor

- [Your social media and you: A guide for elected council members in Queensland, joint publication with Office of the Independent Assessor and LGAQ](#)

Contains practical advice and suggestions to help councillors so they do not breach the Councillor Code of Conduct or other legislation while using social media.

Records Connect

Blogs for councils



We regularly publish blog posts about recordkeeping, and some of them have particular relevance to Councils.

- [Query of the Month – Mayors and Councillor’s Diaries](#)

Discusses how best to manage Mayors and Councillors work diaries, including electronic ones.

- [Dear diary... I’m the Mayor!](#)

Covers what you need to know about Mayors and Councillors work diaries.

- [Are your records ready for the council elections in 2020?](#)

What you need to know to get those council records ready.

- [Mixing your records... Don’t do it!](#)

Advice and examples of what to do if you mix some personal, private, party-political, constituent, or electoral information with your public records.

