

INFORMATION DISPOSAL POLICY

Policy Number:	2.3.4
Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer
Date Approved:	December 2025
Date of Next Review:	December 2026
Applicable to:	Councillors, Council employees and temporary staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants engaged by Council
Responsible Officer:	Chief Information Officer
Related Policies:	CCTV Policy Freedom of Information Policy Information Management Policy Privacy and Data Protection Policy
Related Documents:	Employee Code of Conduct Councillor Code of Conduct PROS 22/04 Disposal Standard, Specifications & Guidelines
Statutory Reference:	<i>Public Records Act 1973</i> <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> <i>Evidence Act 2008</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i> <i>Health Records Act 2001</i>

OVERVIEW

Information disposal is an important part of efficient and effective information management. It is the process of retaining, transferring, or destroying records.

Disposal is defined as a range of processes associated with implementing the retention, deletion, destruction or transfer of information.

It is mandatory for Wellington Shire Council to create, maintain, preserve and dispose of information in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973*.

Section 254 of the *Crimes Act 1958* creates an offence if a person destroys a document, knowing that it is, or is likely to be, required in evidence in legal proceedings.

THE POLICY

The policy explains Wellington Shire Council's disposal management program and outlines Council's approach to lawfully disposing of agency information.

The Information Disposal Policy is consistent with and should be read in conjunction with Wellington Shire Council's Information Management Policy.

The policy applies to:

- All staff whether permanent, temporary or casual, including contractors, consultants, Councillors and volunteers.

- Records of all work carried out by or on behalf of the agency and in all media or formats (e.g. hardcopy, digital document, email and websites) and in all business systems.
- All information created and received by Wellington Shire Council in all formats, media and systems, including business systems. The overarching framework for all other corporate recordkeeping standards and retention and disposal schedules.

Retention and Disposal Requirements

Wellington Shire Council will only destroy or dispose of information in accordance with Public Records Office Victoria Standards. Disposal Authorities are issued by the Keeper of Public Records and are a legal instrument authorising the destruction or transfer of public information and define the minimum retention time that different classes of information must be kept and how they are to be disposed of. They authorise the destruction of time-expired information. They also identify information that are to be permanently retained as State Archives.

Public Records Office Standards (PROS)

When sentencing records Wellington Shire Council references:

- PROS 07/01 - General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Common Administrative Functions; and
- PROS 09/05 - Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Local Government Functions
- PROS 24/03 - Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of the Human Resources Management Function
- 16/01 - Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of the Accredited Training Function
- 16/02 - Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Records of the Non-Accredited Training Function
- PROS 25/06 - Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of the Financial Management Function

Wellington Shire Council's Disposal Program

Council's disposal program provides planned authorised disposals which reduces storage costs; enhances access to existing information by reducing the time expired information is retained; assists with identification of information required for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, subpoenas and discovery in general; identifies permanent information enabling appropriate management prior to transfer to the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) and assists with legislative compliance.

Destroying Information Under Normal Administrative Practice

The destruction of some information is permitted under normal administrative practice (NAP) without authorisation.

The following categories of information may be destroyed as normal administrative practice;

- superseded manuals or instructions;
- catalogues and trade journals;
- "copies" of press cuttings, press statements or publicity;
- facsimiles where copies have been made;
- drafts of reports, correspondence, speeches, notes, spreadsheets, the content of which has been reproduced and incorporated in Council's electronic document records management system (EDRMS) or other systems; and

- routine statistical and progress reports compiled and duplicated in other reports.
- Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) recordings will be routinely destroyed after approximately 30 days unless quarantined by the Coordinator Built Environment Facilities for legal or FOI purposes.

Authorisation to Approve Destruction

All official information must be authorised for destruction, whether it is hard copy or electronic information in the EDRMS or other systems. The authorisation process is designed to ensure information is not destroyed before the required retention period, and other administrative, legal, financial and audit needs have been considered.

Prior to any physical information being destroyed, it is listed on the Wellington Shire Council's *Information Destruction Register Authorisation and Notification* form and sent directly to the relevant authorising officers (e.g. the Manager and General Manager to whom the documents relate) for review and disposal approval.

The authorising officers must indicate if the information is still required for any of the following functions:

- Legal requirements – legislation requires the information to be retained if they relate to a current case or an expected legal case, or are relevant to an FOI application;
- Administrative need – information is required to support the business activities;
- Audit / financial requirements – information relates to an activity being audited or due to be audited.

If authorisation is not approved, the information must be retained with a new review date or trigger assigned to them. Justification for retaining the information must be provided by an authorised officer.

Information Disposal Program Structure

To ensure effective management of the disposal program, it is imperative to take a coordinated approach to the sentencing and disposal of information.

Inactive information eligible for destruction is sentenced by Information Management in accordance with the relevant PROV Retention and Disposal Schedule(s), listed on *Information Destruction Register Authorisation and Notification* forms, signed off by the relevant business units Manager and General Manager authorising the destruction of the information and is prepared for destruction by an authorised shredding company.

Wellington Shire Council captures all signed *Information Destruction Register Authorisation and Notification* forms in their EDRMS. The forms list the information which has been destroyed by secure shredding or electronically, the disposal authority and assigned class and the date of the destruction.

Inactive information archived at Council's Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier (APROSS) which is eligible for destruction is also listed on the *Information Destruction Register Authorisation and Notification* forms and signed off by the relevant Manager and General Manager. The supplier is then notified by Council of the information eligible for destruction and they are responsible for destroying the information and providing a Certificate of Destruction which is also captured into Council's EDRMS by Information Management.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring all staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and Councillors (where the information is of a council business nature) at Wellington Shire Council comply with the *Public Records Act 1973* and the legislative requirements for information disposal.

All authorised information destruction must be managed by the Coordinator Information Management Services or the Senior Information Officer in accordance with PROS 22/04 Disposal Standard, Specifications and Guidelines.

Methods of Secure Destruction

Information eligible for destruction must be listed on Wellington Shire Council's *Information Destruction Register Authorisation and Notification* form and destruction approval provided by the applicable Manager and General Manager of the unit(s) to which the information relates.

Authorised bulk information disposals are currently performed by Council's offsite approved secondary storage provider and/or the professional services of an authorised professional information management organisation by means of secure shredding.

Staff are **not permitted to destroy information** other than those eligible for destruction under normal administrative practice. Non-sensitive material should be placed in normal recycling bins whilst confidential and sensitive documents must be placed in locked secure bins or shredded.

Policy Breaches

Adherence to the Information Disposal Policy is a mandatory requirement for all staff including: Chief Executive Officer, General Managers, Managers, Coordinators, staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and Councillors (where the information is of a council business nature).

Where there is evidence of a breach of this policy, Wellington Shire Council will conduct an investigation to determine the circumstances and extent of the breach.

Non-compliance or breaches of this policy, associated standards and legislative requirements by Council employees, Councillors, contractors and/or volunteers, will be addressed in accordance with either the Employee Code of Conduct or Councillor Code of Conduct as appropriate.

Terms and Definitions

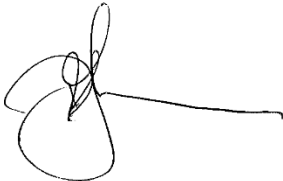
Access	The right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving information.
Destruction	Process of eliminating or deleting information, beyond any possible reconstruction. Note: Authorised information destruction must be managed by Information Management staff.
Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)	The destruction of some information is permitted under NAP and covers the destruction of ephemeral information of a facilitative or duplicate nature created, acquired or collected by agency employees during the course of their employment.
Information	Information created, received and maintained as evidence by an organisation or person in the transaction of the business, or in pursuance of legal obligations, "regardless of media".

Information Management	The field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of information, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions.
Retention	The preservation of information that makes possible the recall or recognition of information contained within.
Retention period	The period for which information must be kept before it may be destroyed. The retention period is set from the date the information ceases to be current.
Retrieval	The process of finding and making available information that has been retained in storage.
Storage	Process involving placement and retention of information for subsequent use.
Sentencing of Information	Sentencing is the process of using a Retention and Disposal Authority or Normal Administrative Practice to decide whether to retain, destroy or transfer information.

ENQUIRIES / FURTHER INFORMATION

Enquiries regarding information disposal or this Policy can be directed to the Coordinator Information Management Services by contacting 1300 366 244 or emailing enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au

This policy is approved by the Chief Executive Officer on 18 December 2025.



.....
DAVID MORCOM
 Chief Executive Officer

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	Date of next review to December 2023. Responsible Officer changed from Manager Information Services to Chief Information Officer.
1.1	December 2023	Date of next review to December 2024. Minor formatting throughout and updating of terms for consistency.
1.2	December 2024	Date of next review to December 2025.
1.3	December 2025	Date of Next Review updated to December 2026. Renaming from “Records” to “Information” Disposal Policy to encompass all information held by Council. Universal replacement of word “Records” to “Information”. Minor word and formatting amendments throughout. Updating of PROS disposal standard to 22/04. Addition of new PROS standards – 24/03, 16/01, 16/02 and 25/06.