



Local Government Elected Members' Records: Which records to capture?

Elected members have a unique and pivotal role within the local government and the community. They represent the interests of electors, residents and ratepayers, participate in local government decision making at council and committee meetings, and facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

The State Records Commission policy regarding the records of local government elected members requires the creation and retention of records of the:

“...communications and transactions of elected members which constitute evidence affecting the accountability of the Council and the discharge of its business.”

This policy applies regardless of a record's format or where it was received.

Under the *Local Government Act 1995*, the CEO of a local government is responsible for ensuring that all records of that local government are kept in accordance with relevant legislation. Accurately created and managed records provide reliable, legally verifiable evidence of decisions and actions.

Records created or received by elected members that relate to local government business must be captured as part of the local government's corporate memory in accordance with the local government's Recordkeeping Plan.

Government records include:

- Correspondence and communications
- File notes made after verbal communications, meetings, phone calls etc.
- Video and audio recordings
- Photographs
- Email
- Social Media posts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- Databases
- Websites
- Messages from Apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Messenger)
- TXT messages

When to create and capture a record:

- Information is related to council business
- An action is required
- A decision or commitment is made
- Business need: for future reference by yourself or others
- Historical: identifies Council activity over time.



Which records should be captured?

YES – forward to your local government administration
<p>Communications, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complaints and compliments • correspondence concerning corporate matters • submissions, petitions and lobbying • information for Council’s interest relating to local government business activity and functions
Lobbying – correspondence or petitions, relating to lobbying matters
Telephone, meetings and other verbal conversations – regarding local government projects or business activities
<p>Social Media – where the posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create interest from the public or media • communicate decisions or commit the local government to an action • seek feedback • address issues of safety, and/or • relate to sensitive or contentious issues
Work diaries / Appointment books – containing information that may be significant to the conduct of the elected member on behalf of the local government
Allowances, benefits and gifts records
Addresses / Speeches / Presentations – delivered as part of an elected member’s official duties

NO – do not need to be forwarded to your local government
Duplicate copies – of Council meeting agenda, minutes and papers
Draft documents or working papers – which are already captured at the local government
Publications – such as newsletters, circulars and journals
Invitations – to community events where an elected member is <i>not</i> representing Council or the local government
<p>Telephone, meetings and other verbal conversations which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convey routine information only; or • do not relate to local government business or functions
Electioneering – or party-political information
Personal records – not related to an elected member’s official duties



Confidential Documents / Records

Records held within an information system or on hard copy files can be restricted so that only the appropriate officers can access them. If the elected member believes that some of the documentation required for capture into the IMS is of a highly sensitive or confidential nature, the Elected Member should advise the local government to treat the information as confidential and restrict access to those records.

For further information, contact your local government administration or the State Records Office on (08) 9427 3661 or via email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au