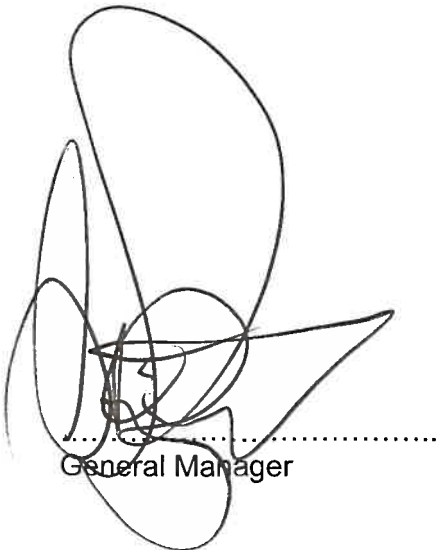




Corporate Governance Policy Framework

DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION

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|-----------------------------|--------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: | | MANAGER OF GOVERNANCE, RISK AND CORPORATE PLANNING (MGRCP) | | | |
| REVIEWED BY: | | Management Executive (MANEX) | | | |
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General Manager

7/3/22.
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Date

PURPOSE

This document provides a framework for the adoption, alteration and systematic review of Council policies, management policies, procedures, guidelines, strategies and plans.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Council Staff, specifically those staff who are responsible for the creation, authorisation and/or implementation of policies, procedures, guidelines etc.

OUTCOMES

The main outcomes of this framework are:

- To provide high quality policy documents that can be easily accessed and readily understood;
- To achieve compliance with legislation and other mandatory requirements;
- To enable Council to achieve enhanced efficiency in its operations;
- To provide appropriate quality assurance and monitoring processes and ensure that the policies are being developed, reviewed and updated appropriately on a rolling schedule;
- To ensure policies no longer relevant or no longer in use are promptly deleted;
- To ensure policy documents reflect governance best practice;
- To plan strategically and ensure strategies that include actions have been included in the integrated planning and budget process; and
- To support the integrity of the integrated planning in Council, avoiding duplication of plans and associated reporting.

Without an overarching guiding framework, it is common for the policy registers of public authorities to grow over time due to the inclusion of documents that would be more appropriately categorised as procedures or guidelines. The intent of this policy is to guide officers regarding appropriate content and categorisation to ensure administrative burden is reduced. The framework will provide the structure for the development of all policies and associated procedure documents, along with other documents and will also reference the principles and key considerations for development of all Council policy, procedure and other documents.

POLICY STATEMENT

The framework will consist of seven tiers of corporate documents to inform the public and/or direct and guide staff. These include:

- Council Policies (including Codes);
 - Management Policies;
 - Procedures;
 - Guidelines;
 - Standards;
 - Plans; and
 - Strategies.
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Policies should be shorter in length and generally, a maximum of two to three pages. Policies should not contain information on how a policy should be implemented or the process or procedure to be followed. These should be contained in accompanying procedure or guideline documents. Staff should use the adopted Council Policy Template when drafting a new policy.

Policies relate to the process of making important organisational decisions in areas that are subjective or may have multiple options available to Council. Policies answer the question of what Council is going to do, not how it is going to do it. For example, a policy is not required where Council is mandated by law to take a particular course of action. A procedure document detailing how we implement that action is all that may be required.

The language used when drafting all council and management policies is to be empowering to staff and not limiting and restrictive. Policies shall be written in a manner that states what Council wants to achieve in a particular subject matter and not limit the ways in which these outcomes can be achieved. This will contribute to Council's ability to be innovative, agile and responsive to change in decision making. Associated Procedure documents shall be drafted in a similar manner, however, contain sufficient steps to address any known risks for the subject area, consistent with any defined risk appetite statements in the subject area.

Council Policy

A Council policy is a statement of the mandatory principles guiding the Council's operations and decision making. Policies relate to subject areas where Council directly interacts or impacts on the community, rather than operational issues. Policies should support legislation, but not replicate it.

Council policies are approved by a Council resolution and are binding and apply Council-wide. A Council policy can only be revoked or amended by Council under section 372 of the Local Government Act 1993, unless delegated authority is given by the Council to the General Manager to do so under section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993.

A Council Policy satisfies all the following criteria:

- It is a governing principle that guides actions that affect community/community members and ratepayers;
- It changes infrequently and supports Council's strategic plans;
- It helps ensure compliance, enhances Council's mission or reduces corporate risk;
- It is reviewed at senior levels and approved by Council.

Code

A Code refers to a document setting out a series of legal requirements for Council to adopt on a particular subject (such as Council meeting practice or the conduct of Councillors and of members of Council staff), which is prescribed by the Office of Local Government and adopted by Council.

Management Policy

A Management Policy is an administrative policy that is a statement of mandatory principles, however, does not require a resolution of Council to be passed. A Management Policy is established by a decision of MANEX or a directive of the General Manager. Like Council policies, Management Policies support the Council's Strategic plans, however, are general in nature, have application to the staff body and provide guidance for decision making that affects employees.

A Management Policy satisfies all the following criteria:

- It is a governing principle that guides consistency;
- It has multi-directorate application;
- It changes infrequently and supports Council's strategic plans;
- It helps ensure compliance and reduces corporate risk; and
- It is reviewed by consultation with the staff and stakeholders and approved by MANEX.

Procedure

A Procedure is a document written to support a Council or Management Policy. A procedure provides for the way in which the principles set out in policies will be implemented. Procedures must not be inconsistent with the policies they support and require approval from the Director of the appropriate directorate.

Procedures are usually established by a senior officer of the operational area to which they relate, but as they specify detail, they change more frequently than policies. Procedures are an interpretive document that provide an interpretation of a policy document and offer broad advice in implementing a function or process. A procedure may apply Council wide or be division specific.

Guideline

Guideline documents are developed to provide additional information to the public or staff on complex legislative, policy or procedural matters.

Standard

A Standard is approved by the General Manager under section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993. It can only be revoked or amended by the General Manager unless the General Manager has given delegated authority to a member of Council staff to amend or revoke. Standards are a mandatory and prescriptive set of rules which should be consistently followed by Council staff and other stakeholders which relate to a critical operational activity or function.

Often Standards will be guided by Australian Standards and used to inform policies, procedures and guidelines.

Strategy

A strategy is a collection of statements of a strategic direction or intent aimed at addressing an identified need, gap or issue. All strategic documents must be aligned with the **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)**. In addition to the CSP, all Council's strategic documents will be consulted to inform the creation of the Delivery Program.

Plan

A plan is used to determine measurable outcomes through a series of actions and objectives with a definite timeline. All plans should be in alignment with integrated planning and be incorporated into Council's Operational Plan and Budget where possible.

ADOPTION OF NEW POLICIES

The policy owner should discuss the draft document and any recommendation to rescind or alter existing policies with key stakeholders. The key stakeholders are those directly affected by a policy, including those responsible for implementation and compliance monitoring, must be consulted during development or revision of the Policy and its associated procedures. Key stakeholders of Council Policies will include members of the community and key stakeholders of the Management Policy adopted by MANEX will include the staff body.

Council Policies

Prior to drafting a new Council Policy, the author must consider if community engagement would be appropriate prior to the development of the draft Policy.

For new draft policies where community engagement is required, the draft policy should be submitted to Council with an accompanying report for Council to consider placing the draft Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. The public exhibition process is to be coordinated via the General Manager's Office through the Media and Communications Officer and is to follow the standard process for public exhibition of Policy documents.

Upon completion of the public exhibition period a further report is to be provided to Council to seek the adoption of the draft Policy, or the initial resolution may allow for the automatic adoption of the Policy after public exhibition if no substantial amendments are required. Once adopted, such policies automatically become Policies of Council and will be entered in the Policy Register.

For new draft policies that do not require community engagement, a report is to be provided to Council to seek the adoption of the draft Policy. Once adopted, such policies automatically become Policies of Council and will be entered in the Policy Register.

Each policy will identify who will conduct any reviews (**Responsible Officer or Policy Owner**) of the policy as required by this policy and when such reviews will be undertaken by (**Review Due Date**).

The review of Policies should begin six months prior to the review date to allow time for research, consultation, and MANEX review before going to Council, prior to the Review Due Date.

Management Policies

New draft Management Policies must be submitted to MANEX with an accompanying report for management to consider. Once adopted, such policies automatically become Policies of Management and will be entered in the Policy Register.

Each policy will identify who the Responsible Officer of the policy is and include the Review Due Date.

At the time of initial adoption of any Management Policy, any associated procedures relevant to the implementation of the Policy should be presented to MANEX for information purposes.

PUBLICATION OF COUNCIL AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

All Council and Management policies and other documents will be published on Council's website and/or staff Intranet and linked to the **Pulse - Delegations and Policy Register (DPR)**.

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Officer to update details of the Policy (or other document) in DPR, including a description, those in Council who the Policy applies to and must acknowledge, last review date, review due date, type of document (e.g., policy, procedure, strategy etc.) and any relevant comments.

ALTERATION OF EXISTING COUNCIL AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Any amendments required to Council and Management policies that are only administrative in nature (i.e., changing position title, legislative details, or organisation references, or the correcting of typographical errors) can be made without reference to Council or MANEX for adoption. The MGRCP will review all changes and determine whether the policy requires submission to MANEX or Council for adoption of amendments. Any and all policies that are not required to be submitted to MANEX or Council for adoption (after review) will be reported, as relevant, to either Council and/or MANEX for noting.

Council Policies

Amendments to Council policies that change the policy position of Council or constitute significant re-wording will be submitted with an accompanying report for Council to seek adoption of the draft amended Policy.

If there are considerations of whether the Policy should go on Public Exhibition, such as for policies impacting the councillors, the community or significant sections of the community, or be of significant interest to the community, the MGRCP must be consulted prior to the amended draft policy being put before Council.

If it is determined that community consultation is required a report is to be put to Council to consider placing the draft amended Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. The public exhibition process is to be coordinated via the General Managers Office through the Media and Communications Officer and to follow the standard process for public exhibition of Policy documents.

Upon completion of the public exhibition period a further report is to be provided to Council to seek the adoption of the draft Policy, or the initial resolution may allow for the automatic adoption of the Policy after public exhibition if no substantial amendments are required.

Management Policies

Amendments to Management Policies that change the policy position of management or constitute significant re-wording require a report approved by the Director to be submitted for approval to MANEX.

REVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES

Policy Owners will carry out reviews of policies under their administration and recommend any changes to MANEX or Council, as guided by this Policy. All policies will be reviewed in accordance with the *Variation and Review* section of the Policy. This review must be documented in the *Document Control* section of the policy and communicated to the MGRCP upon finalisation.

If a Policy is to remain unchanged after the review, it will not be resubmitted for approval, however appropriate notes will be made in the *Document Control* section of the Policy.

DELETION OF EXISTING POLICIES

Council and Management policies may be deleted from the Policy Register when they are considered no longer appropriate. A report shall be submitted to Council (for Council Policies) or MANEX (for Management Policies) documenting reasoning for the deletion of the policy.

Upon Council or MANEX's resolution to delete a policy, that policy will be removed from the Policy Register.

ADOPTION, ALTERATION AND DELETION OF PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES AND PLANS

Procedures, Guidelines and Plans (that do not affect the strategy of Council or have impact upon Council Policies or State or Regional Plans) can be implemented, altered and deleted with approval from the relevant Director as appropriate.

All changes to procedures that support the implementation of a Council or Management Policy, must be notified to the MGRCP. The MGRCP will determine if the changes are of an administrative nature, and if so, approve the publishing of the updated documents to the Internet / Intranet.

If, in the opinion of the MGRCP, the changes/approval effectively change the policy position or create a change in procedure that will impact staff in multiple divisions then the MGRCP will advise to escalate the changes to MANEX for approval.

The Policy Owner will communicate all adopted changes to policies and associated procedures to the organisation in a manner appropriate and commensurate to the impact of the new or amended policy and/or procedure.

ADOPTION, ALTERATION AND DELETION OF STRATEGIES

Creation, alterations or deletion of Council strategies must first be discussed with the relevant Director who will then engage the MGRCP in the process to ensure the Strategy aligns with the CSP, assists in delivering the CSP objectives, and to ascertain if the Strategy, amendments or deletion of, will significantly affect the Delivery Program and/or Operational Plan.

All such considerations and implications (i.e., if the Strategy affects the Delivery Program, the Delivery Program may need amending as may the Operational Plan if the strategy is to be actioned mid-year) must be presented in a report to MANEX for their endorsement prior to a report going to Council to consider placing the draft Strategy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. The public exhibition process is to be coordinated via the General Managers Office through the Media and Communications Officer and to follow the standard process for public exhibition of Policy documents. Upon completion of the public exhibition period a further report is to be provided to Council to seek the adoption (or rescinding) of the draft or draft amended Strategy, or the initial resolution may allow for the automatic adoption of the Strategy after public exhibition if no substantial amendments are required.

REGISTERS

A register of all Council and Management Policies, Procedures etc. will be maintained in the Corporate Records System and DPR. The DPR register will keep track of all policies, review dates and responsible officers.

The MGRCP and the Records Supervisor must be notified of all approved, deleted or amended Policies, Procedures etc.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY FRAMEWORK

Directors

Directors will be responsible for their divisions policies, procedures etc. and ensuring they are reviewed and recorded appropriately.

Manager of Governance, Risk and Corporate Planning (MGRCP)

The MGRCP shall be responsible for administering the Policy Framework.

The MGRCP will be responsible for the following:

- Overseeing and managing the Policy Register within DPR (or other system that may be used from time to time to facilitate a “register”);
- Ensuring all Policies are reviewed on time;
- Overseeing a process that all policies have been approved by the appropriate committee (Council or MANEX) prior to being published;
- Development of appropriate templates for policies;
- Reviewing all changes to policies to determine if the changes are administrative in nature, or are substantive and require higher approval; and
- Providing guidance to Policy Owners on this framework.

Records Supervisor

The Records Supervisor is responsible for the following:

- Publishing all Council and Management Policies, as well as Procedures etc. on either Council’s website or on the staff intranet;
- Consulting with the MGRCP on what Policy, Procedures etc. should be public facing or internal facing only; and
- Communicate to the Responsible Officer and the MGRCP when a Policy, Procedure etc. has been placed on the internet / intranet.

LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

There are no direct legislative requirements that impact upon Council’s Corporate Governance Policy Framework.

VARIATION AND REVIEW

The Corporate Governance Policy Framework will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council. The term of the Policy does not expire on the review date, but will continue in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.
