1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

It is critical that the Corporation of the City of Whyalla develops and continues to review and amend in a consistent manner, a broad range of both Council approved (public) and internal administrative policies to assist in the governance and administration of its operations. Policies and relevant procedures and other supporting documents have been and are being developed pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 and other legislation and Standards relevant to Council.

Also of importance is the ready identification, accessibility and appropriate archival management of such documentation at the Council. Evidence of compliance in this regard is now a requirement of external authorities and legislation such as:

- The Ombudsman Act 1975
- Freedom of Information Act 1992
- OHS&W Act 1986
- Accounting and other Standards

It is also important that policies, procedures and other key materials are document controlled such that the relevant extant version is readily identifiable by readers and users, as applicable at any specific time, especially for legal, auditing and historical purposes.

To this end Whyalla Council has established standardised Policy and Procedure Templates and appropriate review and document control processes in place across all units of the organisation to ensure a council wide consistent approach.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all policies and procedures and supporting documentation such as work instructions and templates at the Whyalla City Council.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management is an important obligation the Whyalla City Council takes very seriously and pro-actively manages.

In its policy development, maintenance, records management and document control functions, the Council is very aware that there may be risks that Elected Members, employees, the community and stakeholders may be exposed to in relation to its management and review of policy and procedures documentation.

The Council has a Risk Management Policy and a number of current procedures as well as a Risk Management Framework all of which are available for viewing on Council's website at [www.whyalla.sa.gov.au](http://www.whyalla.sa.gov.au) under heading “Governance”.

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In the implementation of its policy development and review, records management and document control systems, all Elected Members, employees and contractors are encouraged to consider applicable perceived risks and, if necessary, communicate these to the Chief Executive Officer if in doubt.

4. DEFINITIONS

Policy

A Council Policy whether for public or internal administration, sets out the Whyalla Council’s position on an issue or set of issues to guide decision making. It should be a higher level statement of direction.

Procedure

A procedure (or operating guideline) sets out specific responsibilities and processes required to implement a particular area of Council policy, whether public or internal administrative. Procedures and supporting documentation such as work instructions and templates, are as detailed as necessary to enable policy implementation.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

An efficient, controlled and accessible policy and procedures framework is necessary at Council to:

- meet the compliance requirements of legislation,
- implement the Whyalla Council’s Strategic Plan and the strategies/goals relative to the annual business plans and longer term financial and asset management plans,
- provide a consistent thorough approach to policy development and maintenance that enables Whyalla Council to display leadership, compliance and professionalism, and
- ensure legal compliance with document control and records management requirements and maintain Whyalla Council’s reputation with respect to documentation.

Policies set out the Whyalla Council organisation’s position and accepted role on various matters regarding its operations, role and service provision both as they affect the public arena and internal administration. Many policies of Council are required to be in place by legislation.

A Whyalla Council policy, public or internal administrative, is a guideline for present and subsequent Councils – it is a starting point, the default position. For relevant policy development/maintenance process for Whyalla please refer to flowchart attached at Attachment 1.
Council can make decisions contrary to the policy statement listed but on such occasions Council must record via a resolution by the Elected Body or the Senior Management Team for public and internal administration respectively, the reasons for non-compliance and consideration as to whether its policy requires review and amendment.

A comprehensive register of Council policies, in accordance with the GDS categories of Local Government functions, is in place at Whyalla Council. The public policies within this register are to be placed on Council's web-site for public access.

The Chief Executive Officer and Senior Managers are responsible for an ongoing review program of all the policies relevant to Council so they are regularly reviewed and updated in line with changing legislative and other requirements. All superseded policies are archived as they can be required under Freedom of Information and legal requirements as evidence as to what was Council’s policy at a specific point of time.

Currently the default review period for policies at Whyalla Council is two years unless legislation or other compliance requirements require a different period. However, Council can review any policy or procedure when and as it sees fit. An appropriate review process, incorporating appropriate levels of public and employee consultation, is in place at Whyalla Council.

In the main, policies should not document procedural arrangements. This information should be laid out in procedures, work instructions or templates referenced in the relevant policy document. Separate procedures for the most part, are for the benefit of the administration. Therefore, only rarely and where it is in the public interest, are procedures to be adopted by Council, e.g. for public question time. For efficiency reasons, some public policies may include procedural processes where legislation or best operating principles require them.

An efficient policy framework at Whyalla Council will assist in the creation of sound governance and positive public perceptions of the city.

6. DOCUMENTATION

External

- The Local Government Act 1999
- The Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986
- The Freedom of Information Act 1991
- The Ombudsman's Act 1972.
- ISO 9000: Quality Systems
- ISO 14001: Environmental Management Systems
- AS 4804: OH&S Management Systems
- AS/ANZ 31,000: Risk Management
Internal

- Template 4-0-031 Public Policy Criteria Checklist
- Council’s Records Management Policy, June 2012
- Document Control (including OHSW) Procedure, October 2012
- File Management Procedure
- Creating Records Procedure
- Disposal of Records Procedure
- Capturing Records Procedure
- Accessing Records – Public Procedure
- Accessing Records – Employee Procedure
- File Movement Procedure
- Policy Template
- Procedure Template

7. RESPONSIBLE PERSON

7.1 Manager Governance and Organisation Development is responsible for timely review of the policy.

7.2 Council, Chief Executive Officer and Senior Managers are responsible for compliance with and enforcement of this policy.

8. AUTHORITY

Adopted by Council: 21 January 2013

9. HISTORY

The following flowchart sets out the public policy development/maintenance process for Whyalla Council.

**START**

**Step 1**

Need arises for development or review of a Council policy

**Step 2**

Relevant officer researches/analyses required policy principles and appropriate organisation response

**Step 3**

Relevant officer consults with public, SMT, other staff, interested parties as required/appropriate

**Step 4**

Officer completes policy draft in required language/template format

**Does the policy meet criteria for Council endorsement?**

- Yes
- No

**Step 5**

Report prepared and policy submitted to Council for adoption

**Does Council resolve to workshop the policy?**

- Yes
- No

A | B | C

**Comments:**

Need can arise from:
- legislative requirement;
- Council/SMT decision; or
- review date due.

Policy principles may arise from:
- residents requirements/complaints;
- legislative requirements; or
- social/political change

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Step 6

Further report to Council

Policy adopted by Council?

Yes

Relevant Document Controller enters onto Unity Register and former version is archived

END

No

A

B

C

Workshop held