

FICT 2.2.1 - ELECTRONIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS POLICY

Policy No: *FICT 2.2.1*

Description: *ELECTRONIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS POLICY*

Date Adopted: *4 February 2009*

Amended:

Responsible Officer: *CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER*

Authority: *COUNCIL OF THE WHOLE*

Purpose: *Provides guidelines promoting the appropriate use of all Council owned electronic information and communication systems.*

SCOPE: This document details the Electronic Information and Communication Systems Policy for the Dalby Regional Council. This policy applies to all permanent, part-time, casual and contract staff, and elected members. It is designed primarily to protect the business interests of Dalby Regional Council, by ensuring that all staff understand what the acceptable and unacceptable practices are in relation to the use of electronic information and communication systems.

Related Delegations: *Authority in respect of this policy is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer*

Related Policies:

Policy:

Electronic Information & Communication Systems Policy - as annexured

***ELECTRONIC INFORMATION &
COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS POLICY***

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of this Policy is to assist all users in the appropriate use of Council's electronic information and communication systems, including (but not limited to) devices such as computer systems, phones, mobile phones, facsimile machines, PDA's (Personal Digital Assistants), smart phones and laptops used to access internet and electronic messaging and communication services. This is to ensure that information and communication systems are used efficiently, and the operation of these systems, and the reputation and integrity of the Dalby Regional Council, is not jeopardised. It is imperative for users to understand and comply with this policy to reduce and eliminate potential risks and losses for you, as an individual elected representative or employee, and the Dalby Regional Council as an organisation.

POLICY STATEMENTS

The use of electronic information and communication systems in the workplace is now a standard practice and, in the ordinary performance of their tasks, elected representatives and employees are required to make use of increasingly sophisticated communication tools. The use of e-mail (and other electronic messaging facilities) and the internet, for example, has significantly broadened access to information on the Council computer network and on the web. The proliferation of multifunction mobile devices has also increased our capacity to communicate and conduct business outside of Councils' traditional computer network. Instant messaging, 'Twitter' and SMS (Short Message Services or text messaging) will become increasingly important tools in the way we communicate with our colleagues and customers.

Users have a responsibility to use electronic information and communication systems in a professional, ethical and lawful manner. All users are to use electronic information and communication systems and devices as they would any other type of official Dalby Regional Council communications tool. This implies that when electronic messaging services are used for example, users must ensure that high standards of business communication ethics are adhered to. Users should therefore carefully consider the intended audience, tone, formality and format of all of their communications.

Abuse of electronic information and communication systems for non-business related activities by employees and elected representatives may compromise the organisation, and could potentially result in enormous costs to the Dalby Regional Council. Examples of these costs would be excessive network bandwidth being utilised, lost productivity and potential exposure of the organisation to legal, or other proceedings, emanating from third parties as a result of inappropriate use of electronic information and communication systems.

Improper use of electronic information and communication systems may result in disciplinary action being taken against the elected representative or employee. This could include dismissal, and there is always the possibility that legal action could be taken by Council or a third party.

The Dalby Regional Council accepts no responsibility for any damage, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of the electronic information and communication systems available to you.

This policy seeks to apply the following principles in the use of electronic information and communication systems:

1. Electronic information and communications systems are provided for officially approved purposes only;
2. The use of electronic information and communications systems must be able to survive public scrutiny and/or disclosure, comply with applicable laws and regulations, and Council policies;
3. Elected representatives and employees have a responsibility to be ethical and efficient in their use of electronic information and communications systems.

Procedure

Managers and Directors must ensure that all users within their Department have access to and understand the content of this policy. Each Dalby Regional Council user must familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and if anything is unclear they should contact their Supervisor to discuss this policy further.

Staff and elected members will be required to sign an Acknowledgment form to confirm their understanding of the contents of this policy (Refer Appendix 1).

Access

Elected members and all permanent, temporary and casual employees of the Dalby Regional Council will be permitted to use Council's electronic information and communications systems where the use of these facilities assists them in the performance of their role.

Access may also be granted to those employees or external users, such as consultants and contractors employed on a specific contractual basis, or casual/temporary employees employed through agencies, who require access directly concerned with the business of the Dalby Regional Council.

Approval to make use of these facilities is given by the Chief Executive Officer through appropriate delegations/authorisations.

Users are responsible for the use and integrity of their individual access accounts including password(s) and users should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. (*e.g. lock your workstation to protect your account whilst away from your computer for a brief period or log off whilst away for a longer period*). Under no conditions should a user provide his or her password(s) to another person.

Users are also responsible for the use and integrity of all Council owned electronic information and communications devices under their control e.g. laptops, mobile phones etc.

Users will immediately notify their supervisor if they have identified a possible security problem.

Private Use

While access is provided to Councils' electronic information and communications systems primarily as a business tool to users, reasonable and incidental use for personal purposes is acceptable provided that use does not interfere with the performance of your role or imposes additional cost to Council.

Elected members and employees may use such services for personal use provided that such use:

1. Is consistent with professional conduct;
2. Does not interfere with the responsibilities of the person and the performance of their role;
3. Does not place undue demand on Dalby Regional Council's electronic information and communications systems;
4. Does not impose additional cost to Council;
5. Is not used for personal financial gain or personal commercial purposes;
6. Does not involve the downloading of illegal content;
7. Will not provide the user with personal privacy rights, subject to any provisions to the contrary under Australian law.
8. Will not be used to obtain unauthorised access to electronic data of other parties (internal or external).

Electronic information and communications systems should not be used to communicate any personal details about the user, or any other individual, about which there may be any sensitivity, or whereby that person's reputation may be injured.

Elected members and employees should be aware that all use of electronic information and communications systems, including use of a private nature (e.g. personal emails), is able to be monitored and viewed by ICT staff under certain circumstances. You should remember that electronic communication tools are inherently insecure – you should tailor your use accordingly.

It should be noted that Council is committed to the fair handling of your personal information.

Council reserves the right to require re-imburement of any expenses incurred by employees using its electronic information and communications systems for non-business related reasons.

Monitoring of Use

The Dalby Regional Council reserves the right to access, monitor, audit, and keep records of the use of electronic information and communication systems under its control.

Council may also monitor use to:

1. ascertain compliance with regulatory practices and procedures relevant to the organisation;
2. to ensure that users do not breach its policy regarding the use of electronic information and communications systems;
3. to prevent/detect crime such as fraud or corruption and to ensure compliance with this policy.

In the event of suspected abuse of Councils' electronic information and communications systems, the individual concerned will be advised of the nature of the suspected misuse, and future use may be monitored. Should the misuse continue the Dalby Regional Council reserves the right to initiate disciplinary action.

In all cases of suspected misuse or actual misuse of its' electronic information and communications systems, the Dalby Regional Council may exercise its right to withdraw or suspend access to any or all electronic information and communications systems for a specified period or indefinitely.

Unacceptable Use

Unacceptable use of electronic information and communications systems includes accessing, downloading, uploading, sending, distributing or display of unacceptable or illegal content. This includes but is not limited to content that:

1. is used in connection with infringement of another person's intellectual property rights;
2. may be seen as defamatory, fraudulent, insulting, disruptive, harassing, intimidatory or offensive to other employees (including material concerning sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, national origin, religion, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law);
3. is used in connection with any attempt to penetrate the computer network or security of the Dalby Regional Council, or other electronic information and communications systems, or to gain unauthorised access to any other person's computer or communication systems;
4. is pornographic, profane or obscene.

Furthermore, unacceptable use includes:

5. use of Councils' electronic information and communications systems for personal reasons to conduct any commercial business that is not the business of the Dalby Regional Council (this excludes personal internet banking);
6. destruction of, or damage to, equipment, software or data belonging to Dalby Regional Council, or other clients;
7. deliberate propagation of computer viruses, spyware, malware, root kits, exploits, bots, spam or hacks;
8. engaging in hacking, launching of denial of service attacks, engaging in any illegal conduct;
9. use of electronic information and communications systems to advertise, sell or purchase illegal materials and or services;
10. soliciting, responding to or discussing any illegal actions over Councils' electronic information and communications systems;
11. unauthorised monitoring of electronic communications;
12. intentional unauthorised copying of copyright protected material or infringement of license agreements and other contracts;
13. violation of the privacy of individuals or entities that are creators, authors, users or subjects of the information resources.

Electronic Messaging

Electronic messaging includes your use of services such as instant messaging, personal messaging (PM), text messaging (SMS – Short Message Service), e-mail, voicemail or facsimile.

Inappropriate use of the electronic messaging includes, but is not limited to:

1. the transmission of any electronic message that is of such a nature that would harm the reputation of the Dalby Regional Council;
2. the transmission of any electronic message which is unethical, may be perceived to be a conflict of interest, or contain confidential Dalby Regional Council information sent to individuals unauthorised to receive such information;
3. the transmission of any electronic message which contains an employee's personal view/opinion relating to any matter affecting the Dalby Regional Council and/or its members;
4. users allowing anyone else to send electronic message using their accounts (the exception being Directors, Managers and other staff who give express authorization to Personal Assistants or other support staff) ;
5. the transmission of any material that is unlawful, obscene, threatening, abusive, libellous or hateful, encourages conduct that would constitute a criminal offence, gives rise to liability, or otherwise violate any local or national law;
6. users using electronic message for commercial solicitation or for conducting or pursuing their own business interests or those of another organisation;
7. the use of electronic messaging for the mass distribution of hoaxes, chain letters, spam, or advertisements; or sending rude, obscene or harassing messages (including jokes);
8. knowingly sending or distributing viruses or other material which can damage electronic information systems;

Council Property

Any electronic mail address or account associated with Council, assigned by Council to individuals, sub-units or functions of Council remain the property of Council.

Responsibility

All employees and elected members of Council who use the electronic messaging systems are responsible, in accordance with this policy and the Dalby Regional Council Code of Conduct, for:

1. contents being generated by your electronic messaging account;
2. recognising your responsibility in managing your accounts by following appropriate security measures to avoid unauthorised use;
3. deleting all unnecessary or unsolicited material from your electronic messaging account at the earliest possible opportunity;
4. ensuring use of the electronic messaging system is for the discharge of your official duties;
5. Actively discouraging the use and circulation of junk messages;
6. Notifying supervisors and appropriate agencies of any perceived misuse of the electronic messaging system;
7. Managing your individual electronic messaging account to avoid excessive use of network resources;

8. Not misusing your electronic messaging system as it might cause ramifications to the capacity and performance of the organisational computer environment;
9. Storing information received or generated, in electronic format which is relevant to the business of Government in an appropriate manner;
10. Compliance with the law and Council Policy.

Incorrectly Delivered e-mail

Any message received, which is not intended for you as the recipient, should be immediately returned to the sender. All copies of the misdirected message should be deleted after it has been returned to the sender. An incorrectly addressed message should only be forwarded to the intended recipient if the identity of that recipient is known and certain.

e-mail Attachments

Restrictions apply to the sending of attachments. Large attachments must be compressed where possible and users are requested to remove large attachments from their inboxes. Large attachments relate to files that are in excess of 5 (five) megabytes (MB). Files that are over 5MB should never be sent via e-mail and indeed most mail servers will not accept attachments in excess of 5MB.

The unnecessary use of large "personal" distribution lists must be avoided due to their impact on the network.

Users must be aware of the risks associated with opening documents with macros, postscript files and installing programs received via e-mail. Only IT staff are entitled to receive executable files (e.g. programs) via electronic means, and IT staff are the only authorised staff able to install executable files on Council systems including desktop computers.

Access to e-mail During Absence

There may be the rare occasion where information contained in your mailbox is required while you are absent (sick or on holidays, etc.). In these situations the Information & Communication Technology Manager may organise to retrieve this information for you. Please note that this will not be a normal practice. If you are planning on being absent please contact the Information & Communication Technology Manager to arrange alternate permissions if required, or to give you access to your mailbox via a web browser.

Copyright

Copyright exists on all kinds of materials available on the internet, including web pages, software and any e-mails which may contain copyright material. Elected members and employees are expected to respect and adhere to regulations regarding copyright and other intellectual property rights. In the absence of permission or waiver statements, it is advisable to obtain permission before downloading or printing.

Confidential Information

While technological systems can be relied on to assist in maintaining confidentiality, they cannot ensure confidentiality and must be complemented by employee training and awareness. As stated above, users should therefore carefully consider the intended audience, tone, formality and format for all communications. Once again it should be remembered that electronic communication tools are inherently insecure – you should tailor your use accordingly.

Retention and Security of Electronic Communications

Electronic communications, and all other items stored on Dalby Regional Councils' systems are the property of the Dalby Regional Council. This includes items stored on desktop computers, laptops, PDAs, mobile phones etc. Be aware that these items may have the same legal effect as that of a traditional hard copy document. Accordingly, all electronic communications should be treated as though others may later view them. Electronic messages should be created with the same care that one would use in creating a hard copy document.

Users need to be aware of policies regarding the retention of electronic communications or other records, and any storage limits. Retention of paper copies of electronic communications is discouraged (printing costs money and making paper kills trees). Significant work related electronic communications must be registered into the Councils' electronic filing system.

Dalby Regional Council reserves the right to remove any programs, data, or other items that in any way violate intellectual property rights, copyright, the terms of this or any other policy of Council.

Installation of Software

Only computer software authorised and tested for use on Council's electronic information and communications systems should be used.

Under no circumstances shall any files or application programs downloaded from the internet, transferred via e-mail or received from any other source (except for documents needed for Council business purposes), be installed on Council's electronic information and communications systems without the prior approval of the Information & Communication Technology Manager.

Any staff member requiring software other than that already installed on their equipment is required to provide their Supervisor with a business case. Once approved, the software will, subject to budget limitations, be acquired and installed by, or at the direction of, the Information & Communication Technology Manager.

Under no circumstances will illegal copies of copyrighted software be made available, or used on Council's electronic information and communications systems.

Violation

Violation of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in the suspension or cancellation of the usage of electronic facilities and/or result in disciplinary action.

DELEGATION

The Chief Executive Officer has delegated authority in respect to this Policy.

APPENDIX 1

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS POLICY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____, being an employee/elected member of the Dalby Regional Council, acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of the Council's *Electronic Information & Communication Systems Policy* and accept and agree to abide by the conditions specified therein.

Signed

Date

Approval is given for the abovementioned Council employee to have access to:

- Council's electronic information and communications systems.

Chief Executive Officer/Director

Date