



## *Our Vision*

Nambucca Valley ~ Living at its best

## *Our Mission Statement*

'The Nambucca Valley will value and protect its natural environment, maintain its assets and infrastructure and develop opportunities for its people.'

### **1.0 Policy objective**

This policy establishes the framework for the management of policies, procedures and supporting documents at Nambucca Valley Council (NVC). A policy is a high level strategic directive that establishes a principle-based approach to a subject. A policy should be adopted for any area of the Council's operation where direction or purpose needs to be set in order to conduct Council business.

A policy is operationalised through procedures which give instructions and set out processes to implement a policy. In order to effectively and efficiently manage policies and procedures, this Framework establishes a hierarchy and categories of policies and procedures and sets out the requirements and standards for each step of the development and improvement process. All policies and procedures must be developed, deployed, monitored and revised in accordance with this policy.

### **2.0 Related legislation**

*Local Government Act 1993*

*Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW)*

### **3.0 Definitions**

Council Policy	Council Policies are those which may have significant public interest or a community focus or are required by legislation.
Organisational Policy	Organisational Policies have an internal focus and can affect the whole or the majority of the Organisation. The General Manager (GM) may, at his discretion, refer an Organisational Policy to Council for consideration and feedback prior to approval by the GM.
Organisational Procedure	Organisational Procedures have an internal focus and can affect the whole or the majority of the Organisation. Organisational Procedures provide practical guidance on the implementation of a policy. Organisational Procedures must be linked to a Council Policy or an Organisational Policy. A number of Organisational Procedures may be linked to the same policy.

Affiliate	An Affiliate includes contractors, suppliers, volunteers, members of S355 Community and Advisory Committees, work experience students and other people or groups who have a particular relationship with Council.
Approval Authority	The person or entity occupying the level indicated in the Approval process having the authority to approve a new policy or to approve material changes to an existing policy.
Content Contributor	The person responsible for publishing the approved Policy on the NVC website.
Manager Risk and Governance	<p>The officer responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing and maintaining the Policy and Procedures Framework Policy, Policy Register, Procedures Register and associated templates;</li> <li>• Providing advice and guidance on policy development and access;</li> <li>• Reviewing website content related to policy at Council;</li> <li>• Assisting with policy reviews; and</li> <li>• Updating Policies with immaterial changes.</li> </ul>
Immaterial Changes	A housekeeping change to a policy such as clarifying wording, updating a section or position name, contact person, typographical errors or reference to legislation which does not alter the scope, purpose or intent of the document.
Material Changes	Changes to the purpose, scope or significant changes to the content, responsibilities, limits, assignment of powers etc. of a policy or procedure.
Policy	Concise formal statements of principles that indicate how Council will act in a particular aspect of its operation. In this way, policies regulate and direct actions and conduct.
Policy Development	<p>The various stages from concept to implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of a policy need;</li> <li>• consultation and development of the policy document;</li> <li>• consideration and approval of the policy;</li> <li>• implementation of the policy; and</li> <li>• review of the policy.</li> </ul>
Policy Drafter	The position responsible for drafting the policy and who should be contacted for any matters relating to the specific policy, or procedure prior to the approval process.
Policy Owner	The Policy Owner is the position responsible for the preparation and implementation of the Policy and when necessary, advertises the Policy for public comment and/or publishes the Policy on the website.
Policy Register	The schedule of current policies approved in accordance with the Policy and Procedures Framework Policy.

## **4.0 Policy Content**

### **4.1 Background**

A policy or procedure will remain in force unless formally repealed by the relevant Approval Authority or superseded by another policy or procedure.

Where organisational structure change results in a different Approval Authority or other role referenced in a particular policy or procedure, the existing responsibilities and accountabilities will remain in force until the policy or procedure is amended to reflect the new or amended position title, authority or role that takes its place.

The Manager Risk and Governance has the authority to update immaterial changes to policies or procedures without the need for undertaking the full review process.

Policy and procedure compliance is mandatory for all employees, affiliates and where applicable, Councillors. The GM may commence disciplinary action or seek other penalties if a person or entity breaches policy or any of its related procedures. Policies and procedures must be applied fairly and consistently.

### **4.2 Principles**

This section specifies the essential characteristics of acceptable policy and procedure at Council.

#### **4.2.1 Content**

The content of policies and procedures will:

- uphold the general principles as outlined in Council's Code of Conduct, organisational values, vision and mission statements and strategic goals;
- ensure compliance with legislative and industrial requirements;
- be consistent with Council's current practices;
- provide a clear and discernible separation between governance and management responsibilities;
- clearly articulate expectations and accountability;
- clearly assign responsibility for actions and outcomes and
- show due consideration of risk mitigation.

#### **4.2.2 Process**

The process of development, deployment and review of policies and procedures will:

- be appropriately consultative;
- be directed by the principles of continuous improvement;

- not be unnecessarily burdensome;
- be informed by prevailing legislative requirements, sector best practice and Council's Community Strategic Plan; and
- be appropriately communicated.

#### **4.2.3 Procedures**

Procedures will:

- where relevant align with applicable policies;
- clearly articulate roles and responsibilities
- be open to continuous review and improvement.

#### **4.2.4 Presentation**

All documentation will be:

- consistent with approved organisational templates;
- retained according to the prevailing standard;
- centrally registered;
- accessible;
- current and accurate; and
- clear and comprehensible.

### **4.3 Scope**

This Framework applies to all policy categories at Council - Council and Organisational Policies and Organisational Procedures.

(**Note:** An Organisational Procedure is still a category of policy. The use of the term 'procedure' shows that it is a policy with an operational focus.)

#### **4.3.1 Content**

Policies are developed in order to provide parameters and guidelines for the achievement of the Council's strategic and operational objectives, giving consideration to statutory, best practice and quality management requirements.

The Policy and Procedures Framework Policy requires that the Council and Organisational Policies and Organisational Procedures are written in clear, concise English, conform to adopted guidelines, are approved at an appropriate level of the organisation, and are regularly reviewed by the Policy Owner.

#### **4.3.2 Compliance**

Policies must comply with the relevant principles and terminology set out in all relevant legislation, Council resolutions, the Community Strategic Plan and the Policy template.

#### **4.3.3 Clarity**

The two dimensions relating to clarity in the development of policy are:

- **Clarity of approval:** All policies will clearly state where responsibility for final approval lies, when approval was formally given and the effective date of the policy.
- **Clarity of writing:** All policy documents will contain clear, concise English, enabling a wide range of users to understand the content. Where prescribed terminology is used (e.g. extracted from legislation) a clear description of the terminology must be given in the definitions section of the policy document, to allow cross-referencing and comprehension.

#### 4.3.4 Stages of policy development

The five stages of policy development are:

1. **Needs Identification:** This stage includes identifying the matter to be addressed, seeking authority to proceed, and selection of the appropriate policy level which will contribute to achievement of Community Strategic Plan goals.
2. **Policy Development:** This stage incorporates the identification of appropriate stakeholders, commencement of the consultation process, gathering relevant background information, authoring the policy document, and incorporating feedback. Prior to commencing the draft policy, it is essential that the policy drafter arrange to meet with the Manager Risk and Governance to discuss the relevant processes.
3. **Policy Endorsement and Approval:** This stage includes notifying the appropriate officers, Work, Health & Safety Committee or Employee Consultative Committee (if appropriate), Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (if appropriate) and/or Council, of the requirement to evaluate the draft policy, placing the policy on public exhibition if required and submitting it for endorsement and approval.
4. **Policy Implementation:** This is the final stage in the policy process, but is ongoing. It includes such activities as activating the policy, notification, distribution, awareness and education.
5. **Policy Review:** During the policy drafting stage, consideration will be given to the appropriate timelines for reviewing the policy. A review schedule will be incorporated into the policy document, which will commence once implementation has occurred. A Flow Chart detailing the steps in Reviewing Policies is attached as an Appendix.

#### 4.3.5 Policy Owner and Contact Officer

A Policy Owner will be designated for all policies. The Contact Officer will bear responsibility for regular review of the policy and for incorporating required changes as well as assessment to ascertain the following:

- Has the intent of document changed?
- Is the intent clearly expressed?
- Is the policy still relevant and has it been affected by any changes in legislation or similar?
- Do associated forms, work instructions or similar conform to the objectives of the policy?

- Who needs to be notified/ educated subsequent to the revision?
- Is the policy / procedure embedded in business processes as 'business as usual'?

#### **4.3.6 Relationship/impact on other policies**

It is the responsibility of the proposed policy drafter to assess any areas of overlap, contradiction, or integration with other existing or draft policies and to discuss these issues with other involved Policy Owner(s).

The policy drafter will consider the various levels (i.e. categorisations) of ~~Strategic Policy~~, Council and Organisational Policies and Organisational, Group and Branch Procedures. References to related policies and procedures must be clearly articulated in the policy document.

#### **4.3.7 Policy currency**

The electronic version of each policy will be verifiable as the current version, whilst printed versions will contain a disclaimer warning that the version may be superseded.

#### **4.3.8 Policy functional grouping and numbering**

Policy numbering will reflect the category and classification of policy. The Manager Risk and Governance will provide numbers for all categories of Policies. The categories for existing and new policies are to be allocated to and then numbered sequentially as follows:

G	Governance including Councillors, human resources, community services and economic development
CS	Corporate Services including finance, ICT, customer service and records
DE	Development and Environment including planning, health, building, waste and animals
ES	Engineering Services including infrastructure, parks and reserves, water, sewer, and assets

#### **4.3.9 Policy review**

All policies will have specified time frames for review. As a minimum policies will be reviewed at least every four years to coincide with the term of Council. This does not, however, prevent policies being reviewed more frequently on a case-by-case basis, for example in the case of a change in legislation or identification of inherent risk.

Once the review has been completed any material changes will be required to be progressed through the full policy development process.

However, any changes considered to be of an immaterial nature can be undertaken by the Manager Risk and Governance subject to the completion of all of the relevant review documentation.

#### **4.3.10 Policy access**

All employees will have access to the Council and Organisational Policies and Organisational Procedures via the Council intranet. Organisational Policies and Procedures are to be placed on the Council intranet. Employees without access to the website intranet will be notified by their Supervisor or Manager when policies are approved. Printed copies may be obtained upon request from supervisors and a copy of all approved

policies relevant to the Department's operations must be available at all Council offices and depots where staff do not have internet access.

The public will have access to Council policies through the website. Procedures associated with those Council policies will also be displayed based on General Manager's approval.

Printed copies of Council Policies will be made available on request. The Manager Risk and Governance will be responsible for the publication of Council Policies and General Manager approved procedures for public display on Council's website.

#### 4.3.11 Responsibilities/accountabilities

All Policies and Procedures are to be endorsed and approved in accordance with the following table before they become operational. In addition, some policies may require endorsement by the Work, Health & Safety Committee, the Employee Consultative Committee or the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee prior to sign off by MANEX, the General Manager and/or Council.

Endorsement and Approval Process Officer/Entity	Endorsement and Approval Function
<b>Policy Drafter</b>	Draft policies and procedures in accordance with the Policy and Procedures Framework Policy
<b>Manager</b>	Endorses Section Organisational Procedures
<b>MANEX</b>	Endorses Council policies for submission to Council for approval or referral to Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee if the policy is a Governance, Risk or Finance Policy.
	Endorses Organisational Policies and Organisational Procedures to be referred to General Manager for approval.
<b>General Manager</b>	Approves Organisational Policies and Organisational Procedures
<b>Council</b>	Approves Council Policies

#### 4.3.12 Policy and Procedures Templates

These templates are found in Word at [file/new/shared/Admin](#). Policies and Procedures must be saved in the Content Manager Document Management System and a Document No. placed in the History table.

### 5.0 Related Procedures or Documents

- Policy Review Process Flowchart (attached)
- Policy Schedule (CM10 60894/2024)
- Policy Procedure (CM10 52888/2023)

## 6.0 History

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>Resolution Number</b>
<b>Policy Category</b>	Council Policy	Oct 22 by AGMCS – minor changes	
<b>Endorsed By:</b>	General Manager	August 23 by DCS – minor changes	
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Council	Dec 2024 – updated by MRG and approved by MANEX	
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	MRG	15 Jan 2025 – endorsed by the ARIC	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	MRG	13 Feb 2025 - Adopted by Council	28/25
<b>Document No.</b>	34526/2018		
<b>First Adopted:</b>	29 Nov 2018		
<b>Resolution No:</b>	585/18		
<b>Review Date:</b>	February 2029		



## POLICY REVIEW PROCESS FLOWCHART

