

## 1. POLICY CERTIFICATION

Policy title:	<b>Policy Framework</b>
Policy number:	<b>ADM001</b>
Category:	<b>Council Policy</b>
Classification:	<b>Administrative</b>
Link to Business Plan:	Goal 5: Good governance – Our elected members and staff will manage the Roper Gulf Region and its resources with professionalism, transparency and accountability and in the best interest of all the Region's people. Strategy 5.2: Strong and effective corporate governance. Objective 5.2.14: To set in place effective schedules, processes and resources to ensure the Roper Gulf Region's corporate plans are developed, implemented and reviewed in a timely manner. Activity 5.2.14.4: Develop corporate and governance policies to support Strategic and Business Plans.
Status:	<b>Approved Oct 2010</b>

## 2. PURPOSE

This Council Policy provides guidance for developing, classifying and categorising all policy documents for Roper Gulf Regional Council. It sets levels of policy and who has the authority and responsibility for each level. This document also provides a framework to support consistency, control, clarity, and quality in the development, approval and review processes associated with policy.

In the Roper Gulf Regional Council Policy Framework, there are three types of policy document: Council Policies, Organisational Directives and Standard Operating Procedures. Broadly speaking, Council Policy provides strategic direction, is based on legislative requirements, addresses cross-cultural issues, has an external focus or addresses Council/Councillor-specific issues. Organisational Directives relate to organisational wide attitudes, philosophies and intent and usually have an internal focus. Standard Operating Procedures document the methods and steps required to support Council Policies or Organisational Directives, as well as to complete a function or task. Standard Operating Procedures may be relevant to all departments in the Region or to only one or two.

## 3. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council Policies, Organisational Directives and Standard Operating Procedures developed by Roper Gulf Shire. It is relevant to all Roper Gulf Regional Councillors, Local authority Members, Council Committee Members and employees.

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

Policies are developed in order to provide boundaries, guidelines and consistency for the achievement of Roper Gulf Regional Council's strategic and operational directions. They take into consideration legal requirements, best practice and quality standards.

This policy framework aims to support the development of policy documents that are:

- written in clear language;
- have a standard layout;
- conform to accepted standards and guidelines;
- are approved at an appropriate level of the organization; and
- are assigned to specific managers for regular revision.

This policy framework provides key support for the Business Plan and for implementing sound governance practices across Roper Gulf Region.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

<b>Approval levels</b>	A policy document will be endorsed and approved by different people in the organisation. See the diagram at the end of this document for advice on who has authority to endorse and approve different types of policy documents.
<b>Categorisation</b>	Selection of the appropriate category of policy, according to its level, content and purpose. The category allocated by the Policy Coordination Officer (Manager Governance & Corporate Planning) will either be Council Policy, Organisational Directive or Standard Operating Procedure.
<b>Classification</b>	Allocation of the appropriate classification of policy, according to the content and limitations of the policy. Classifications currently include Council, Administrative, Human Resources and Workplace Health & Safety. However, these classifications are subject to review.
<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation is the compulsory process of meeting with identified, relevant stakeholders to seek information, advice and feedback. It must take place prior to, and during development of any Council Policy, Organisational Directive or Standard Operating Procedure.
<b>Council Policy</b>	A general statement outlining strategic directions and/or adherence to statutory or other corporate requirements, which usually has an external focus. The exceptions are policies specific to Council or Councillors (e.g.: Members' Disciplinary Policy) – these are also categorized as Council Policies. A Council Policy directs decision-making in areas affected by the policy. Council Policies must be approved by Council.
<b>Endorsement</b>	Agreement to the Council Policy, Organisational Directive, or Standard Operating Procedure by the appropriate stakeholders prior to being sent for formal approval to the appropriate person(s). Endorsement should be seen as an essential step on the way to formal approval. See diagram at the end of this document.
<b>Formal approval</b>	The official and final approval of a Council Policy by Council or an Organisational Directive or Standard Operating Procedure by the appropriate person. No policy document is official Roper Gulf Regional Council Policy until formal approval has been given and the document registered by the Policy Coordination Officer (Manager Governance & Corporate Planning).
<b>Organisational Directive</b>	A general and official statement outlining attitudes, philosophies, intentions and boundaries that will usually have an internal, operational focus. Organisational Directives ensure that operational

	work supports the directions and objectives that Council has set in Council Policy, the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan. Organisational Directives must be approved by the CEO.
<b>Policy Coordination Officer</b>	The Policy Coordination Officer (Manager Governance & Corporate Planning) is responsible for performing final checks on the Council Policy or Organisational Directive or Standard Operating Procedure prior to submission for approval. This takes place after the policy has been developed or reviewed.

<b>Policy development &amp; review cycle</b>	<p>The stages of the policy development cycle are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of a policy need;</li> <li>• development of the draft policy document;</li> <li>• consideration and endorsement;</li> <li>• consideration and approval;</li> <li>• implementation; and</li> <li>• ongoing monitoring and review of the policy.</li> </ul> <p>See the diagram at the end of this document.</p>
<b>Policy Drafter</b>	The staff member responsible for writing the draft Council Policy, Organisational Directive or Standard Operating Procedure.
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Once a policy has been endorsed and approved, the nominated Policy Owner is the staff member/position who has responsibility and accountability for the regular monitoring, review and update of that policy.
<b>Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)</b>	A specific statement about the steps needed to safely and effectively complete a task or function. A Standard Operating Procedure provides detailed 'how to' instructions and may include responsibilities for task achievement, timelines, safety guidelines, trouble shooting hints and approvals required. SOPs must be approved by the CEO.
<b>Policy content</b>	All Roper Gulf Regional Council Policies, Organisational Directives (except for By-Laws, Subordinate By-Laws, the Code of Conduct and planning documents such as the Business Plan) must be developed using the policy content list at Section 7 of this document. SOPs may be written in whatever format is suitable for the procedure but must include OH&S considerations.

## 6. PRINCIPLES

### 6.1 Compliance

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Policies must comply with all relevant legislation (including, but not limited to, the Local Government Act and the Workplace Health and Safety Act), Council resolutions, other Roper Gulf Regional Council policies and the Roper Gulf Regional Business Plan.

## 6.2 Consistency

Terminology used in the policy should reflect that used in any relevant legislation, standard, guideline, Roper Gulf Regional Business Plan, or other Roper Gulf Regional Council policy documents.

## 6.3 Clarity

There are two aspects of clarity that are important in the development of *Council Policies* and *Organisational Directives*. They are:

**6.3.1 Clarity of approval:** All policies will clearly state where responsibility for final approval lies and when that approval was formally given.

**6.3.2 Clarity of writing:** All policy documents will use plain language as far as is possible. If acronyms or complex terminology are unavoidable, plain language definitions will be given in Section 5 of the policy. The aim is to allow a wide range of users to understand the content of the policy.

## 6.4 Stages of Policy Development

The five stages of policy development are:

**6.4.1 Needs identification:** This includes identifying the matter to be addressed, deciding whether a policy document is the best way to address it, selection of the policy level which will best support achieving Business Plan objectives and seeking authority to proceed.

**6.4.2 Draft policy development:** This stage includes identifying the relevant stakeholders, commencing the consultation process, gathering background information, writing the policy document and incorporating feedback into later drafts. The Draft Policy must go to the Policy Coordination Officer for final checks and assignment of Policy Number prior to going on to the next stage.

**6.4.3 Policy consideration and endorsement:** This stage involves presenting the policy document to the appropriate manager(s) for evaluation and endorsement. In some cases this may require submitting an agenda item to an existing committee. In others it may require holding a special meeting to discuss the policy. At this stage the policy document may be rejected, returned for further modification or endorsed.

**6.4.4 Policy approval:** This stage involves presenting the policy document to the CEO or to Council for formal approval. All new policy and reviewed/updated policies with significant changes must be presented to the Council or CEO as appropriate for approval. This cannot be done until endorsement has been given by the appropriate person or group. This ensures that the policy document has been well researched and considered by the time it reaches the CEO or Council and this reduces the likelihood

that it will be rejected. In the case of the Council, a report must also be written to introduce the policy document onto the Council meeting agenda. Once approval has been gained, the policy document must be noted in the policy register.

**6.4.5 Policy implementation:** This is the final stage in the policy process and it is ongoing. It includes such activities as activating the policy, notification, distribution, awareness raising and education. Complex or very sensitive policies may require specific implementation plans.

**6.4.6 Policy review:** During the policy drafting stage, consideration will be given to appropriate timelines for review of the policy. A review schedule will be incorporated into the policy document and this starts once implementation has occurred. The Policy Owner is responsible for the ongoing monitoring, review and updating of that policy. A reviewed policy that has only administration, formatting or other insignificant changes does not have to go back to Council or to the CEO but can be approved by its Policy Owner.

## **6.5 Categorisation and classification**

When formulating policy, an early task is to identify the category of the document – this will determine the approvals levels required. There are three category choices – Council Policy, Organisational Directive or Standard Operating Procedure. Classifications are used to group similar policy documents and to broadly describe the content. Classifications are subject to review. There are currently four used by Roper Gulf Regional Council – Council, Administrative, Human Resources and Workplace Health & Safety.

Categories and classifications may be discussed with the Policy Coordination Officer and will be confirmed during the final checks done prior to presentation for formal approval.

## **6.6 Policy Owner**

A Policy Owner will be designated for each Council Policy, Organisational Directive or SOP. The Policy Owner will bear responsibility for regular monitoring and review of the policy and for incorporating necessary changes.

The Policy Owner is also responsible to assess the revised policy document and decide whether any significant changes have been made. If it is, formal endorsement and approval need to be gained again.

The Policy Owner is also responsible to coordinate a process to notify the necessary staff and stakeholders after a policy document has been revised.

## **6.7 Policy access**

All Roper Gulf Regional Council employees will have access to all Council Policies and Organisational Directives. Approved policies will be placed in the 'Approved Policy' sub-directory of the Reference Library in InfoXpert. Staff who do not have access to InfoXpert can obtain printed copies from their Managers.

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Access to Council Policy for interested external members of the community will be via the Roper Gulf Regional Council website. Alternatively, printed copies of individual Council Policy documents will be made available on a cost-recovery basis.

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

It is the responsibility of the Policy Drafter in the case of a new policy document, or the Policy Owner in the case of a policy document undergoing a major review, to assess any areas of overlap, contradiction, or integration with other existing or draft Roper Gulf Regional Council policy documents. When identified, these must be discussed with the Policy Owner(s) of the affected policy documents. This check needs to consider policy documents in all categories. References or links to related policy documents must be stated within the new policy document in Section 8.

### **6.9 Policy currency**

The current version of any policy document will be considered to be the electronic version stored in the 'Approved Policies' sub-directory of the 'Reference Library' section in the Roper Gulf Regional Council document library. Printed versions will be dated to enable quick checking of currency.

### **6.10 Policy numbering**

Policy document numbering will reflect the category and classification of policy. The Policy Coordination Officer will allocate numbers during the checks done prior to presentation for formal approval.

### **6.11 Policy review**

It is the responsibility of the Policy Owner to review the document according to the review time frame specified. It is the responsibility of the Policy Coordination Officer to update the current version of the policy document in the Roper Gulf Regional Council document library once reviewed and approved.

## **7. POLICY CONTENT**

The content of the body of the *Council Policy*, or the *Organisational Directive*, will be organised under the following headings:

- 1 Policy/Directive Title.
- 2 Purpose.
- 3 Scope.
- 4 Policy/Directive Statement.
- 5 Definitions.
- 6 Principles.
- 7 Policy/Directive Content.
- 8 References.
- 9 Document Control
- 10 Contact Information

SOPs may be written in whatever format is suitable for the procedure but must include OH&S considerations.

Additionally, the Policy Coordination Officer, in consultation with the Policy Drafter, will ensure inclusion of references to the document category, classification and related document control information, such as the version number, policy status, approval date, Policy Owner and review information.

**8. REFERENCES**

Acknowledgements (original author/source documents)	<b>Litchfield Council Policy Framework. Re-worked by Moira McCreesh.</b>
Related Policies	<b>All RGRC policies</b>
Related Publications	<b>Nil</b>

**9. DOCUMENT CONTROL**

Policy number	<b>CPA01</b>
Policy Owner	<b>Manager Governance &amp; Corporate Planning</b>
Endorsed by	<b>Council</b>
Date approved	<b>21 Oct 2009</b>
Revisions	<b>Oct 2010</b>
Amendments	2010 – Admin changes + inclusion of Councillor-specific policy under Council Policy definition; clarification of format for SOPs; approval of reviewed and updated policies.
Next revision due	<b>May 2015</b>

**10. CONTACT PERSON**

Position	<b>Manager Governance, Corporate Planning &amp; Compliance</b>
Contact number	<b>89 729000</b>

### Policy development and review cycle

