Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**
GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA **State Records Office of WA**

State Records Office of WA

Archives Keeping Plan

November 2019

VISION
of the
State Records Office

To ensure permanent accessibility to the essential evidence of the business of government in Western Australia

MISSION
of the
State Records Office

To serve the people of Western Australia by strengthening the management of government information and safeguarding the State's archives, ensuring people can discover, use and learn from this unique collection

State Records Office of Western Australia

James Street
Perth Cultural Centre
Perth   WA   6000

T: 08 9427 3600

E: sro@sro.wa.gov.au

W: sro.wa.gov.au

This plan can be made available in an alternative format on request.

© State of Western Australia 2019

Contents

Definition of Terms

In this plan, the following terms are defined / abbreviated as follows:

The **Act** *means* the *State Records Act 2000*;

The **Collection** *means* the State archives collection as defined in Section 3 of the Act;

The **Commission** *means* the State Records Commission as defined in Part 8 of the Act;

The **Director** *means* the Director of State Records as defined in Section 70 of the Act;

The **SRO** *means* the State Records Office as defined in Section 72 of the Act;

A **State organisation** *means* parliamentary departments and government organisations (State and local government) as defined in Section 3 of the Act.

1. Introduction

1.1 Legislative background

This document is presented to the State Records Commission (the Commission) under section 41(3) of the *State Records Act 2000* (the Act).

The Commission approved the first Archives Keeping Plan in May 2003 in accordance with section 40(2) of the Act. Revised Plans were approved by the Commission in December 2008 and August 2014.

This document constitutes the State Records Office's (the SRO) fourth Archives Keeping Plan. This plan reflects current management practices for the State archives collection (the Collection).

1.2 Purpose of the Archives Keeping Plan

The Archives Keeping Plan documents the framework in place for the keeping of State archives in the Collection.

As well as describing current practices, the Archives Keeping Plan identifies actions to be carried out to ensure improved management of the Collection.

1.3 Functions of the State Archivist

The office of the Director of State Records (the Director) is established under Part 9 of the Act. The Director and staff comprise the SRO.

The following sections of the Act describe the Director's functions with respect to the management and maintenance of the Collection.

Section 35 of the Act defines what constitutes the Collection.

Section 36 of the Act specifies that the Director has control of State archives in the Collection and requires the Director to keep those records in accordance with the Archives Keeping Plan.

Section 32 specifies when government organisations must transfer State archives to the Collection. State archives must be transferred to the Collection when the archives become 25 years old. Transfer of State archives may not occur when:

- The Director has advised a State organisation that the SRO cannot accept custody of its State archives. This advice is to include directions as to keeping the archives until the SRO is able to accept custody.

- The government organisation is authorized through its recordkeeping plan to retain control of State archives beyond the 25 year transfer date. Records retained as State archives by organisations must be kept in accordance with *SRC Standard 7 – Storage of Archives*.

Section 43 enables the Director to apply to the Commission for permission to destroy a State archive held in the Collection.

Sections 45 and 50 provide a right of access to those records in the Collection that are unrestricted, subject to any written law.

Section 50(3) confirms that government organisations are entitled to reasonable access to records held in the Collection to which they had access prior to their transfer to the Collection. Section 51 enables the Director to attach conditions to access by government organisations and the public, where such access may affect the safe custody and physical condition of a State archive.

Sections 73(1)(c) & (d) define the functions of the Director with respect to public access to unrestricted records that are in the Collection, and require the Director to create and maintain a register of all State archives, irrespective of whether the SRO or another government organisation has control of those records.

Section 79(4) confirms that a copy of a State archive certified as a copy by the Director has the same evidential value as the original.

1.4 Operational arrangements

The SRO operates as a statutory agency within the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

The line manager within the SRO who has direct responsibility for maintaining and providing access to the Collection is the Director: Archives. The Director: Archives reports directly to the Director of State Records.

Services and functions associated with the management, preservation and access to the Collection is undertaken by the SRO's Archives team. This team is currently composed of 8 substantive FTE's.

1.5 Services provided to the SRO

The State Library of WA provides the SRO with building maintenance (including environmental controls) and security services at the Alexander Library Building. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries facilitate building maintenance services at the SRO's offsite storage facility.

The provision of the SRO's corporate ICT services is provided by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

1.6 Stakeholders

Stakeholders who have an interest in the proper maintenance of records in the Collection are:

- The Minister for Culture and the Arts
- The State Records Commission
- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- State organisations as identified by Schedules 1, 2 & 3 of the *State Records Act 2000*
- Organisations representing researcher clients
- Organisations representing the information management profession
- The Western Australian community
- National and International Researchers.

2. What is the State archives collection?

2.1 What is an archive?

In general terms, an archive is a record identified for permanent retention to support ongoing informational and evidential purposes. The Act defines a State archive as a State record (a parliamentary record or a government record) that is to be retained permanently. State archives are maintained in perpetuity and never to be destroyed.

The SRO uses the following criteria to help determine which government records are to be archived:

- Records that provide evidence of the source of authority, foundation and machinery of government. Included are State records that define the function of government, such as the nature and extent of government jurisdiction, obligations and powers;
- Records that provide concise evidence of the deliberations, decisions and actions of Western Australian government relating to key functions and programs and significant issues faced in governing the State;
- Records that provide evidence of the legal status and fundamental rights and entitlements of individuals and groups essential for ongoing functions of the State;
- Records with a special capacity to illustrate the condition and status of Western Australia and its people, the impact of government activities and the interaction of people with the government;
- Records containing information that is considered essential for the protection and future well-being of Western Australians and their environment;
- Records that have a substantial capacity to enrich the knowledge and understanding of aspects of the State's history, society, culture and people.

2.2 What is the State archives collection?

Section 35 of the Act provides direction as to what the Collection is to consist of:

- State archives that on the commencement of the Act are taken to be in the Collection
- State archives that have been transferred to the Collection under section 32 (i.e. in practice, via recordkeeping plan processes)
- Records that have been transferred to the Collection under another written law
- Records that have been transferred to the Collection with the approval of the Director.

2.3   Historical overview

In historical terms, the nucleus of the Collection is the Colonial Secretary's Office records which were acquired in 1903 by the first Librarian of the then Public Library, Dr James S. Battye. Other records were later collected by Dr Battye during the course of writing his various publications.

With the appointment of the first State Archivist Mollie Lukis in March 1945, a process for registering transfers of State archives commenced that continues to this day. Ms Lukis collected many records that form part of the Collection through active acquisition, particularly in regional areas of the State.

The first legislative provisions relating to government recordkeeping and State archives were added to the *Library Board of Western Australia Act* in 1971. At that stage, the Collection comprised 2,140 linear metres of records.

The Collection rapidly increased in size during the 1980's and 1990's. In 1985, the Collection was moved from premises adjacent to the Victoria Public Library to the newly-built Alexander Library Building.

The proclamation of the *State Records Act 2000* in November 2001 introduced improved controls for archives and the keeping of the Collection.

2.4   Collection summary

The Collection currently consists of Colonial, State and Local government records for the State of Western Australia.   The Collection documents a wide range of government activity since the formation of the Swan River Colony, including:

- Aboriginal affairs
- Birth, death and marriage registration
- Colonial administration
- Education and schooling
- Health system and hospital management
- Justice system: convict administration as well as court, police and prisoner information
- Land administration
- Local government administration
- Mining and industrial development
- Passenger arrivals and shipping information
- Public works: public architecture and engineering
- Railway infrastructure.

Quantitatively, the Collection currently comprises:

- Date range of the Collection: **1827 – 2013**

- Size of the Collection: **14,903 linear metres**[1]
- Number of State archives in the Collection: **1,177,337 items**[2];
- Number of government organisations (past and present) archives have been received from: **2,182 agencies**;
- Physical formats in the Collection:
    - Paper (correspondence files, registers, cards, maps/plans, etc.);
    - Photographic prints;
    - Microforms (microfilm, aperture cards, microfiche);
    - Audio tapes;
    - Digital copies (preservation copies from SRO digitisation programs);
    - Some archives in the collection are contained on additional specialized materials (e.g. linen, vellum, plastic, etc.).

The Collection is located in two buildings within the Perth metropolitan area. Most archives transferred to the Collection prior to 1994 are housed on the 3rd and 4th floors of the Alexander Library Building in central Perth. Archives transferred to the collection from 1994 onwards are housed in the archive section of the SRO's offsite storage facility.

2.5 Who uses the Collection?

The Collection is used to fulfill a wide range of research interests, including:

- Genealogy (family history)
- Academic research
- Heritage-based research
- Local studies
- Legal research
- Establishing personal rights or for personal evidential purposes
- Ongoing evidential and informational business needs of government organisations.

Statistical analysis shows the Collection is used by the research community and by government organisations in approximately the following ratio:

- Community users: **65%**
- Government organisations: **35%**[3]

2.6 SRO Collection Policy

The SRO has in place a policy that provides guidance for determining what is to be added to the Collection. Although section 35 of the Act provides direction as to what

---

[1] Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities, *CAARA Archival Statistics 2018-19.*
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. Survey data from *CAARA Archival Statistics* show these figures to be consistent with those of previous years.

the Collection is to comprise, the Collection Policy provides qualitative criteria to define what should be added to the Collection.

The SRO's Collection Policy is integrated into appraisal (retention and disposal) processes in order to provide consistent high-level guidance for such decision making. The criteria specified in section 2.1 are used to guide decisions around which government records are to be archived.

3. Key issues

3.1 Compliance issues

All government organisations are required to transfer State archives in their control and custody to the Collection in accordance with sections 32 of the Act. Subsection 16(6)(b) provides provision for the transfer of State archives to the Collection at a time other than that prescribed by Section 32 (e.g. prior to the archives becoming 25 years old).

Government organisations wishing to retain State archives beyond 25 years require approval from the State Records Commission. *SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations* (2016) provides minimum compliance requirements for organisations wishing to retain archives beyond 25 years.

The SRO has been unable to accept regular transfers of State archives from government organisations since July 2001 due to lack of archival storage capacity. Current estimates show that there is a backlog of approximately 75,000 linear metres of State archives currently held by government organisations awaiting transfer to the Collection.

In addition, the SRO has been unable to accept custody of State archives in digital form from government organisations due to lack of appropriate infrastructure.

The Director has periodically advised organisations of the need for agencies to retain State archives in their control until they can be transferred to the SRO. In 2016 the State Archivist issued *Directions for keeping hardcopy State archives awaiting transfer to the State Records Office* for the purpose of ensuring that State archives are managed appropriately until such time as transfer can take place. This fulfills the State Archivist's legislative obligation required under section 32(4) of the Act.

4.   Transfer of State archives

Section 32 of the Act provides the basis upon which organisations must transfer State archives to the Collection via recordkeeping plan processes. In practical terms, transfers of State archives are conducted using approved Disposal Authorities that identify government records deemed State archives.

As outlined in section 3 of this plan, the SRO has been unable to receive transfers to the Collection since July 2001 owing to lack of archival storage space. Government organisations are required to retain State archives awaiting transfer in accordance with the SRO's *Directions for keeping hardcopy State archives awaiting transfer to the State Records Office*.

4.1   Business practices and processes

The business processes for transfer practices prior to transfers ceasing in 2001 are out of date. Transfer processes will require comprehensive review prior to archive transfers recommencing.

4.2   Policies and procedures

Basic procedures for organisations regarding the transfer of records to the Collection are available from the SRO website.

4.3   Vital records

Control records for transfer processes maintained by the SRO are:

- The Consignment Register.   This register records the allocation of consignment numbers to State archives prior to their transfer to the Collection. The Consignment Register records the registration date, location within the SRO, shelf metres and final processing dates for individual consignments. This register is maintained in hard copy format. Consignment details are entered into the SRO's archive management system once consignments are transferred to the Collection.
- The SRO's archive management system.
- The SRO's corporate files documenting correspondence to and from individual organisations about archival transfers.

4.4   Matters to be addressed

4.4.1   Review of transfer processes

Prior to storage facilities/infrastructure being available to support the transfer of State archives to the Collection, SRO will review its transfer procedures to ensure the most efficient processes are in place. Transfer procedures which were in place prior to

2001 were dependent upon manual systems. The SRO has identified the need to more fully automate its business processes to facilitate a more streamlined transfer process.

Actions
Prior to archive transfers recommencing, review transfer procedures with a view to improving the automation of business processes.
Ensure revised transfer documentation is available from the SRO website.

4.4.2   Review of transfer priorities

In the past, transfers of State archives to the Collection were typically initiated by government organisations. This was due mainly to the legislative framework in place prior to the Act (e.g. the earlier *Library Board Act* did not mandate that all organisations have an approved Disposal Authority which resulted in incomplete coverage). Because of this, some organisations transferred large amounts of material to the Collection and others none at all. As such, the Collection is under-represented in some areas of government activity.

There is an estimated backlog of 75,000 linear metres of State archives still in the custody of government organisations awaiting transfer.

To ensure the best use of archival storage space once it becomes available, the SRO plans for future transfers to be prioritised and that the SRO will need to pro-actively direct transfer activity. To do this, SRO will need to develop a Transfer Prioritisation Strategy that establishes criteria by which to prioritize transfers (e.g. age and fragility of archives, access needs of community, exceptional significance of archives, etc.).

Although there is a special need to prioritize transfers to address the backlog of State archives awaiting transfer, it is anticipated that ongoing monitoring of transfer priorities would form part of the SRO's permanent transfer methodology.

Actions
Develop a Transfer Prioritisation Strategy that incorporates the aforementioned matters.

5. Intellectual Control

Intellectual control of the Collection refers to what is traditionally known as "cataloguing" and is used to describe and list records in the Collection.

Until 1988, the Collection was described and listed in hardcopy catalogues called Archive Notes (ANs). These catalogues list archives by their creating agency but often lack important contextual information about the archives.

Since 1988, all new archive transfers have been documented using the series registration system. The series registration system provides rich contextual information about archives as well as content information about archives

The series registration system is the standard national practice for documenting information about archives.

5.1 Business practices and processes

5.1.1 Method of documenting State archives

Since the 1990's, the SRO has been retrospectively converting archive listings from the defunct AN system into the series registration system. As well as consolidating the intellectual control of the Collection into a unified system, this activity has also converted hardcopy listings into electronic listings which have been added to the SRO's archive management system over preceding years.

At present, the SRO estimates that 95% of the collection is now documented in the series registration system. Activity continues to ensure the entirety of the State archives collection forms part of this system and is electronically searchable.

5.1.2 Computer systems

In 1991, the SRO commenced the computerised documentation of new archive transfers. Systems in place up until 2004 were limited to staff use only and lacked search capabilities.

In 2015, the SRO implemented a new archive management system (Access to Memory, or AtoM) to provide for improved search / archive display capability.

5.1.3 Register of State archives

Section 73(1)(d) of the Act requires the State Archivist to establish and maintain a register of all State archives including those that are not in the State archives collection.

The SRO has fulfilled the first part of this requirement with respect to State archives that are part of the Collection. All State archives in the Collection are listed and

documented in a combination of the AN catalogues and the archive management system.

The requirement to register State archives that are not in the Collection is outside the scope of the Archives Keeping Plan which relates purely to the Collection.

5.2 Policies and procedures

The SRO's procedures for providing instruction on documenting archives transferred to the Collection have been identified for review.

Actions
Review the archival control model and related procedures in place for intellectual control of the Collection.

5.3 Vital records

The SRO's archive management system (AtoM) forms the main control record for the SRO's cataloguing and archive description processes.

In addition, the SRO maintains:

- Archive Note (AN) catalogues, for State archives transferred to the Collection prior to 1988
- defunct sets of agency, series and accession registers previously used to allocate archive registration information. These registers are required for ongoing reference purposes by the SRO.

5.4 Matters to be addressed

5.4.1 Improved descriptive information

Many State archives in the Collection require improved descriptive information to improve their accessibility.

Action
Improve descriptive information to the Collection to aid client access.
Address the bulk import of item-level descriptive information to the SRO's archive management system.

6. Physical Control

Physical control of the collection refers to the mechanisms in place to ensure that archives are physically locatable and retrievable at any point in time.

Members of the public can access original archives in the Collection at the SRO Search Room or through digitisation processes.

Government organisations may access original archives in the Collection on a loan basis (subject to the SRO's Loans Policy) or through digitisation processes.

6.1 Business practices and processes

6.1.1 Physical arrangement of the Collection

In general terms, archives in the Collection are physically shelved in the order in which they were transferred. This is done through a sequential numbering system known as the consignment number (formerly accession number). Each group of records transferred to the Collection is allocated a consignment number as part of transfer processes. The way the Collection has been shelved effectively mirrors the order in which archives were transferred.

The consignment number has a two-fold purpose:

- To identify the transfer of a group of records to the Collection at a specific point in time
- To act as an ongoing physical locator for those records.

On the latter point, the current system is limited as different types of records (such as maps or large items) will be stored in different physical locations particular to their storage needs. Intermediary location guides are often needed by SRO staff to locate a given archive.

A detailed location coding system is not currently implemented.

6.1.2 System for retrieving, replacing and tracking archives

The SRO currently operates a partially automated system for retrieving and replacing archives when they have been accessed. When archives are required for client access or other purposes, paper call slips are inserted into the box or shelf from which the archives are taken and copies of the call slip are kept with the archive (to show who the record is issued to) as well as maintained by SRO staff in a central location to track the location of that archive e.g. issued to a researcher in the SRO Search Room or issued to a government agency on a loan basis.

The SRO's archive management system allows for central, electronic tracking of archives being retrieved and issued for public or government use, when client orders are placed through that system.

6.2 Policies and Procedures

The SRO maintains an internal *Policies and Procedures Manual for Loans Team Processes* which provides instruction on archive retrieval and associated protocols.

6.3 Vital Records

Vital records for physical control of the Collection comprise:

- Archive movement/tracking information in the SRO's archive management system
- SRO call slips used for retrieving and replacing archives
- SRO's intermediary location guides for archives.

6.4 Matters to be addressed

6.4.1 Fuller automation of Collection control processes

Further improvements to physical control of the Collection have been identified to ensure:
- Archives not yet entered into the system can still be tracked via the system;
- Fuller automation (e.g. using barcoding) is adopted to improve the efficiency and accuracy of archive movements / tracking.

Actions
Implement physical location coding for the State archives collection.
Implement functionality that allows the archive management system to be able to track the movement of all State archives in the Collection, whether those State archives have been entered into the system or not.
Investigate fuller automation of archive movement processes, such as using barcoding.

7. Physical Storage

Physical storage relates to the physical areas and conditions in which the Collection is maintained. As well as the environmental conditions, physical storage also addresses the shelving and housing used for the Collection.

This section also addresses disaster management planning for the Collection.

7.1 Business practices and processes

7.1.1 Physical storage areas

The Collection is located in two buildings within the Perth metropolitan area. Most archives transferred to the Collection prior to 1994 are housed on the 3rd and 4th floors of the Alexander Library Building in central Perth. Archives transferred to the Collection after 1994 onwards are housed in the archives section of the SRO's offsite storage facility.

7.1.2 Building maintenance and structural integrity

The Facilities Management Branch of the State Library is responsible for building maintenance at the Alexander Library Building. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is responsible for facilitating building maintenance at the SRO's offsite storage facility.

7.1.3 Environmental conditions

Archives stored on the 3rd and 4th floors of the Alexander Library Building are maintained in environmental conditions that meet accepted archival standards for paper-based records.[4]

Master copies of archival microfilm are stored with the State Library's Preservation and Maintenance Branch in appropriate archival storage conditions on the 3rd floor of the Alexander Library Building.

Archives stored at the SRO's offsite storage facility are housed in a discreet unit within that building. The archives storage unit has been fitted out to meet accepted archival standards for paper-based records.

One of the limiting factors with the SRO's current archival storage is the lack of specialized storage areas for non paper-based records. Photographic media, magnetic media and optical media all require different environmental conditions (i.e. ambient temperature and relative humidity) to ensure their long-term preservation.

---

[4] The specifications in the National Archives of Australia's *Standard for Storage of Archival Records* (2014) have been used to benchmark environmental conditions for archival storage. These specifications also apply to the SRO's *Archival Storage Specification*.

The environmental conditions in the SRO's main archival storage areas are configured to suit paper-based records.

7.1.4 Fire detection and suppression

Heat/smoke detection apparatus (including very early smoke detection apparatus) are in place in all areas in which the Collection is stored. Sprinkler systems are installed in all areas of the Alexander Library Building but not at the SRO's offsite storage facility. Fire extinguishers are situated in all areas in which the Collection is stored.

Both the Alexander Library Building and the offsite storage facility have direct, automated links to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

7.1.5 Building protection and security

[This section has been removed from the public access copy for reasons of collection security].

7.1.6 Access to storage areas

Since mid-1996 when the SRO relinquished control of the Private Archives Collection to the then Battye Library, both the SRO and State Library have jointly occupied the 4th floor archives storage area. Access to this area is granted jointly by the SRO and the State Library on a business needs basis. Regular monitoring of access to this area (which is reported through use of swipe cards into this secure area) is conducted by the Facilities Management Branch of the State Library.

A security stack located within the archives storage area of the Alexander Library Building (4th floor) is also used jointly by the SRO and the State Library to store government and private archives that in the past were deemed exceptionally sensitive or exceptionally significant. Staff access to this security stack is limited and monitored.

Every person who requires access to the 4th floor Alexander Library Building archives stack and/or the SRO's offsite storage facility must sign a confidentiality statement. Signed statements are maintained within the SRO's corporate recordkeeping system.

7.1.7 Shelving

All shelving units for the Collection are made of powder coated metal which is the accepted archival standard.

7.1.8 Containers and packaging

Apart from archives with high preservation needs, the bulk of the Collection is stored in boxes that are non acid-free and that do not meet the accepted archival standard.

The SRO undertakes re-boxing of State archives into acid free boxes as a long-term project.

7.1.9 Compliance matrix

The following matrix outlines how well the physical storage for the Collection meets compliance benchmarks. Storage specifications developed by the National Archives of Australia have been used for benchmarking purposes.

√	= meets compliance
P	= partially meets compliance
X	= does not meet compliance

Location	Format of Archives	Temp/RH	Air Quality	Lighting	Fire	Security	Housing	Containers	Packaging
ALB 4th floor	Paper	√	√	P	√	√	√	P	P
	Some photographic media (b/w)	X	√	P	√	√	√	X	X
	Some magnetic media	X	√	P	√	√	X	X	X
ALB 3rd floor	Paper	√	√	P	√	√	√	P	√
ALB cold storage (preservation)	Photographic media (b/w)	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X
Offsite storage facility	Paper	√	√	P	P	P	√	X	X

7.1.10 Business continuity and disaster management planning

The SRO has in place procedures for Collection disaster management.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has in place a business continuity plan. This plan incorporates SRO business continuity needs.

7.2 Policies and procedures

The SRO has internal procedures in place for:

- Disaster management for the Collection
- Identifying and securing any hazardous material in the Collection (e.g. asbestos samples)
- Security, safety and fire alarm instructions for the SRO offsite storage facility.

The State Library has in place procedures for emergency evacuation for the Alexander Library Building which the SRO is party to.

7.3   Vital records

The State Library monitors environmental conditions within the Alexander Library Building.   System reports which measure temperature and relative humidity are maintained by the State Library.

The SRO monitors environmental conditions at the offsite storage facility by manually using data loggers.   The reports from the data loggers are maintained by the SRO.

The SRO maintains a corporate file that contains signed confidentiality statements by persons accessing archival storage areas in the Alexander Library Building and the SRO offsite storage facility.

7.4   Matters to be addressed

7.4.1 Rehousing program

Action
The SRO is undertaking a phased re-boxing program for the whole of the Collection to ensure acid free boxes and packaging are used to improve the log-term preservation of the Collection.

8. Preservation

Preservation of the collection refers to the programs and practices in place to ensure that the Collection is accessible to current and future researchers.

Preservation issues are partly addressed via the previous section. This section focuses on direct preservation initiatives the SRO undertakes to provide for the ongoing conservation of archives in the Collection.

8.1 Business practices and processes

8.1.1 SRO preservation program

Up until 2012, an annual preservation program for the Collection was negotiated and implemented by the SRO and the Preservation and Maintenance Branch of the State Library of WA. The Preservation and Maintenance Branch provided the following services to the SRO:

- Micrographics – Advice and technical support on the preparation and microfilming of internal and external records to archival standards; storage of microfilm masters and working negatives.
- Digitisation – Scanning of internal archival records to an agreed specification;
- Conservation – Advice and technical support on the conservation of archival materials, including monitoring of storage environments and conservation treatments and repackaging to preserve archival records.

This service has since been curtailed. The SRO is currently unable to operate a preservation program.

8.1.2 Copying of archives

The SRO utilizes a combination of in-house and third-party services for client-based digitisation requests and project-based digitisation.

According to section 39(3) of the Act, "the Archives Keeping Plan may provide for a State archive to be reproduced in another form and for the destruction of a State archive if a reproduction of it is being kept". The SRO does not destroy any original material following copying of archives in the Collection.

8.2 Policies and Procedures

The SRO's *Policy on Preservation of State Records* is accessible via the SRO website.

SRO staff are provided with instruction on handling and transport procedures for archives.

Public researchers must also agree to abide by certain conditions for handling archives as part of the Researcher Registration process. Reference staff working in the SRO Search Room monitor the handling of archives by researchers and provide guidance on protocols.

8.3 Vital Records

Conservation reports are documented in the SRO's corporate recordkeeping system.

8.4 Matters to be addressed

8.4.1 Re-commence an ongoing preservation program

Action
Work in collaboration with partner agencies to seek support for an ongoing preservation program.

8.4.2 Ensure digital copies of State archives are appropriately managed

Action
Implement fit-for-purpose systems that ensure digital copies of State archives are appropriately managed and to mitigate against risk of loss.

9. Access

Under the terms of the Act, the Director is required to facilitate public access to the Collection and to provide "appropriate facilities and services to enable them (the archives) to be effectively used for administrative requirements and for study and research."[5]

9.1 Business practices and processes

9.1.1 SRO website

The SRO website (www.sro.wa.gov.au) currently provides the main source of information about the Collection and how to access it. The site includes:

- Advice to the community on how to access the Collection at the SRO Search Room
- Collection guides to frequently used areas of the Collection
- Specific guidance on common topics / sets of records.

Information on the SRO website is maintained and updated internally by the SRO.

Website maintenance procedures are documented in the SRO recordkeeping plan.

9.1.2 Online catalogue

The SRO's online catalogue is accessible via the homepage of the SRO website. The web catalogue lists individual archives in the Collection as well as providing their contextual information. The catalogue also provides access to a discreet set of archives in the Collection that have been digitized.

Currently, the web catalogue lists approximately 95% of the archives in the Collection and provides various search options to identify specific State archives. Archives that have been digitised and are accessible through the web catalogue comprise less than 1% of the Collection.

9.1.3 SRO Search Room

The SRO Search Room is situated in the Alexander Library Building, Perth Cultural Centre. The public and government organisation staff may access original archival records at the SRO Search Room. Where the SRO has microfilmed archival records, clients are requested to access these copies in the Search Room in place of original material.

---

[5] Sect. 73(1)(c)(iii) of the Act.

The SRO provides researchers in the Search Room with free self-serve digital copying facilities. Researchers can also use their own cameras in the Search Room to copy archival material (subject to the SRO's conditions of use) or request that high-resolution copies for a fee.

Equipment is available in the Search Room for researchers to make copies (paper or digital) from microfilm.

9.1.4 Digital services

The SRO provides all clients with a fee-based digitization on request service. Requests to have archives digitised can be made through the SRO online catalogue or via email. Clients may specify how they would like the digitised record/s delivered to them, through physical media (to be collected or posted) or through file sharing services.

9.1.5 Research services

The SRO provides a limited reference service to clients who are unable to visit the Search Room. A brief service delivery statement including SRO contact details is available on the SRO. The SRO does not currently charge for this service, other than for any copying of archives that may be associated with responding to an enquiry.

If the SRO is unable to undertake a research request, clients are directed to a (non-accredited) list of external research agents maintained by the SRO.

9.1.5 Loans to government organisations

Section 50(3) of the Act stipulates that government organisations may obtain access to records that they formerly controlled and which are held in the Collection. Section 51 of the Act enables the State Archivist to attach conditions to a person or an organisation having access to State archives for the purpose on ensuring their safe custody and of protecting their condition.

The SRO has in place a loans policy which sets limits on what an organisation may borrow. For archives which cannot be lent under this policy, government staff are requested to view the material at the SRO Search Room or to have the item digitised.

Advice regarding government loans, as well as a copy of the loans policy, is provided on the SRO website.

9.1.6 Restricted access archives

SRC Standard 4: Restricted Access Archives establishes principles for determining the management of restricted access archives.

A comprehensive review of restricted access archive decisions was completed in 2007, with the State Records Commission ratifying all decisions relating to restricted access archives in the Collection.

The review helped ensure that groups of records that previously had open-ended restrictions placed on them have finite periods of restriction, as per the requirements of the Act. The review also aimed to ensure greater consistency in restricted access decisions as they apply across the Collection. As a result of the review, many archives in the Collection that were previously restricted are now open access archives.

The SRO has documented the revised access status of archives in the Collection and this information is reflected to public clients via its web catalogue.

Reviews of restricted access archives are conducted every five years to ensure access protocols remain appropriate.

9.1.7 Fees and charges

Access to the Collection in the Search Room is free of charge. Charges apply for copying services undertaken by the SRO. These charges are listed on the SRO website.

Fees apply to government organisations who borrow archives from the Collection created by their organisation (or their predecessor organisation). These charges are listed on the SRO website.

9.1.8 Public programs and outreach services

The SRO promotes access to the Collection via a series of annual public programs and participates in metropolitan and regional community-based talks and tours promoting access to the Collection. These talks and tours are conducted on demand.

9.2 Policies and procedures

The SRO maintains a procedure manual for the operations of the SRO Search Room.

Protocols for clients who wish to access the Collection are available on the SRO website. These protocols cover matters including researcher registration, procedures for applying for access to restricted access archives and copying of archives.

The SRO's policy for Government Loans is also available via the SRO website.

9.3   Vital Records

The SRO website and web catalogue form the vital record for access to the Collection.

9.4   Matters to be addressed

9.4.1   Access Strategy

The main conduit through which the SRO facilitates access to the Collection is currently via the SRO Search Room. There are time and geographical constraints associated with this form of service that limit access to the Collection.

A fundamental review of how the SRO is to deliver its access services is required. A review of how SRO is to deliver its access services into the future would encompass, but would not be limited to:

- Client-preferred access mechanisms
- Consolidation of SRO finding aids and indexes
- The provision of web access to digitised copies of core sets of the Collection
- Integration of digital access services with a Digital Archive
- Consideration of an ongoing outreach and public programs activities to support access to the Collection and to educate SRO clients
- Sustainable approaches for access and research services.

Action
Develop and implement an Access Strategy that maximizes online access to the State archives collection

9.4.2   Monitoring of restricted access archive decisions

Subsequent to the review of restricted access archives that was conducted in 2007, the State Records Commission is required to review these restricted access decisions on a 5 yearly basis as per the requirement of Sect. 37(5) of the Act. A review of restricted access decisions was conducted in 2016.

Action
Conduct a further review of restricted access archive decisions, for records in the Collection, in 2021.