



STATE RECORDS COMMISSION

SRC Standard 3

APPRAISAL OF RECORDS

A Record Keeping Standard For State Organizations

**State Records Commission of WA
Perth, Western Australia
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SRC Standard 3 – Appraisal of Records

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DEFINITIONS

Appraisal – is the process of determining which records are to be retained as archives and which will be destroyed.

Disposal Authority – the document authorising the disposal of records. This may take the form of a Retention and Disposal Authority or Schedule, an Ad Hoc Disposal Authority or a Disposal List, which has been approved. The State Records Commission is the authorizing body for disposal authorities.

General Disposal Authority – a document designed to provide consistency throughout government organizations in disposal activities and decisions. It covers records common to all State organizations such as Human Resource Management and Financial and Accounting. The General Disposal Authority for Local Government covers records common to local governments and will eliminate the necessity for each organization to prepare its own Schedule.

Government organization – is an organization listed in Schedule 1 or Schedule 3 of the State Records Act 2000.

Government record – is a record created or received by a government organization or a government organization employee or contractor in the course of the work for the organization.

Record – means any record of information however recorded and includes:

- a) any thing on which there is writing or Braille;
- b) a map, plan, diagram or graph;
- c) a drawing, pictorial or graphic work, or photograph;
- d) any thing on which there are figures, marks, perforations, or symbols, having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them;
- e) any thing from which images, sounds or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; and
- f) any thing on which information has been stored or recorded, either mechanically, magnetically, or electronically.

Record keeping plan – is the plan required under Parts 2 and 3 of the State Records Act 2000. State Records Commission Standard 2 provides details about the plan.

Retention and Disposal Schedule – is a systematic and comprehensive listing of categories, or series, of records created and/or kept by an organization that plans the life of those records from creation to ultimate disposal.

Retention period – in relation to a record, means the period for which the record must be kept before it may be destroyed.

State archive – is a State record that is to be retained permanently.

State record – is a parliamentary record or a government record.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard, established under Sections 61(1)(c) and (f) of the State Records Act 2000, is to ensure that State organizations determine which State records should be State archives and determine the retention periods for State records that are not to be State archives.

BACKGROUND

Under State Records Commission Standard 2: Principle 5 (Retention and Disposal), State organizations are to retain and dispose of their records in accordance with an approved disposal authority. The State Records Commission is the authorizing body for disposal authorities.

Several General Disposal Authorities published by the State Records Office are current for the disposal of the records they describe. The General Disposal Authority for Financial and Accounting Records (1996) and the General Disposal Authority for Human Resource Management Records (revised 1999), authorize the retention and disposal of these types of records, which are common to most organizations. State organizations must use these General Disposal Authorities for the retention and disposal of records covered in them.

The General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records covers the retention and disposal of records (including finance and accounting and human resource management records) common to most local governments. Local governments must use this General Disposal Authority for the retention and disposal of records covered by the General Disposal Authority.

State organizations are to operate an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule for those records created or received by the organization that are not covered by the General Disposal Authorities.

SCOPE

The principles and minimum compliance requirements in this Standard apply to all State organizations as defined in Section 3 of the State Records Act 2000.

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Principle 1 – Appraisal of Records

State records are to be kept for as long as required.

Rationale

Every State record, or record series, has a minimum retention period for which it must be kept. Some records series have continuing value and are to be kept permanently as State archives, either within the State archives collection or, in the case of electronic records designated as having archival value, within and by the organization that created or received them. Some records series are to be kept by the organization for the life of the organization. Most records series may be destroyed at the end of their minimum period of retention, in accordance with an approved retention and disposal schedule.

State organizations in developing their Retention and Disposal Schedules must determine which records series are to be retained permanently as State archives and must determine the minimum length of time that a record series, which is not to be a State archive, is to be retained.

The essential criteria for making these determinations are described in *Records Disposal: A Handbook for Government Agencies* (2000) produced by the State Records Office. State organizations may liaise with the State Records Office in making retention and disposal determinations.

Minimum Compliance Requirements

1. State organizations retain and dispose of records covered by the General Disposal Authorities in accordance with those Authorities.
 - The General Disposal Authority for Financial and Accounting Records.
 - The General Disposal Authority for Human Resource Management Records.
 - The General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records.
2. State organizations must take into account legislative and any other legal requirements that prescribe the minimum retention period for a record or records series, and/or identify which records, created or received by the organization in the performance of its functions, are to be retained permanently.
3. State organizations must use the appraisal criteria described in *Records Disposal: A Handbook for Government Agencies*, for determining the minimum retention period and final disposition of those records of the organization not covered by the General Disposal Authority.

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