

Department of Conservation and Land Management

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Corporate Information Section

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PREFACE

The aim of the State Records Act 2000 is to strengthen public sector accountability through effective record keeping. All government departments must comply with this legislation.

Record keeping is the responsibility of all government employees. Therefore, a collaborative effort by all Departmental employees is essential to ensure that government records are created, managed and maintained to meet the business needs and accountability requirements of the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The Department's records management policy provides the framework for establishing compliant record keeping within the agency. The implementation guidelines in this manual will enable the Department to comply with record keeping legislation by ensuring all government employees are provided with practical guidelines for the record keeping requirements within the Department. A number of record keeping principles are identified in these guidelines along with the practices required to support these principles.

All government employees working for the Department must comply with the policies, principles and guidelines outlined in this manual.

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PART 1

BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Scope

The Department of Conservation and Land Management's Records Management Policy provides the framework for establishing compliant record keeping within the agency. The implementation guidelines in this manual cover the record keeping requirements for all government records within the Department, regardless of their format.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to:

- Advise on the record keeping processes required in the Department.
- Outline the statutory basis for record keeping in all government agencies.
- Describe the record keeping responsibilities of all Departmental employees.
- Provide practical guidelines for record keeping practices within the Department.

1.3 Compliance

The policies, principles and guidelines in this manual have been approved by the Corporate Executive. They must be complied with by all the Department's government employees.

1.4 Implementation and Use

The guidelines and associated record keeping principles in this manual have been developed to enable the Department to implement its Records Management Policy. These guidelines cover the broad range of record keeping processes necessary to ensure the Department and its employees meet the legislative requirements of the *State Records Act*.

The following structure has been used to assist employees in using the manual:

- Part 1 provides background information relating to development of these guidelines.
- Part 2 outlines each of the record keeping guidelines that must be implemented.
- Instructions to employees, to support implementing the guidelines, are printed in *italics*.
- Hyperlinks are provided throughout the document to support navigation of the document.

1.5 Document Control

The following measures will ensure appropriate control of this document:

- The guidelines are authorised by the Corporate Executive.
- The custodian of the guidelines is the Manager of the Corporate Information Section (CIS).
- The controlled version of the document sits in the Index of Key Documents on CALM Web.
- CIS is responsible for the review and maintenance of the guidelines.
- These guidelines will be reviewed at regular intervals and revisions posted to CALM Web.
- All employees must ensure they have the most up to date version of these guidelines.

1.6 Further Information

For further information about these guidelines or other record keeping matters contact:

Service Desk - Corporate Information Section
Department of Conservation and Land Management
17 Dick Perry Avenue
Kensington 6151

Phone: (08) 9334 0392
Fax: (08) 9334 0466

2. BENEFITS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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The information contained in records is a valuable resource and a vital business asset. Appropriate and systematic records management is necessary to ensure the effective and accountable administration of an organization.

A record keeping system is a source of information about business activities, which can support subsequent activities and business decisions.

2.1 Principles of Government Record keeping

The record is the basis of all accountability. It is the tangible evidence of actions, decisions, opinions and processes of a government organization that would otherwise be forgotten or become distorted or corrupted over time. Record keeping is the making and maintaining of complete, accurate and reliable evidence of these business activities in the form of recorded information. Managing these government records in an appropriate and systematic manner, regardless of their format, is integral to the effective and accountable conduct of the Department's business activities.

2.2 Management of Government Records

Appropriate management of government records will enable the Department to:

- Facilitate more effective and efficient performance of business activities.
- Provide consistency, continuity and improved productivity in management and administration.
- Meet accountability requirements by ensuring compliance with the legislative and regulatory environment.
- Support and document policy formation and managerial decision making.
- Provide protection and support in litigation, including the management of risks associated with the existence or otherwise of evidence of the Department's business activities.
- Support and document current and future scientific research activities, developments and achievements, as well as historical research.
- Maintain corporate memory.

2.3 Systematic Records Management

A systematic approach to records management is essential in order to:

- Facilitate efficient and effective management of the Department's records.
- Establish timely access to accurate and useful information.
- Support better quality advice to senior management and Ministers.
- Facilitate timely response to questions and complaints.
- Minimise duplication of both information and effort.
- Minimise storage requirements.

3. REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

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3.1 State Records Act

The primary legislation for record keeping in government is the *State Records Act 2000*.

Key points of the State Records Act are:

- Any record of information (in any form, including electronic) which is produced or received by a government employee in the course of their work is a government record.
- All government employees are required to ensure, to the best of their knowledge and ability, the accurate and proper creation and maintenance of records for each business transaction or event, so that there is an auditable activity trail.
- The individual who creates a government record is also responsible for ensuring that it becomes part of the Department's record keeping system.
- Destruction (or transfer of custody) of government records is illegal unless it is in accordance with an approved disposal authority such as a Departmental Retention and Disposal Schedule.

3.2 State Records Principles and Standards

The State Records Act is complemented by regulations known as the *State Records Principles and Standards*, first gazetted in 2002. It is expected further principles and standards will follow, as and when published by the State Records Commission.

3.3 Other Legislation, Standards, Codes and Guidelines

Various other legislation, standards and guidelines affect the Department's record keeping:

3.3.1 Legislation

- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984.*
- *Evidence Act 1906-2000.*
- *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985.*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992-1994.*
- *Limitation Act 1935-1978.*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984.*
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994.*
- *Criminal Code 1913.*
- *Sandalwood Act 1929.*
- *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950.*

3.3.2 Standards, Codes and Guidelines

- *Department of Conservation and Land Management Code of Conduct*, March 2002.
- *State Records Principles and Standards*. State Records Commission, 2002.
- *AS/ISO 15489-2001 - Records Management*. Standards Australia, 2001.
- *Policies and Standards Manual*. State Archives of WA, 1992-2001.
- *Records Disposal: a handbook for government agencies*. State Records Office, 2000.
- *Public Records Management: a guide to normal administrative practice*. Public Records Office of WA, 1995
- *General Disposal Authority for Financial and Accounting Records*, State Records Office WA, 1996.
- *General Disposal Authority for Human Resource Management Records*, State Records Office WA, 1999.

4. POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

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4.1 Policy Statement

To ensure Departmental records are managed to meet business needs and accountability requirements the following records management policy statements, which are outlined in the Department's Records Management Policy No 61, will be implemented through the principles and guidelines in this manual:

- Adopt AS/ISO 15489 as the model for best practice in record keeping.
- Adopt a records management system that has centralized control over design and implementation of the records management program while facilitating decentralised record keeping.
- Maintain uniform and reliable record keeping systems to support business needs by facilitating efficient retrieval and appropriate access.
- Ensure awareness of record keeping roles and responsibilities amongst all its government employees.
- Establish processes to monitor compliance with external and internal record keeping requirements.

4.2 Principles for Record Keeping

The record keeping principles below have been identified as the key requirements for record keeping within the Department and are based on the *State Records Principles and Standards*:

- Principle 1. The Department owns all government records and information resources created or received by the Department, or its employees, regardless of who has custody of the records or information.
- Principle 2. All government employees must understand their responsibilities in regard to government record keeping to ensure that business and accountability requirements are met when creating, managing, maintaining and disposing of Departmental records.
- Principle 3. All government employees must create and maintain proper and adequate records to reflect government business activity when they receive business documents, commit the organization to an action, render it accountable, or document an action, a decision or a decision-making process.
- Principle 4. All record keeping systems within the Department, whether electronic or manual, should be designed and implemented in ways that meet operational needs, accountability requirements and comply with the regulatory environment.
- Principle 5. All employees in the Department must ensure business documents are captured as records into the Department's record keeping system when they create or receive business documents that reflect government business activity.
- Principle 6. Timely and efficient access to, and retrieval of, the Department's records must be ensured for as long as they are required for accountability and business purposes.
- Principle 7. To ensure that government records are retained by the Department for as long as required, decisions on retention, archiving and destruction of records must meet both the business needs and regulatory requirements of the Department.

- Principle 8. Electronic records generated or received by the Department or an employee in the course of their work are government records and must be managed according to government record keeping requirements.
- Principle 9. Storage conditions should provide the Department's records with appropriate levels of protection from the environment and unauthorised access, and ensure they remain accessible for as long as they are required.
- Principle 10. The Department must ensure that proper procedures for capture, management and maintenance of government records are established prior to entering into a contract or agreement for the outsourcing of a government function or service.
- Principle 11. To ensure all new and existing Departmental employees are aware of, and understand, their roles and responsibilities in record keeping, they must participate in the Department's record keeping training program.
- Principle 12. To maintain compliance with the record keeping requirements in accordance with the regulatory environment, the Department's record keeping systems and processes will be monitored, audited and reviewed at regular intervals.

PART 2

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

1. GUIDELINES ON OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS

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PRINCIPLE 1.

The Department owns all government records and information resources created or received by the Department, or its employees, regardless of who has custody of the records or information.

1.1 Ownership of Government Records

The issue of ownership of government records has become more difficult with changes occurring in the public sector, particularly in relation to outsourcing of government functions.

All government employees employed by the Department must be aware that:

- (i) *All records that are created or received by the Department, or by an individual employed by the Department, are government records and are owned by the Department.*
- (ii) *All information or data gathered, created, or received by the Department, or by an employee of the Department (regardless of whether it becomes a government record) is owned by the Department.*
- (iii) *The ownership of the Department's records and information resources remains with the Department at all times, regardless of who has physical custody.*

1.2 Custody and Ownership

Custody and ownership of government records is not always the same thing. Misunderstandings and inappropriate decisions in regard to the custody and ownership of government records can result in the loss of records of evidential value, loss of integrity of a records series, unnecessary duplication of records, or wasted resources.

All government employees within the Department must be aware that:

- (i) *Ownership of government records remains with the Department, regardless of which division, branch or regional office has physical custody of the records.*
- (ii) *If custody of certain records is temporarily transferred to a contractor while undertaking an outsourced function, ownership of those records still remains with the Department.*
- (iii) *If transfer of government records is necessary, for example due to transfer of functions between agencies, outsourcing of business functions or creation of new business units, the custodianship and ownership of records must be clearly documented.*

1.3 Intellectual Property

The intellectual property (IP) of a government agency is valuable and tradeable and must be protected. The forms of IP within an agency may include, for example copyright, trademarks, new plant varieties, trade secrets and patents.

All government employees within the Department must be aware that:

- (i) *All intellectual property in any form, produced or developed by a government employee in the course of their work for the Department, is owned by the Department.*
- (ii) *All contracts or agreements for outsourced functions should clearly address ownership of any intellectual property, which may be produced or developed by the contractor.*

2. GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBILITIES IN RECORD KEEPING [Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 2.

All government employees must understand their responsibilities in regard to government record keeping to ensure that business and accountability requirements are met when creating, managing, maintaining and disposing of Departmental records.

2.1 Executive Director

The Executive Director is required by the State Records Act to:

- (i) *Ensure that the Department complies with the provisions of the Act, together with any principles and standards gazetted by the State Records Commission.*

2.2 Director Corporate Services

The Director Corporate Services, through CIS, is responsible for:

- (i) *Developing policies, guidelines, procedures and practices that meet business needs and regulatory requirements.*
- (ii) *Designing and implementing record keeping systems in ways that meet business needs and regulatory requirements.*
- (iii) *Determining retention periods for records and making decisions about retention and disposal of records of continuing value to the Department, in keeping with regulations.*
- (iv) *Training staff in records management practices.*
- (v) *Ensuring all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in record keeping.*

2.3 Managers

All managers within the Department are responsible for:

- (i) *Ensuring they are aware of any record keeping requirements within the legislation relating to the business activities of their section.*
- (ii) *Ensuring that the records under their control are managed according to these guidelines.*
- (iii) *Ensuring that all staff are aware of the Department's record keeping policies and guidelines.*
- (iv) *Ensuring that all new staff are made aware of their responsibilities in record keeping.*
- (v) *Maintaining a secure environment for the storage of records.*
- (vi) *Implementing the Department's Retention and Disposal Schedules.*
- (vii) *Assigning responsibility for record keeping functions and activities in their workplace.*
- (viii) *Ensuring contracts or agreements for outsourced functions contain provisions in relation to the creation, control, access, custody, ownership and disposal of government records.*

2.4 All Departmental Staff

All staff employed by the Department, regardless of the terms of employment, are responsible for:

- (i) Ensuring records created or received by them are identified as government records.*
- (ii) Ensuring full and accurate records are created to document business activities or decisions.*
- (iii) Ensuring that all records are captured into the record keeping system(s) in their workplace.*
- (iv) Ensuring there is timely and efficient flow of information in the workplace.*
- (v) Ensuring that all government records are disposed of in accordance with an approved disposal authority.*

2.5 Contractors, Consultants and Others

Contractors, consultants and others engaged directly or indirectly by the Department to perform any service or function for the Department are responsible for:

- (i) Ensuring that records created while working for or on behalf of the Department are appropriately managed in accordance with requirements in the State Records Act.*
- (ii) Ensuring compliance with record keeping provisions written into a contract or agreement with the Department.*
- (iii) Ensuring they understand their responsibilities as defined in 2.4 if they are engaged to work internally as a Departmental staff member.*

3. GUIDELINES FOR CREATING GOVERNMENT RECORDS

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PRINCIPLE 3.

All government employees must create and maintain proper and adequate records to reflect government business activity when they receive business documents, commit the organization to an action, render it accountable, or document an action, a decision or a decision-making process.

3.1 Characteristics of Proper and Adequate Records

Government organizations must ensure that their records properly and adequately record evidence of their business transactions. A government record, regardless of its format, should properly and adequately reflect what was communicated or decided or what action was taken. A proper and adequate record must have the following characteristics:

3.1.1 Records should be *compliant*

A record must comply with record keeping requirements arising from the regulatory and accountability environment in which the Department operates. Various legislation, standards, codes and guidelines make up the regulatory and accountability environment.

3.1.2 Records should be *adequate*

A record must be adequate for the purpose for which it is kept. For example, a major business transaction should be extensively documented, while a simple routine administrative action will only require the recording of minimum information. The record should provide sufficient evidence to account for the business activity to which it relates.

3.1.3 Records should be *complete*

A complete record must contain more than just its content. Records derive their meaning and value as evidence from the context in which they are created, but only if the structure of the record and its links to other records remain intact. To be complete, a record must have sufficient metadata (captured by the record creator or automatically by the electronic system used to create a record) to make it possible to clearly identify the:

- **Content** – ie the information within the record that identifies what the record is about (eg the text, symbols, numerals, images or sound).
- **Context** – ie the background information relating to the business activity that resulted in a record being created or received (eg processes, transactions, and personnel involved).
- **Structure** – ie the physical format of a record (eg hard copy, electronic) and the arrangement of related elements of the record (eg language, style, file reference, date, or boxes on a form and relationships between fields).
- **Links** - ie how a record is related to other records.

3.1.4 Records should be *comprehensive*

A record must be created for the complete range of the Department's business activities and transactions for which there is a requirement for evidence.

3.1.5 Records should be *reliable*

A record must be reliable. The contents of the record must be a full and accurate representation of the transactions it documents.

3.1.6 Records should be *authentic*

A record must be authentic and credible. It should be possible to prove who created the record and that it relates to the activity documented, ie the record details can be trusted.

3.1.7 Records should be *inviolable*

For a record to be inviolable, its integrity must not be violated, or in doubt. That is, the record must be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration or destruction. Any authorised annotation, addition or deletion should be explicitly indicated and traceable.

3.1.8 Records should be *useable*

A useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted at a later date. It should still be possible to identify a direct connection to the business activity or transaction that produced the record.

3.1.9 Records should be *accessible*

A record must remain accessible for as long as it is required for either accountability or business purposes. An accessible record is one that can be readily retrieved, read and understood when required.

3.1.10 Records should be *auditable*

A record must be able to stand up to rigorous audit, both internal and external audit. A record consisting of the characteristics above in 3.1.1 to 3.1.9 is an auditable record.

3.2 Creating a Government Record

Records document decisions and actions taken during the course of government business. While records will often be created as a direct result of a transaction, there are instances where the transaction does not generate a record. In this case, a decision must be made about whether it is necessary to create a record as evidence of a particular transaction. Government records should be created in the following situations:

3.2.1 Create records of *policies and procedures*

The Department should establish policies and procedures to enable government employees to determine which types of records must be captured into record keeping systems and when and how they are captured. A government employee should frequently and consistently refer to these policy guidelines and procedures on record keeping to eliminate *ad hoc* decisions about the need to create records.

3.2.2 Create records of *oral decisions and commitments*

An employee should document any decision reached, or commitment or other transaction made orally (eg person to person, by telephone or in conference) by making a record and ensuring its capture into the record keeping system.

3.2.3 Create records of *decisions and recommendations*

Any decision or recommendation for which the Department may be held accountable in any way should be adequately documented to meet the accountability requirements. Where decisions are made as part of a process with established procedures and criteria (eg decisions about the evaluation of tenders or granting of licences) records should document who made the decision, on the basis of what facts and for what reasons. If established procedures are not followed during the decision making process the reasons should be documented by the individual making the decision.

3.2.4 Create records of *meetings*

A record should be made of meetings (eg meetings of management committees and working groups). The record should adequately document decisions made at the meeting and include a copy of the agenda and all documents considered at, or resulting from, the meeting.

3.2.5 Create records of *drafts and versions of documents*

In many cases only the 'final copy' of a document, hardcopy or electronic, will be kept as the official record. However, in some business processes, successive drafts of the same document must be retained to provide adequate evidence of that process. For example, each time a policy document is submitted for approval and rejected a new draft is created. In this instance, each version of the policy document must be captured in the record keeping system as a record of the transactions having taken place during the policy development process.

3.2.6 Create records of *working papers*

Working papers are papers, background notes and reference materials that are used to prepare or complete other documents. Working papers that document significant decisions, reasons and actions or contain significant information that is not contained in the final version of a document, must be kept as a government record (eg working papers that provide substantial documentation of a project or an investigation that is not recorded in the final version of the report must be kept as records themselves).

3.2.7 Create records of *individual actions*

Where an individual employee performs an action that does not itself generate a record, the employee should determine, according to the Department's record keeping requirements, whether a record needs to be created. Documented records management policies, guidelines and procedures will assist the employee in making such a decision.

3.2.8 Create records of *correspondence*

Inwards and outwards correspondence, in either hardcopy or electronic format (eg electronic mail and fax transmissions) relating to government business transactions must be captured into the Department's record keeping system. This will ensure that the Department complies with regulatory obligations and is protected from risk of litigation arising out of business disputes or cases involving public accountability.

3.2.9 Create records of *data collected from the public*

When data is collected from the public, manually or electronically, a record should be created (eg data collected from visitor statistics, surveys, online public submission forms, or online application forms must be captured as government records).

3.2.10 Create records of *duplicates*

When annotations, notes or amendments are made on a duplicate of an original record, the duplicate itself becomes an original record and must be retained as evidence.

3.2.11 Create records of *precedent*

Records relating to a precedent should be created (eg where an administrative instruction has been issued, or a legal proceeding directly or indirectly relates to the Department).

All government employees must ensure:

- (i) *That all government records have the characteristics of a proper and adequate record.*
- (ii) *They create government records as evidence of all government business activities.*

4. GUIDELINES FOR RECORD KEEPING SYSTEMS

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PRINCIPLE 4:

All record keeping systems within the Department, whether electronic or manual, should be designed and implemented in ways that meet operational needs, accountability requirements and comply with the regulatory environment.

4.1 Types of Record Keeping Systems

A record keeping system is an information system which captures, manages and provides access to an organization's records over time. All government records, regardless of format must be captured into identifiable record keeping systems within the Department. In its broadest sense, a record keeping system includes:

- The personnel managing and using the system.
- Policies, guidelines, procedures, manuals, and practices.
- The records.
- The system used to control the records.
- Software, hardware and other equipment and stationery.

Government records are not only maintained within a dedicated record keeping system, such as the Department's primary record keeping system, managed by CIS. Records are also contained within other secondary record keeping systems, electronic and manual, throughout the Department, for example, business systems, databases, and paper-based record keeping systems. As these systems have a record keeping function they must also be managed to meet the record keeping and business requirements of the Department.

4.1.1 Electronic Record Keeping Systems

The following business information systems and databases are examples of electronic secondary record keeping systems currently in use within the department:

- People Services - Human Resources Management System (Concept).
- Recreation & Tourism Information Management - Recreation & Tourism Information System (RATIS).
- Geographic Information Services - Tenure Information System (TENIS).
- Management Audit – Audit Database (ADB).
- Wildlife Conservation – Declared Rare Flora Database (DEFL).
- Forest Management Branch – Integrated Resources Information System (IRIS).

4.1.2 Manual Record Keeping Systems

There are many manual, or paper based, secondary record keeping systems used within the Department. Many of these systems may only be recognised as record keeping systems by those employees actually using the system. Regardless of however small the record keeping systems are, the records maintained within them are government records and must be managed according to record keeping requirements. See the examples below:

- Land Administration – register of freehold lands; register of timber resources.
- Parks, Policy and Tourism – leasing agreements; bee keepers permits.
- Wildlife Licensing – licensing returns.
- Wildlife Protection – diaries of wildlife officers.
- People Services – personnel hardcopy files.
- Science Division – field books of research officers.

4.2 Characteristics of a Record Keeping System

All record keeping systems must be capable of capturing, maintaining and providing evidence of business activities over time to satisfy the Department's operational needs and its accountability and regulatory requirements.

All Departmental record keeping systems must support records that have the characteristics identified in section 3.1. A record keeping system should have the following characteristics:

4.2.1 Reliability

All record keeping systems must be capable of regular and continuous operation and should:

- Routinely capture all records within the scope of the business activities it covers.
- Organise the records in a way that reflects the business processes of the records' creator.
- Protect the records from unauthorised alteration or disposal.
- Routinely function as the primary source of information about actions documented in the records.
- Provide ready access to all relevant records and related metadata.

4.2.2 Integrity

Control measures should be implemented for access monitoring, user verification, authorised destruction and security. They may reside within a record keeping system or be external to the system.

4.2.3 Compliance

Record keeping systems should be managed in compliance with business requirements and regulatory requirements.

4.2.4 Comprehensiveness

Record keeping systems should manage records resulting from the complete range of business activities for the division or section in which they operate (eg the HR management information system should manage all records of business activity related to human resources).

4.2.5 Systematic

All government records should be systematically captured and maintained in a Departmental record keeping system. Employees who need to access the records for business purposes should be made aware of the system and appropriately trained in its use.

5. GUIDELINES FOR CAPTURE AND CONTROL OF RECORDS [Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 5:

All employees in the Department must ensure business documents are captured as records into the Department's record keeping system when they create or receive business documents that reflect government business activity.

5.1 Mail Management

As incoming mail and internally generated documents are the principal ways the Department sends and receives records, whether in hardcopy or electronic form, appropriate mail management is critical. The productivity of the Department relies on the efficient flow of correspondence into, throughout, and out of the agency.

To ensure appropriate mail management Departmental employees must be aware that:

- (i) *Incoming mail is opened centrally by CIS, or by those responsible for mail management functions at regional and decentralised branches.*
- (ii) *Incoming mail which requires registration should be registered before being actioned.*
- (iii) *Under Crown Solicitors advice the Department has the right to open all mail sent to the agency address, even if it is marked 'private' or 'confidential'.*
- (iv) *Personal, or private, mail should be sent to an employees home address.*

5.2 Document Registration

To function as a corporate record (ie government record), a business document must be captured and registered into a Departmental record keeping system. Registration formalises the capture of records and provides evidence that a record of business transactions has been created. Registration involves recording brief descriptive information, or metadata, about a record in a register, and assigning it with a unique identifier to facilitate identification and retrieval of the record at a later date.

When a government record is received or created by a departmental employee it must be registered into:

- (i) *The Department's primary record keeping system; or*
- (ii) *A secondary record keeping system which manages a particular series of records (eg personnel records, licensing records, scientific research records).*

5.2.1 Types of Documents Registered

Departmental employees must ensure that documents created or received in hardcopy or electronic format that are evidence of business transactions, are registered. Below are some examples of the types of documents that must be registered as government records (this is not a comprehensive list):

- Correspondence received by the Department that requires action or a reply from the Department.
- Ministerials.
- Freedom of Information applications and appeals.
- Ombudsman enquiries.
- Enquiries from members of the public.

- Enquiries from State, Commonwealth and Local Government agencies.
- Enquiries from non-government organizations.
- Applications for funding.
- Agendas, minutes, and briefing papers of meetings and committees on which the Department is represented.
- Any significant communications, ie those which have impact on the policy and decision-making processes of the Department.
- Records created or issued by a Departmental officer.
- Notes of telephone conversations or meetings, ie those that contain instructions/directives, proposals, recommendations, definitions or interpretations.

5.3 Metadata Recorded at Registration

It is important that sufficient metadata relating to a record is captured at registration. Metadata may need to be recorded in a paper-based register or may be captured during registration into the Department's record keeping system. Metadata should always be captured at the time of creating an electronic document.

5.3.1 Minimum Metadata Required:

As a minimum requirement all records registered into a departmental record keeping system should include the following metadata:

- Unique identifier (eg document number, license registration number).
- Document title or brief description.
- Date created.
- Date and time registered or date and time received.
- Creator/author/sender (individual or organization).
- Recipient (individual or branch).
- Version number.

5.3.2 Additional Useful Metadata:

The more metadata captured for a record the easier it will be to retrieve the record at some later date, particularly electronic records. Below is a list of additional useful metadata:

- Document type (eg circular, email, letter, licence, memo, report, survey).
- Media type (eg audio tape, paper, CD-ROM, magnetic tape, photograph).
- Date and time of communication (eg phone conversation, verbal commitment, email transmission).
- Subject (description of the text of a document).
- External references.
- Related documents.

5.4 Indexing and Classification of Records

Searching and retrieval of records is more efficient and effective when the terminology used for indexing and classification of records is consistent and common to all those using the record keeping system.

5.4.1 Indexing

Indexing is the process of allocating appropriate search terms to records to assist users in searching for, and retrieving, records from the system. Consistency in the language used to describe records when they are registered, that is the indexing terms, will ensure the records can be efficiently retrieved from the record keeping system.

5.4.2 Classification

A consistent and logical method of classifying or arranging records, together with consistency in file titles, will ensure that all the records on a particular topic can be easily located and retrieved when required.

While the records within the Department's primary record keeping system are classified using terminology based on business activities, other Departmental record keeping systems may classify records differently, for example alphabetically. Regardless of the type of classification used it is important that the approach is consistent, logical and understood by all those using the records so that they can be located and managed by others, not just the records' creator.

Departmental employees responsible for registration of government records must ensure:

- (i) *That records registered into the primary record keeping system are indexed using Department's Keyword Classification Thesaurus.*
- (ii) *That the terminology used to classify and title files in the primary record keeping system is taken from the Department's Keyword Classification Thesaurus.*
- (iii) *There is consistency in the index terms entered into the primary record keeping system by adhering to any existing data entry conventions.*
- (iv) *That records captured into a secondary record keeping system are captured in a consistent and logical manner and use standardised terminology.*
- (v) *Electronic records are identified and grouped (ie named and classified) logically into folders that are accessible to others.*

5.5 Tracking of Records

Tracking involves recording the movement and usage of the Department's records. Providing a tracking process ensures:

- Accountability by establishing an auditable activity trail.
- More effective and efficient retrieval of records.
- Better security of records.

A record keeping system should track the movement of records, regardless of format. This includes both individual documents and files. The Department's primary record keeping system uses bar coding to assist with tracking the movement and use of records. The type of information recorded for tracking purposes should include, for example:

- Who the record has been issued to.
- When the record was issued.
- Who has created or modified an electronic record.
- The home location of the record.
- The movement history of a record (ie who has accessed a file or document in the past).

Electronic records pose a significant challenge when it comes to tracking use and movement of records. As the Department's primary record keeping system does not have the facility to manage electronic records it is critical that the individual who creates a government record in electronic format ensures sufficient metadata is captured to be able to establish an auditable activity trail (refer 8.5).

Other secondary record keeping systems which manage electronic records, in use within the Department, may have the facility to record the metadata necessary to establish an auditable activity trail. In systems where this is possible it is important that the metadata recorded is sufficient to provide an audit trail.

Departmental employees who have responsibility for maintaining a record keeping system should ensure that:

- (i) Record movements can be tracked to provide an auditable activity trail.*
- (ii) Sufficient metadata is captured with electronic records at the time of creation or modification (eg the file properties facilities in most software applications will enable the user to record details about: creator, date edited, name of editor, forwarded to, file storage location).*
- (iii) The physical movement of hard copy records is documented to enable the items to be located when they are required.*
- (iv) Any record that is taken off-site on official business is the responsibility of the employee who has custody of that record. The record must be kept in a secure location to reduce the likelihood of unauthorised access, damage or theft.*

6. GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS TO RECORDS

[Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 6:

Timely and efficient access to, and retrieval of, the Department's records must be ensured for as long as they are required for accountability and business purposes.

6.1 Managing Access to Government Records

Managing access to records involves ensuring the Department's records remain accessible and useable for as long as they are required for accountability and business purposes. Access to these government records must be managed appropriately by:

- Ensuring appropriate information sharing throughout the organization.
- Identifying and administering requirements for public access to records.
- Ensuring continued access to technology dependent records.

6.2 Information Sharing

As outlined in the Department's Strategic Plan 2002-2005, information sharing is a key focus of the Department. It is important that all employees of the Department continuously seek to improve corporate information sharing.

All government employees in the Department should ensure that:

- (i) *There is appropriate sharing of information throughout the Department.*
- (ii) *Information resources are used efficiently and effectively to meet business needs.*
- (iii) *Access to government information that is of a confidential or sensitive nature is managed appropriately to ensure that confidentiality or sensitivity is protected.*

6.3 Public Access Requirements

There are certain rights and restrictions in regard to public access to the Department's records. The Department makes a significant amount of its records available for public access via informal requests. Access to other records may require a more formal approach under Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation.

All Departmental employees should be aware that:

- (i) *Informal requests for public access to Departmental records (ie non-FOI requests) may be approved by the Director with functional responsibility.*
- (ii) *If there are strategic, financial or political reasons for questioning public access to Departmental records the request should be referred to the Executive Director.*
- (iii) *Guidance on dealing with formal FOI requests for public access to Departmental records can be sought from CIS staff. The following documents will also be of assistance: FOI Statement and FOI : A Procedural Guide for CALM Decision-makers.*
- (iv) *Open access archives are State archives that are open to public access with no restrictions.*
- (v) *Restricted access archives contain sensitive information and are restricted from public access until a certain age. The restriction period is determined by the Department, in consultation with the State Records Commission.*

6.4 Accessibility of Technology Dependent Records

Some record formats are more vulnerable than others. Inappropriate storage and maintenance of records, system changes and new technology can mean that technology dependent records become inaccessible through time. For example, digital data sets are vulnerable to loss or inaccessibility when software applications change, if the change is not planned and well managed.

Departmental employees must ensure that technology dependent records remain accessible and useful for as long as they are required for business or accountability purposes by:

- (i) *Ensuring appropriate storage and maintenance of records of this type.*
- (ii) *Converting records to a different, more stable, format (eg copying records on floppy disk over to CD ROM).*
- (iii) *Transferring records, for example by migration, between hardware and operating systems or specific software applications (eg upgrading to a new database management system or to a new version of an existing system).*
- (iv) *Continually reviewing the condition of storage media and integrity of the data stored, and upgrading the storage media at regular intervals to ensure ongoing accessibility.*
- (v) *Carefully planning any process of transferring electronic records using conversion or migration to ensure there is no loss of the records functionality, content, structure, context, or authenticity.*
- (vi) *Migrating technology dependent records (eg records stored on hard drives, CD, floppy disk, or magnetic tape) across any changes that may occur over time in technology, storage media, or software application development and review.*

7. Guidelines on Retention and Disposal of Records [Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 7:

To ensure that government records are retained by the Department for as long as required, decisions on retention, archiving and destruction of records must meet both the business needs and regulatory requirements of the Department.

7.1 Retention and Disposal of Government Records

Regular and routine removal of inactive records is essential to ensure efficient, economic and accountable record keeping practices. A systematic approach to retention and disposal of government records is required to ensure prompt destruction of records which are no longer required and identification and preservation of records of continuing value. All government records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with a disposal authority approved by the State Records Commission (SRC).

7.2 Appraisal of Records

There is a common **misconception** that the '7 year rule' applying to many financial records also applies to all other government records. However, the length of time government records must be retained varies considerably, and is dependent on the value of individual groups of records. Once active records are no longer in use, appraisal of those records is necessary to identify if the records have continuing value to the organization for business or accountability purposes. For example a record may be kept because of its significance as a State archive, or kept for other legal or business purposes. All government records must be appraised for their value to the organization or community before disposal can be carried out.

7.2.1 Records of No Further Value

A record of 'no further value' is no longer required by the organization. It has no continuing value to the organization, ie ephemeral records. These records may be disposed of in accordance with an approved disposal authority.

7.2.2 Records of Continuing Value

A record of continuing value has ongoing administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential, historical or research value to the organization and/or the community. The Department must identify which records are to be kept permanently as State archives and must also determine how long to retain records of continuing value that are not identified as State archives.

7.3 Disposal Authority

A disposal authority approved by the SRC must be used to determine the appropriate retention period for all government records. A disposal authority is a systematic and comprehensive listing of categories or series of records created and/or kept by an organization, which plans the life of those records from creation to ultimate disposal. A retention and disposal schedule is one form of disposal authority. The type of records under review will determine whether the Department's agency-specific retention and disposal schedule is used, or if a general disposal authority (GDA), such as the GDA for Financial and Accounting Records (published by the State Records Office) is used.

7.4 Responsibility for Records Disposal

The decisions and processes involved in the retention and disposal of government records must be fully authorised to ensure that records are disposed of in a consistent, accountable and timely manner. Disposal action may encompass:

- Immediate physical destruction of the records.
- Retention for a further period within the Department.
- Transfer to the custody of the State Records Office archives collection.

To ensure that disposal decisions are not undertaken unilaterally, are not unplanned, and are not unauthorised, government employees must be aware that:

- (i) *No government record can be destroyed unless in accordance with a disposal authority approved by the State Records Commission (SRC).*
- (ii) *Unauthorised destruction of government records can result in serious penalties for both the Department and the individual.*
- (iii) *Development and review of Departmental disposal authorities is the responsibility of CIS, in consultation with the users of the records.*
- (iv) *Regional and District offices, and Branches with secondary record keeping systems, who are contemplating disposal of records are required to first seek guidance from CIS.*
- (v) *Disposal authorities that govern the retention and disposal of the Department's records should be applied on a routine basis, eg annually.*
- (vi) *Records transferred to secondary storage for further retention should be managed so that they may be readily retrieved when required.*
- (vii) *Records transferred to the State Records Office archives collection may only be transferred with the approval of the SRC. Any transfer should be discussed with CIS.*
- (viii) *All disposal actions and authorizations must be documented and retained for evidential and accountability purposes.*

7.5 Destruction of Records

Unauthorised destruction of government records is an offence under the State Records Act. Any government employee who destroys a government record without authority commits an offence, which may attract a fine of up to \$10,000 for the individual.

When physical destruction of records is the appropriate method of disposal, as determined in an approved disposal authority, government employees in the Department must ensure that:

- (i) *Physical destruction of records is always authorised, by both the Manager responsible for the business activity and by an approved disposal authority.*
- (ii) *Destruction of records involves the entire file, rather than destroying selective records from a file.*
- (iii) *Records pertaining to current or pending litigation, or subject to an FOI application are not destroyed even if they are due for disposal.*
- (iv) *Destruction is carried out using a government approved destruction method, eg pulping.*
- (v) *Electronic records are subject to the same retention and disposal decision-making processes as paper-based records, but require different methods for managing their retention and disposal (refer 8.7).*

8. GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING ELECTRONIC RECORDS

[Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 8:

Electronic records generated or received by the Department or an employee in the course of their work are government records and must be managed according to government record keeping requirements.

8.1 Electronic Business Transactions

As the Department increasingly conducts business electronically, awareness of the connection between record keeping and accountability becomes more important. The principles for electronic record keeping are no different from those for paper record keeping. However, electronic record keeping presents many challenges. This section outlines record keeping requirements specific to electronic records to ensure their proper management as government records.

To ensure electronic record keeping practices comply with regulatory and accountability requirements the Department must ensure:

- (i) *Electronic business processes routinely include the capture of records and the metadata necessary to document them (refer 5.3).*
- (ii) *Electronic systems are designed to create and capture records with the characteristics of proper and adequate records (refer 3.1).*
- (iii) *Electronic mail is managed in the same manner as other government records.*
- (iv) *Electronic records remain accessible and useable for as long as required.*
- (v) *Electronic records are disposed of in the appropriate manner.*

8.2 Types of Electronic Records

Many electronic records are created during the course of an employee's work. When an electronic record is created as part of a government business transaction, it must be routinely kept as evidence of that transaction.

Electronic records include, for example:

- Word processing files.
- Electronic spreadsheets.
- Imaged documents.
- Machine readable indexes.
- Data files and database records.
- Digital geographic information.
- Compound documents.
- Electronic mail messages.
- Web-based records on intranet and internet systems.

Electronic mail messages and web-based records are a rapidly growing group of records in use within government agencies. Failure to capture full and accurate records of email communication and web-based activity may leave agencies exposed to considerable legal, financial and political risk. These two groups are dealt with in some detail in 8.3 and 8.4.

8.3 Managing Email as Government Records

Electronic mail (email) has become more than a simple electronic messaging system. Email generates, stores and communicates vital business information. Email messages created or received by government employees in connection with government business are government records and must be retained as evidence of the Department's activities.

Email created or received by a Department can be divided into three different types: corporate email, ephemeral email and personal email. Government employees in the Department must be able to identify which email must be kept as government records.

8.3.1 Corporate Email

Corporate email messages document the organization's business transactions. Corporate email contains corporate information that is owned (created or received) by the Department and has continuing administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential, historical, or research value. Corporate email must be captured in the Department's record keeping system. Examples of corporate email are:

- A directive approving or authorizing an important course of action or expenditure.
- A record documenting the rationale behind policy change or development.
- Formal communications and/or transactions between staff relating to official business (eg a memorandum, report or submission).
- Formal communications and/or transactions between a government employee and an outside party.
- Business correspondence received from outside the organization.

8.3.2 Ephemeral Email

Ephemeral email messages contain information that is duplicated, unimportant, or has short term facilitative value to the organization. A facilitative record has a business context and may be used to further a business activity but is not a business transaction itself. Ephemeral email has no continuing value to the Department. Examples of ephemeral email are:

- Reference documents consisting of background information used solely to assist in the preparation of other records.
- Drafts where significant content in the draft is completely reproduced and incorporated in the final version of the record.
- Extra copies of documents, or published material kept by government employees purely for reference purposes.
- Duplicates of records that have already been captured into the Department's record keeping system.
- Routine instructions to officers, for example those relating to routine tasks, correction of typing errors, or formatting documents.
- Downloads from the intranet or internet.
- Solicited or unsolicited advertising material.

8.3.3 Personal Email

Personal email is private in nature and has nothing to do with the business of the Department. Examples of personal email are:

- Messages to 'do lunch'.
- Messages making personal arrangements.
- Unsolicited information with no relation to government business.

8.3.4 Identifying Email as a Government Record

The distinction between the different types of email is not always clear cut and, therefore, it can sometimes be difficult to identify if an email is a government record. When deciding which email messages to keep as government records, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the message form part of an agency transaction?
- Does it add value, or further clarification, to an existing record?
- Does it show how an agency transaction was dealt with?
- Does it show how an agency decision was made?
- Does it show when or where an agency event happened?
- Does it indicate who was involved or what advice was given?
- Is it a formal draft of a cabinet submission, an agreement or legal document?

If the answer is YES to any of these questions, the email message is a government record and must not be destroyed. If you are in doubt contact CIS for advice.

All Departmental employees must ensure they understand the following requirements for managing email as government records:

- (i) *Corporate email must be captured as a government record into the Department's record keeping system and retained for the period determined by the relevant disposal authority.*
- (ii) *Ephemeral email is generally not incorporated into the agency's record keeping system.*
- (iii) *Ephemeral email may be retained if the custodian determines that it has some longer term value to the Department.*
- (iv) *Ephemeral email can be destroyed in accordance with an approved disposal authority when it is no longer useful.*
- (v) *Personal email can be destroyed as soon as it is no longer useful.*
- (vi) *Email incorporating both personal and work-related information must be treated as a government record and kept for the period determined by the relevant disposal authority.*

8.4 Managing Web Resources as Government Records

The Department provides a significant amount of information on its websites. Under the *State Records Act* all web resources such as, websites, intranets, extranets and other web-based documents created by a government agency are regarded as government records. These records should be captured and preserved for as long as they are required in accordance with legislative, accountability, business and cultural requirements.

To ensure that web-based government records are being captured and managed in compliance with legislative requirements the following issues must be considered:

- (i) *Departmental record keeping systems must be designed to capture full and adequate records of web-based based government business activity (eg published advice, public information, or interactive web transactions such as online registration forms).*
- (ii) *Departmental websites must be assessed to establish what approach should be taken in order to capture full and adequate web-based based records (eg snapshots of a website at regular intervals is one approach).*
- (iii) *Responsibility for appropriately managing web-based based government records is a shared responsibility and will include, for example, those responsible for systems design, website design, website administration and records management.*
- (iv) *Failure to capture full and adequate records of web-based based government business activity may leave the Department open to legal, financial and political risk.*

Managing web records as government records is an increasingly important issue for the Department. Further advice on the appropriate management of websites is available from the Department of Industry and Technology in its *Guidelines for State Government Web Sites*.

8.5 Capturing Electronic Records

All electronic records that are evidence of the Department's business transactions must be captured within the Department's record keeping system. Where there is no automated facility to capture and register electronic records, appropriate procedures must be in place to capture these records within hard copy filing systems.

8.5.1 Registration of Electronic Records

The individual who creates or receives any type of electronic record has responsibility for registering it into the primary record keeping system (refer 8.2).

All Departmental employees must ensure that:

- (i) *Government records created or received electronically are printed as hard copies and registered into the primary record keeping system (except records that are added, under standard operating procedures, to a secondary Departmental record keeping system).*
- (ii) *Hard copies of electronic records are attached to the relevant paper file.*
- (iii) *All the components of an email record are captured into the primary record keeping system (eg addressee, sender, date/time, message body, and header information).*

8.6 Maintaining Accessibility of Electronic Records

Electronic records are more vulnerable to becoming inaccessible than paper records simply because of the instability of some storage media and the constant advances in software and hardware development. The custodians of these records must ensure that they remain accessible and readable for the entire period of their retention for business and accountability purposes. This can be achieved through conversion or migration of electronic records.

8.6.1 Conversion of Electronic Records

As storage media have a finite life it will be necessary to transfer electronic records, through conversion, to new media. Records should be copied from one medium to another or from one format to another to ensure their continued accessibility, before the media becomes vulnerable. For example: copying records from a floppy disk or magnetic tape to a new floppy disk, CD ROM or DVD.

8.6.2 Migration of Electronic Records

Migration is the periodic transfer of electronic records from one hardware or software configuration to another, or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation. When new technology is implemented, such as a new computer system or new software program, the records within the old system should be migrated to the new one, while maintaining the characteristics of the records (refer 3.1). For example, migrating research data to a new or upgraded version of a database when hardware and software changes are made so that the records can be accessed, read and understood for as long as they are required for business and accountability purposes.

8.7 Retention and Disposal of Electronic Records

Technology provides the opportunity to store huge volumes of electronic records and to very easily destroy those records. It is important that electronic records are not retained or destroyed in an ad hoc manner. While electronic records are subject to the same retention and disposal processes applying to paper-based records (refer 7) there are further retention and disposal requirements specific to electronic records.

All employees within the Department must ensure that:

- (i) *Any electronic records which cannot be printed and placed on file due to the format of the data, such as database records or web-based based records, are subject to the same disposal decisions and processes as paper records.*
- (ii) *Disposal of all electronic records is carried out in accordance with an approved disposal authority.*
- (iii) *They have a clear understanding of the different types of email before making decisions to delete email from personal computers (refer 8.3).*
- (iv) *Electronic records which are identified as government records are not stored in 'personal' files on the computer network (such as an email 'in box' or the U-drive).*
- (v) *Electronic records are stored on the appropriate drive relevant to the business activity/unit for which they were created.*
- (vi) *Regular backups of systems storing electronic records are conducted by the custodian of the system and backup copies are stored in a secure offsite location.*
- (vii) *Electronic records of archival value are kept and preserved permanently by the Department. State archives in electronic format cannot be transferred to the State Records Office archives collection.*
- (viii) *Electronic records of archival value are stored in a format that ensures they retain the full characteristics of a record (refer 3.1).*
- (ix) *Access to electronic records of archival value is maintained for as long as they are required for business and accountability purposes. This will require periodic transfer of the records to new storage media, or hardware or software platforms to ensure continued accessibility (refer 8.6).*

9. GUIDELINES ON RECORDS STORAGE

[Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 9:

Storage conditions should provide the Department's records with appropriate levels of protection from the environment and unauthorised access, and ensure they remain accessible for as long as they are required.

9.1 Records Storage

Government records should be stored in a manner that will ensure they can be accessed and retrieved when they are required for business or accountability purposes during the period of their retention.

9.1.1 Responsibility for Records Storage

Given the dispersed nature of the Department's records and information resources, the responsibility for appropriate storage of government records is shared.

All government employees in the Department must be aware of their responsibilities as follows:

- (i) *CIS is responsible for storage of corporate files managed by the Section.*
- (ii) *Branches with decentralised file collections are responsible for storage of active and semi-active Branch files.*
- (iii) *Regions and Districts are responsible for storage of local files from their active phase through to final disposition.*
- (iv) *The custodian of a digital database, or a website, is responsible for the management of the database, or website, and ensuring access to it for as long as it is required for business or accountability purposes.*
- (v) *Any individual or organization that has custody of government records while undertaking an outsourced function for the Department is responsible for the storage of those records until they are returned to the Department at the completion of the outsourcing contract.*

9.1.2 Records Storage Conditions

The storage conditions suitable for the storage of government records will depend on several factors:

- How long the record will be retained.
- The physical characteristics, or format, of the record (eg paper, computer disk, CD, DVD).
- The purpose and use served by the record.
- Access needs and sensitivity, or confidentiality, of the record.

When making decisions about records storage all employees of the Department must ensure they consider the following:

- (i) *Records identified as State archives should be transferred to the custody of the State Records Office archives collection for preservation as soon as no longer required by the Department.*
- (ii) *Vital records should be identified and provided the highest level of security (eg specialised off site records storage facilities, such as commercial records storage facilities).*

- (iii) *Records of continuing value to the organization, irrespective of format, require storage on higher quality media to preserve them for as long as they are required (eg use of archival quality paper, or use of optical disk instead of floppy disk).*
- (iv) *Records at risk of loss due to instability of the storage media should periodically be transferred, or converted, to new storage media to ensure that the records remain accessible (eg transferring paper records to microfilm, or electronic records from floppy disk to CD).*
- (v) *Records should be stored in a manner that will protect their confidentiality (eg stored in a separate secure location, with access to only authorised personnel).*
- (vi) *Storage conditions should be designed to protect records from unauthorised access, alteration, loss or destruction.*
- (vii) *The physical storage conditions should protect records from environmental damage, for example, from sunlight, heat, humidity, mould, pests, fire, water, or magnetic fields.*

9.1.3. Digital Storage

Storage of electronic records requires additional planning to ensure the continued accessibility of those records into the future.

When planning for the storage of electronic records departmental employees must consider the following:

- (i) *Digital storage media must be regularly reviewed to ensure that data integrity is intact. If any data erosion is identified the records should be transferred to a new medium.*
- (ii) *Systems for digital records should be designed so that records will remain useable through any kind of system change for as long as they are required for business or accountability purposes. This may require migration to new software programs or hardware platforms.*
- (iii) *Taking snapshots of databases and websites at significant stages will provide a record of the evolution of the system over time.*
- (iv) *Backup of all electronic record keeping systems (eg business systems and databases) should be scheduled and conducted at regular intervals.*
- (v) *Copies of all system backups should be stored in a secure off site location.*

10. GUIDELINES ON OUTSOURCING AND RECORD KEEPING

[Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 10:

The Department must ensure that proper procedures for capture, management and maintenance of government records are established prior to entering into a contract or agreement for the outsourcing of a government function or service.

10.1 Outsourcing Government Functions

There will often be a need to engage a contractor, consultant or others to provide a government function or service. In these circumstances there will be a need for the Department to create records documenting the outsourcing of a government activity and for the contractor to create records relating to the function or service they provide.

All records relating to an outsourced government function or service are government records and, as such, are subject to the record keeping requirements for government agencies.

Government employees involved in formulating a contract or agreement for the outsourcing of government functions must ensure that:

- (i) *Contracts or agreements document specific record keeping requirements for records created or received by those undertaking the outsourced function.*
- (ii) *Contractors understand their duty to comply with record keeping requirements in accordance with legislation.*
- (iii) *Records required as evidence of the outsourced function are determined and identified in the contract or agreement.*
- (iv) *A record of activities related to the outsourced function is maintained.*
- (v) *Ownership and custodianship of the records is clearly addressed in the contract or agreement.*
- (vi) *Access provisions and restrictions are clearly defined in the contract or agreement.*
- (vii) *Records are only disposed of in accordance with legislative requirements.*
- (viii) *Any departmental records temporarily transferred to the outsourcing contractor, or created by the contractor as a direct result of undertaking the function on behalf of the agency, must be returned to the Department on completion of the contract.*
- (ix) *When the Department provides a service or function to another government agency (ie the reverse of viii above) the above guidelines on outsourcing also apply. For example, the Department provides a number of services to the Forest Products Commission (FPC), such as records management services, personnel services and housing services. Any records received or created by the Department while undertaking these services for the FPC must be returned to the FPC at the conclusion of the service arrangements.*

11. GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING IN RECORD KEEPING

[Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 11:

To ensure all new and existing Departmental employees are aware of, and understand, their roles and responsibilities in record keeping, they must participate in the Department's record keeping training program.

11.1 Training Program

All government employees must comply with the record keeping requirements of the State Records Act. To ensure that all Departmental employees are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and understand what is required in government record keeping they must be provided with appropriate training.

Methods of record keeping training will include:

- Incorporating record keeping training into the Department's orientation program.
- On-the-job training provided by CIS.
- Briefing sessions on specific records issues.
- Preparation of records management guidelines and procedure manuals.
- Implementation of an online record keeping training program.

Every new and existing Departmental employee must ensure they:

- (i) *Participate in the Department's record keeping training program.*
- (ii) *Consistently refer to the Department's policy, guidelines and procedures for advice on record keeping requirements, processes and practices.*
- (iii) *Contact CIS for clarification of any record keeping issues.*

12. GUIDELINES FOR MONITORING OF RECORD KEEPING

[Contents](#)

PRINCIPLE 12:

To maintain compliance with the record keeping requirements in accordance with the regulatory environment, the Department's record keeping systems and processes will be monitored, audited and reviewed at regular intervals.

12.1 Monitoring Record keeping

It is important that the Department's record keeping systems and processes are continuously monitored to:

- Ensure compliance with the regulatory environment.
- Ensure government records are acceptable as evidence if required by a court of law.
- Ensure continued review of the organization's record keeping performance against business requirements.

12.1.1 Compliance Auditing

The Department must be able to demonstrate compliance with record keeping legislation, policies, principles, processes and procedures. The Department will be subject to compliance auditing by both external and internal bodies.

External Audit

- The State Records Commission may periodically monitor and audit the Department's record keeping processes for compliance with the *State Records Act 2000*.

Internal Audit

- Management Audit will conduct regular internal audits of the Department's record keeping systems and processes for compliance with records legislation and Departmental records policy and guidelines.
- CIS will undertake regular internal audits of the Department's record keeping processes and procedures to facilitate branches' and regions' compliance with the Department's records management policy, guidelines and procedures.

12.1.2 Evidential Weight

If the integrity or authenticity of government records is called into doubt in a court of law, the evidential weight of those records may be lost or seriously reduced. To ensure such risk is limited the Department must be able to prove its compliance with record keeping legislation by producing records of its monitoring and auditing of records management processes, systems and procedures.

12.1.3 Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring is essential to ensure the Department's record keeping systems, processes and procedures are meeting corporate needs and accountability requirements.

Performance monitoring will ensure the Department meets the following performance objectives for best practice in government record keeping:

- All Departmental employees are creating and maintaining proper and adequate records of any business transactions they conduct.

- The design and implementation of the Department's record keeping systems meets both the operational needs and regulatory requirements of the Department.
- All Departmental employees are consistently capturing records into the Department's record keeping system, when they receive business correspondence, commit the Department to an action, render it accountable, or document an action, decision, or a decision-making process.
- Departmental records can be efficiently accessed and retrieved from the record keeping system as and when they are required for business or accountability purposes.
- Retention and disposal of Departmental records is undertaken regularly and consistently in accordance with an approved disposal authority.
- Electronic records are being captured and managed according to government record keeping requirements.
- Government record keeping requirements are written into all contracts and agreements entered into by the Department for the outsourcing of any Departmental function or service.
- Storage conditions for the Department's records provide appropriate protection from environmental damage and inappropriate access, and ensure the records remain accessible for as long as they are required.
- All new and existing employees have undertaken the Department's record keeping training program.
- Departmental record keeping systems and processes are regularly monitored, audited and reviewed.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access

The right, opportunity, means of finding, using, or retrieving information.

Accountability

The principle that agencies and the individuals who are employed by them are responsible for the business transactions and decisions made and may be required to explain those transactions and decisions to others.

Active records

Those records that are retrieved and consulted frequently, or that contain information of immediate relevance to the current activities of the Department.

Appraisal

The process of determining which records are to be retained as archives and which will be destroyed.

Archival value

Archival value means a record has continuing administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential, historical or research value to the organization and/or the community and, as such, must be kept permanently as a State archive.

Archives

Departmental records that are of continuing value to the organization and/or the community. The archival management of electronic records, in records management, is a process of maintaining data indefinitely so that they remain permanently accessible into the future. This is distinct from "data archiving", which is a computing term used to describe the periodic transfer of data files off-line to a backup medium (eg magnetic tape or optical disk).

Business activity

An umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of the Department and its employees.

Classification

The process of devising and applying schemes, such as the Department's Keyword Classification Scheme, based on the business activities that generate records. Records are thereby categorised in systematic and consistent ways to facilitate their capture, retrieval, maintenance and disposal. Includes determining file-naming conventions.

Compound document

A compound document is one that is presented on more than one medium or in which more than one application is embedded. For example, a Word document with an Excel spreadsheet.

Content

Content is what conveys information, eg the text, symbols, numerals, images or sound. The content of a record should correctly reflect what was communicated or decided or what action was taken.

Context

Context is the background information relating to the business activity that resulted in a record being created or received (eg the systems, processes, transactions, metadata, and personnel involved).

Conversion

The process of copying records from one medium to another or from one format to another to ensure their continued accessibility. The process of transferring records from one medium to the next is sometimes also referred to as 'refreshing'. [Not to be confused with File Conversion].

Corporate record *(also referred to as a government record)*

A corporate record is a record in any format, **including email**, that documents the agency's business transactions. It contains information that is owned (created or received) by the organization, or one of its employees. A corporate record has ongoing administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential, historical, or research value to the agency. Corporate records must be captured into the agency's record keeping system.

Examples of corporate records are:

- A directive approving or authorizing an important course of action or expenditure.
- A record documenting the rationale behind policy change or development.
- Formal communications and/or transactions between staff relating to official business (eg a memorandum, report or submission).
- Formal communications and/or transactions between a government employee and an outside party.
- Business correspondence received from outside the organization
- Any email containing the types of information described in the above examples.

See also Ephemeral record

Custody

Refers to the responsibility for government records, usually based on physical possession. Custody does not mean legal ownership, or the right to control access to the records.

Disposal

The removal of records from the agency once they have reached the end of their inactive phase. Disposal occurs once inactive records have met statutory retention requirements and are no longer required for occasional reference or for legal or other reasons. Disposal action may involve destruction, migration between systems, retention for a further period, permanent retention or transfer of custody to State Records Office.

Disposal authority

A formal instrument that defines the retention periods and consequent disposal actions authorised for classes of records that are described within it. May be a Departmental retention and disposal schedule or a general disposal authority from the State Records Commission (SRC). The SRC authorises all disposal authorities in WA.

Document

A structured unit of recorded information in hard copy or electronic form. Includes printed matter, word processing documents, graphics files, database records, electronic mail items, spreadsheets, or other similarly recorded information managed as a discrete unit in information systems. To function as a record, a document must be captured into a corporate record keeping system and must incorporate relevant structural and contextual information.

Electronic records

Records that are created, received, communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment. An electronic record is any information that is input into a computer system, and processed, modified, stored and accessed via that system. Electronic records include data files, databases, machine readable indexes, word processing files, electronic spreadsheets, imaged documents, electronic mail and electronic messages, internet and intranet systems.

Email

Electronic mail (email) are messages sent through a computer system to general or private directories or electronic mail boxes, and which may originate from within or outside an organization.

Many email messages are corporate records and as such are government records. Other email messages may be classed as ephemeral records or may simply be personal email.

See also Corporate record, Ephemeral record, Personal email

Ephemeral record

An ephemeral record is a record in any format, **including email**, that has only short term facilitative value to the organization. A facilitative record has a business context and may be used to further a business activity but is not a business transaction itself.

An ephemeral record has little or no ongoing value to the organization and is generally not incorporated into the agency's record keeping system. Ephemeral records have no continuing administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential, historical, or research value to the agency and may be disposed of in accordance with an approved disposal authority.

Examples of ephemeral records are:

- Reference documents consisting of background information used solely to assist in the preparation of other records.
- Drafts where significant content in the draft is completely reproduced and incorporated in the final version of the record.
- Extra copies of documents, or published material kept by government employees purely for reference purposes.

See also Corporate record

Evidence

Information that can prove a fact. Not limited to the legal sense of the term. A government record is evidence of a business transaction.

Evidential value

Has value as evidence. The integrity and authenticity of the information in a record ensures its evidential value ie the record is clear proof or evidence of a business transaction.

Extranet

An intranet, or portion of an intranet, to which an organization allows access by selected external entities, such as individuals or companies considered partners of the organization.

See also Intranet.

File

An organised unit of documents accumulated during current use and kept together because they deal with the same subject, activity or transaction. Provides an auditable 'activity' or 'accountability' trail.

Government employee

A government employee, under the State Records Act, includes:

- A person who, under the Public Sector Management Act 1994, is a public service officer of a government organization; or
- A person who is engaged by a government organization, whether under a contract for services or otherwise (eg contractors, consultants, and anyone performing an outsourced service or function for the Department).

Government records (also referred to as corporate records)

Any record in any form created or received by a government organization, or by a government employee in the course of the employee's work, which records evidence of the organization's business activities or decisions. Under the State Records Act states a record may include:

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

Inactive records

Records that are seldom accessed or have been closed because a volume of a file is full, but which must be retained for occasional reference, to meet business or accountability purposes. These records are retained for the period determined by an approved disposal authority.

Indexing

Indexing is the process of allocating appropriate search terms to records to assist users in searching for, and retrieving, records from the system.

Information system

An information system is a system which stores and provides access to information, for example a business system. It is an organised collection of hardware, software, supplies, policies, procedures and people. An information system need not necessarily be an electronic system, it may be a manual system of managing information.

Intranet

A site, internal to an organization, which uses the same network technology and protocols as a public website, but is for internal use only.

See also [Extranet](#).

Metadata

Metadata is structured data about other data. It describes information objects, such as records, to ensure they are identifiable, accessible, meaningful and manageable. The descriptive information contains data about the context, content and structure of records and their management through time, for example, creator, creation date, title, or version number.

Migration

Migration is the periodic transfer of digital materials from one hardware /software configuration to another, or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation. When new technology is implemented, such as a new computer system or new software program, the records within the old system should be transferred ie migrated to the new one, while maintaining the characteristics of the records.

Ownership

The legal, physical and intellectual property rights over government records. The records may not be in the custody of an agency but they still remain the property of the organization.

Personal email

Personal email is private in nature and has nothing to do with the business of the Department. Personal email can be destroyed as soon as it is no longer useful. Where personal email incorporates both personal and work-related information it must be treated as a government record and retained for the period determined by the relevant disposal authority.

See also Corporate record, Ephemeral record

Primary record keeping system

The primary record keeping system captures, manages and provides access to government records relating to the full range of the Department's business activities. The primary record keeping system is managed by CIS and the custodianship of the records within this system remains with CIS, except where the records are kept at a decentralised location. The Department has a range of secondary record keeping systems, which capture, manage and provide access to other records relating to specific Departmental business activities.

See also Secondary record keeping system

Record keeping

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business activities in the form of recorded information. Record keeping is the responsibility of all government employees.

Record keeping system

A record keeping system is an information system which captures, manages and provides access to an organization's records over time. In its broadest sense, a record keeping system includes:

- the personnel managing and using the system;
- policies, guidelines, procedures, manuals and practices;
- the records;
- the electronic or manual system used to control the records; and
- software, hardware and other equipment and stationery.

The record keeping system may be a dedicated record keeping system, such as the Department's primary record keeping system, or may be one of many other types of business systems, databases, or paper-based systems which have a record keeping function.

A record keeping system may be referred to as a records management system (RMS), such as InfoRMS, or an electronic document management system (EDMS). These terms are generally used to describe the actual hardware/software package used to implement a record keeping system.

Records

Recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, that is created or received and maintained by an organization in the transaction of business and kept as evidence of such activity.

See also Government record

Records management

Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Registration

Involves recording metadata about a record and assigning the record a unique identifier within a record keeping system.

Retention and disposal schedule

See disposal authority.

Retention period

In relation to a record, means the period for which the record must be kept in accordance with regulatory requirements before disposal.

Secondary record keeping system

The Department has a range of secondary record keeping systems, which capture, manage and provide access to other records relating to specific Departmental business activities. The branch or section managing the record keeping system has custodianship of the records within the system, for example GIS is the custodian of the geographic information within the TENIS database, and People Services is the custodian of human resources records within Concept.

See also Primary record keeping system

State archive

A State archive is a government record that is to be retained permanently due to its continuing value to the organization and/or the community, ie administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential, historical or research value. State archives can include for example, rules and regulations, agreements, financial statements, policies, minutes and agendas and promotional material.

Structure

Structure is the physical format of a record (eg hard copy, electronic) and the arrangement of related elements of the record (such as, language, style, file reference, date, or boxes on a form and relationships between fields).

Technology dependent records

Records that are in such a form that information can be produced or made available from them only by means of the use of particular technology (eg computer software).

Thesaurus

A thesaurus is a complex alphabetical listing of all terms derived from an organization's business classification scheme. It acts as a guide in the allocation of classification terms to individual records. The thesaurus controls the vocabulary used in indexing, creating file titles and classifying records.

Tracking

Creating, capturing and maintaining information about records use and movement.

Vital records

Those records considered essential to the Department in the event of any disaster. Vital records can consist of both active and inactive records and include electronic records/information. The vital records contain information critical to the Department in:

- conducting its operations;
- establishing the rights and interests of the Department and/or its clients;
- re-establishing its functions in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Website

In this document the term website is a generic term used to refer to all types of web sites, including public websites such as the internet, intranets and extranets.

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