



Department for Culture and the Arts
State Records Office of Western Australia

Information Sheet

STARTING YOUR RESEARCH

Archival institutions, such as the State Records Office, document their holdings (the records for which they have custody) by their origin, according to the government body or agency which created or transferred the records. The State Records Office of Western Australia holds archives of past and present Western Australian state and local government agencies. To find the records you require you need to take the following steps:

- 1) **Locating an Agency.** In the **AGENCY INDEX FOR GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES** (located in the Search Room, Microfilm Area and the Enquiry Desk), look up the name of the agency you are interested in. If you do not know the agency's name, try to think of keywords which may appear in the title e.g. Land, Police, Environment, etc.

Next to the Agency name you will find the date range of the Agency and a reference number, which will direct you to an index for that Agency.

EG

LAND ADMINISTRATION , Department of	1986	WAA 43 AN 3
LANDS AND SURVEYS , Department of	1890 – 1986	WAA 42 AN 3

- 2) **Locating an index.** The reference numbers refer to the two systems of indexes and finding aids which have been used in the State Records Office. **AN** stands for **ARCHIVE NOTE**, a system which was used to list and describe records until 1986. It is no longer being added to. **WAA** stands for **WEST AUSTRALIAN AGENCY**, in the new **SERIES REGISTRATION SYSTEM (SRS)** now in use. Where both references are given this means that different records are listed in both indexes which should be checked. The indexes are located on shelves in the Search Room and in the Microfilm area.

Note the years of the Agency's existence and whether these correspond to the time period you are interested in.

3. **To find records in SRS:**

- a) **Locate a series**

- i) Go to the volumes with the **pink** labels. Look for your **WAA** number on the pink sheet.
- ii) The pink sheet notes the Agency's correct title, the dates it was in existence, a description of its functions and a list of any predecessor or successor agencies.

- iii) Immediately behind the pink Agency Sheet you will find **blue** sheets with details of the **series** created by the Agency.
 - iv) Look carefully at the titles on the **blue Series Sheets** and their descriptions until you find the series you are interested in. Note the **WAS** (WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SERIES) number from the Series chosen.
- b) Locate a consignment:**
- i) Go to the volumes with the blue labels, looking for the WAS number you noted from the previous step.
 - ii) Within the volume find the blue sheet which corresponds with the one you previously identified. Behind that, you will find **yellow** sheets giving details about **consignments** (or batches) of that group of records which have been received by the State Records Office.
- c) Locate an item:**
- i) The yellow Consignment sheet provides details about that particular consignment of records, and the first part of the individual listing of records. White continuation sheets follow on with the remainder of the listing. Identify the record, item or file number and year for the record you wish to see, completing one Call Slip for each item.

3) To find records in the AN system:

- i) Go to the volumes with the green labels and look for the AN number of the appropriate agency.
- ii) Within the AN you will find a cover sheet which describes the series received and listed within that AN. Divisions within the AN note accessions of records which have been transferred to the State Records Office on a given date.
- iii) Identify the series which contains the records you require. Browse through the listing(s) to identify the items you wish to see, noting Accession (similar to Consignment), item or file number and year. Complete one Call Slip for each item.

Hand in completed Call Slips at the Search Room Enquiry Desk.