



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Culture and the Arts**
State Records Office of Western Australia

State Records Office of WA

Archives Keeping Plan

August 2014



**VISION
of the
State Records Office**

To ensure the community has permanent access to the essential evidence of the business of government in Western Australia

**MISSION
of the
State Records Office**

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

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Definition of Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Introduction

1.1 Legislative background

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

The Commission approved the first Archives Keeping Plan in May 2003 in accordance with section 40(2) of the Act. A revised Plan was approved by the Commission in December 2008.

This document constitutes the third Archives Keeping Plan. This plan reflects changes in how State archives in the State archives collection (the Collection) are to be kept since the previous plan was approved.

1.2 Purpose of the Archives Keeping Plan

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

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

1.3 Functions of the State Archivist

The office of the Director of State Records is established under Part 9 of the Act. This position is formally known as the State Archivist and Executive Director of State Records (the State Archivist). The State Archivist and staff comprise the State Records Office (the SRO).

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

Section 35 of the Act defines what constitutes the Collection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.4 Operational arrangements

The SRO operates as a Directorate within the Department of the Culture and the Arts.

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

Services and functions associated with the management, preservation and access to the Collection is undertaken by the SRO's Archives, Control and Access team. This team is currently composed of 9.7 substantive FTE's.

1.5 Services provided to the SRO

Prior to the administrative separation of the SRO from the Library and Information Service of Western Australia (LISWA) on 1 July 2002, the State Archivist and the State Librarian jointly agreed to the continuation of certain services to the SRO by LISWA beyond the separation date.

A number of these services have subsequently been curtailed, including preservation and conservation services. The following is the only activity (pertaining to the Collection) currently performed by the State Library on behalf of the SRO:

- Building maintenance (including environmental controls) and security services at the Alexander Library Building.

The provision of building maintenance at the SRO's offsite storage facility is provided by the Department of Culture and the Arts.

The provision of the SRO's corporate ICT services is provided by the Department of Culture and the Arts.

1.6 Stakeholders

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

- The Minister for Culture and the Arts
- The State Records Commission
- The Department of Culture and the Arts
- State organizations as identified by Schedules 1, 2 & 3 of the *State Records Act 2000*
- Organizations representing researcher clients
- The Australian Society of Archivists (Inc.)
- The Western Australian community
- National and International Researchers.

2. What is the State archives collection?

2.1 What is an archive?

In general terms, an archive is a record identified for permanent retention to support ongoing informational and evidential purposes. The reasons for retaining such records typically include:

- “As long-term memory, enabling better quality planning, decision-making and action by providing for continuity, access to past experience, expertise and knowledge, and a historical perspective
- As a way of accessing the experience of others
- As evidence of continuing rights and obligations
- As instruments of power, legitimacy and accountability, facilitating social interaction and cohesion
- As a source for our understanding and identification of ourselves, our organizations and our society
- As vehicles for communicating political, social and cultural values.”¹

The common perception of archival records is of material that is old. Whilst this may be true to some degree, it would be more accurate to think of archival records by their *significance*. In the Western Australian jurisdiction, State archives should be able to be identified from their initial creation via processes associated with recordkeeping plans.

The Act defines a State archive as a State record (a parliamentary record or a government record) that is to be retained permanently. State archives are maintained in perpetuity and never to be destroyed.



SRO, Alien Registration certificates, Sunset Hospital, series 2115, item 23



SRO, *Plaint and Minute Book*, Perth Local Court, series 1385

¹ Judith Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives*, Port Melbourne, 1993.

2.2 What is the State archives collection?

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

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

2.3 Historical overview

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

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

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

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

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

2.4 Collection summary

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

- Aboriginal affairs
- Birth, death and marriage registration
- Colonial administration
- Education and schooling
- Health system and hospital management

- Justice system: convict administration as well as court, police and prisoner information
- Land administration
- Local government administration
- Mining and industrial development
- Passenger arrivals and shipping information
- Public works: public architecture and engineering
- Railway infrastructure.

Quantitatively, the Collection currently comprises:

- Date range of the Collection: **1827 – 2001**
- Size of the Collection: **14,864 linear metres²**
- Number of State archives in the Collection: **2,361,888 items³**;
- Number of government organizations (past and present) archives have been received from: **1838 agencies**;
- Physical formats in the Collection:
 - Paper (correspondence files, registers, cards, maps/plans, etc.);
 - Photographic prints;
 - Microforms (microfilm, aperture cards, microfiche);
 - Audio tapes;
 - Digital copies (from the SRO's in-house digitization program);
 - Some archives in the collection are contained on additional specialized materials (e.g. linen, vellum, plastic, etc.).

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

2.5 Who uses the Collection?

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

- Genealogy (family history)
- Academic research
- Heritage-based research
- Local studies
- Native Title and other legal research
- Establishing personal rights or for personal evidential purposes
- Ongoing evidential and informational business needs of government organizations.

² Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities, *CAARA Archival Statistics 2011-12* (sourced from <http://www.caara.org.au/index.php/archival-statistics/> on 18 February 2014).

³ Ibid.

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

- Community users: **65%**
- Government organizations: **35%**⁴

2.6 SRO Collection Policy

The SRO has in place a policy that provides guidance for determining what is to be added to the Collection. Although section 35 of the Act provides direction as to what the Collection is to comprise, the Collection Policy provides qualitative criteria to define what should be added to the Collection.

The SRO's Collection Policy was developed with a view to being integrated into existing appraisal (retention and disposal) processes in order to provide consistent high-level guidance for such decision making.

⁴ Ibid. Survey data from *CAARA Archival Statistics* show these figures to be consistent with those of previous years.

3. Key issues

3.1 Compliance issues

SRC Standard 5: Compulsory Transfer of Archives (2002) establishes principles for the transfer of State archives by government organizations to the Collection.

State archives are transferred to the Collection in accordance with sections 32 and 35 of the Act. Subsection 16(6)(b) provides provision for the transfer of State archives to the Collection at a time other than that prescribed by Section 32 (e.g. prior to the archives becoming 25 years old).

State organizations wishing to retain State archives beyond 25 years require approval from the State Records Commission. *SRC Standard 7 – Storage of Archives (2008)* provides minimum compliance requirements for organizations wishing to retain archives beyond 25 years.

The SRO has been unable to accept transfers of State archives from State organizations since July 2001. The State Archivist has periodically advised organizations of this situation in writing. In 2009 the State Archivist issued *Directions for keeping hardcopy State archives awaiting transfer to the State Records Office* for the purpose of ensuring that State archives are managed appropriately until such time as transfer can take place. This fulfills the State Archivist's legislative obligation required under section 32(4) of the Act.

3.2 Lack of archival storage capacity

The inability of the SRO to accept transfers of State archives from government organizations is a key issue preventing the objectives of the Act being fully achieved. Survey and analysis work conducted by the SRO shows that there is a backlog of over 50,000 linear metres of State archives currently held by government organizations awaiting transfer to the Collection.

The most recent business case for delivering a new archives storage facility and associated services was prepared in November 2010 but was unsuccessful in receiving funding. The business case is subject to revision and resubmission.

3.3 The need for a digital archives repository

To date, the SRO has been unable to accept custody of State archives in digital form from government organizations due to lack of appropriate infrastructure. In the interim, *Public Records Policy 8 – Policy for the ongoing management of electronic records designated as having archival value (1992)* places responsibility upon organizations to maintain their digital archives and to implement strategies to ensure their ongoing preservation. *SRC Standard 8 – Digital Recordkeeping (2008)*

provides minimum compliance criteria for organizations retaining digital records, including digital archives.

The degree to which digital archives are being properly managed and preserved by organizations is not fully known. The issues relating to digital permanence are significant. Without a dedicated digital archive facility and program there remain risks to the integrity and longevity of State archives in digital format.

A business case for establishing a digital archive was prepared in 2006 but was unsuccessful in receiving funding. The SRO conducted a pilot project to research digital archive methodologies and needs in 2009. Planning is currently being undertaken to establish preliminary digital archive capability.

3.4 Photographic and audio-visual records

Under the terms of the Act, photographic and audio-visual records of archival value are required to be transferred to the custody of the SRO unless an organization's recordkeeping plan states otherwise.

Apart from several isolated groups of records, the SRO has not received photographic or audio-visual records in any great quantity. Prior to the commencement of the Act, the Library and Information Service of WA's Pictorial Branch and State Film Archives accepted custody of government photographs and government film respectively. Significant collections of government photographs and government film transferred to these branches continue to be managed and maintained by the State Library. The transfer of this material to the custody of the SRO remains subject to further negotiation with the State Library.

3.5 Estrays

From time to time, the SRO receives government records that have been in the custody of private individuals/organizations. Government records that have left government custody, for whatever reason, are termed "estrays". Estrays that are returned or recovered and are deemed to have archival significance are added to the Collection under section 35(d) of the Act. In circumstances whereby an estray is deemed to not have archival significance, the State Archivist may return such material to the custody of the government organization (or its successor) from which the record originated.

It is understood that there may be government records still in the custody of non-government hands that require delivery to the SRO. Section 52 of the Act gives the State Archivist powers to ensure estrays are recovered.

4. Transfer of State archives

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

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

The business processes, policies/procedures and vital records for transfer practices outlined below are those that were in place prior to transfers ceasing in 2001. Transfer processes will require comprehensive review prior to archive transfers recommencing.

4.1 Business practices and processes

4.1.1 Transfer requests

The transfer processes in place in 2001 were geared towards organizations initiating transfer requests. When a transfer request was received by telephone or email, SRO staff would provide external or on-site instruction on preparing records for transfer, depending on the organization's needs.

The SRO would conduct preliminary analysis at the transfer request stage to ensure the records proposed for transfer were identified as archives in the organization's approved Disposal Authority.

4.1.2 Organizations to prepare transfers

The SRO required organizations to conduct the work in preparing their records for archival transfer. This entailed that the organization:

- Ensured records to be transferred were boxed in a strict numbering sequence (e.g. by file number)
- Purchased and used approved archive boxes
- Stamped all records with a SRO consignment stamp
- Ensured all records were electronically listed
- Conducted any other physical processing of the records as instructed by the SRO.

4.1.3 Transfer documentation

Prior to transferring archives to the Collection, the SRO required an organization to submit transfer documentation as per the requirements outlined in the SRO's *Records Disposal: A Handbook for Government Agencies*. Of critical importance in this documentation was the manifest (or electronic listing) of archives to be transferred. The SRO would conduct further analysis of the transfer manifest to ensure records proposed for transfer were identified as archives in the organization's approved Disposal Authority.

This stage of the process would also allow any final problem solving with the proposed transfer before it was accepted into the Collection.

4.1.4 Receipt of transfer

When the records were physically transferred to the Collection, the SRO would finalise documentation processes and upload the transfer manifest to its archival management system.

4.2 Policies and procedures

Procedures for the transfer of State archives (including their arrangement and documentation) were published in the *Records Disposal: A Handbook for Government Agencies (Sections 11 to 17)*. The 2000 edition of the Handbook was distributed to all State and local government organizations. The Handbook was withdrawn from use in 2008.

Advice to organizations regarding the transfer of records to the Collection is now available via the SRO website.

4.3 Vital records

Control records for transfer processes maintained by the SRO are:

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

4.4 Matters to be addressed

4.4.1 Review of transfer processes

Once new archive facilities/infrastructure is available, SRO will review its transfer procedures to ensure the most efficient processes are in place. Transfer procedures which were in place prior to 2001 were dependent upon manual systems. The SRO has identified the need to more fully automate its business processes to facilitate a more streamlined transfer process.

Actions

Prior to archive transfers recommencing, review transfer procedures with a view to improving the automation of business processes.

Ensure revised transfer documentation is available from the SRO website.

4.4.2 Review of transfer priorities

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

The SRO estimates that there is a backlog of 50,000 linear metres of State archives still in the custody of government organizations awaiting transfer.

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

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

Actions

Develop a Transfer Prioritization Strategy that incorporates the aforementioned matters.

5. Intellectual Control

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

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

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

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

5.1 Business practices and processes

5.1.1 Method of documenting State archives

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

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

5.1.2 Computer systems

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

In 2014, the SRO began implementing a new archive management system to provide for improved search / archive display capability.

5.1.3 Register of State archives

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

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

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

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

5.2 Policies and procedures

The SRO maintains a series registration system procedure manual for providing instruction on documenting archives transferred to the Collection.

The SRO maintains user manual documentation for its archive management system.

5.3 Vital records

The control record for the SRO's cataloguing process is the Intellectual Control module of its archive management system.

In addition, the SRO maintains:

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

5.4 Matters to be addressed

5.4.1 Improved descriptive information

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

Action

Establish ongoing programs to improve descriptive information to the Collection to aid client access.

6. Physical Control

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

Members of the public may only access original archives in the Collection at the SRO Search Room. Government organizations may access original archives in the Collection on a loan basis, subject to the SRO's Loans Policy.

6.1 Business practices and processes

6.1.1 Physical arrangement of the Collection

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

The consignment number has a two-fold purpose:

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

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

Currently, detailed location coding against physical storage areas and shelving units is being planned to allow for precise mapping of archives in the Collection against their physical location.

6.1.2 System for retrieving, replacing and tracking archives

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

With the introduction of a new archive management system, this process will be partly automated to allow for system-generated call slips. The archive management

system will also provide for electronic tracking of archives being retrieved and issued for public or government use.

6.2 Policies and Procedures

The SRO maintains an internal *Policies and Procedures Manual for Loans Team Processes* which provides instruction on archive retrieval and associated protocols. This manual is being updated to reflect changes in business practice with the introduction of the new archive management system.

6.3 Vital Records

The SRO call slips used for retrieving and replacing archives form the vital records for physical control of the Collection. Once the new archive management system is introduced, archive movement/tracking information in the system will form part of the vital record.

SRO's intermediary location guides for archives are also deemed a vital record.

6.4 Matters to be addressed

6.4.1 Fuller automation of Collection control processes

The introduction of the new archive management system will provide improvements to electronically tracking the movement of State archives in the Collection for public / government use. Further improvements have been identified to ensure:

- Archives not yet entered into the system can still be tracked via the system;
- Fuller automation (using barcoding or RFIDs) is adopted to improve the efficiency and accuracy of archive movements / tracking.

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

7. Physical Storage

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

This section also addresses disaster management planning for the Collection.

7.1 Business practices and processes

7.1.1 Physical storage areas

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

7.1.2 Building maintenance and structural integrity

The Facilities Management Branch of the State Library is responsible for building maintenance at the Alexander Library Building. The Department of Culture and the Arts is responsible for building maintenance at the SRO's offsite storage facility.

7.1.3 Environmental conditions

Archives stored on the 4th floor of the Alexander Library Building are maintained in environmental conditions that are required to meet accepted archival standards for paper-based records.⁵

Archival maps and plans that are housed on the 3rd floor of the Alexander Library Building (in the Library's stack area) are stored in an air conditioned environment only and do not meet the accepted archival standard for paper-based records.

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

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

⁵ The specifications in the National Archives of Australia's *Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records* (2002) have been used to benchmark environmental conditions for archival storage. These specifications also apply to *SRC Standard 7 – Storage of Archives*.

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

7.1.4 Fire detection and suppression

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

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

7.1.5

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

7.1.6 Access to storage areas

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

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

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

7.1.7 Shelving

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

7.1.8 Containers and packaging

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

The SRO has had to curtail its archives repackaging program due to lack of resources.

7.1.9 Compliance matrix

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

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

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

7.1.10 Business continuity and disaster management planning

The SRO has in place procedures for Collection disaster management.

The Department of Culture and the Arts has in place a business continuity plan. This plan incorporates SRO business continuity needs.

7.2 Policies and procedures

The SRO has internal procedures in place for:

- Disaster management for the Collection

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

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

7.3 Vital records

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

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

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

7.4 Matters to be addressed

7.4.1 Rehousing program

The SRO plans to examine the costs and logistics associated with a phased box replacement program to ensure all non-acid free boxes used to house the Collection are replaced with archival quality, acid-free boxes.

Action
Assess the need for a box replacement program for the whole of the Collection, as well as assess the long-term risks associated with not implementing such a program. Scope the costs and logistics of such a box program and how it should be implemented.

8. Preservation

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

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

8.1 Business practices and processes

8.1.1 SRO preservation program

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

- Micrographics – Advice and technical support on the preparation and microfilming of internal and external records to archival standards; storage of microfilm masters and working negatives.
- Digitization – Scanning of internal archival records to an agreed specification;
- Conservation – Advice and technical support on the conservation of archival materials, including monitoring of storage environments and conservation treatments and repackaging to preserve archival records.
- Public orders – Reproduction of archival records for private research purposes or publication.

This service has since been curtailed. The SRO currently operates a limited preservation program.

8.1.2 Copying of archives

Although a formal copying program is currently not in place, the SRO utilizes a third-party provider for project-based digitization / microfilming.

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

8.1.3 Government Agency Archives Microfilming Program

Since 1996 the SRO has copied (microfilmed / digitised) State archives that are held by government agencies as a component of the Preservation Program. This service is known as the Government Agency Archives Microfilming Program. The service was initially free but since 2001 participating agencies have been charged for the

costs of materials required to copy the records. Information on this program is available on the SRO website.

In some instances, original records are destroyed following the microfilming of them under this program. Such destruction is only carried out in accordance with an approved disposal authority. As such, destruction of such records is regulated through the recordkeeping plan regime rather than through the mechanism of the Archives Keeping Plan.

8.1.4 Public Orders

On the SRO's behalf, the State Library's Preservation Branch provides high resolution copying of archives at the request of public clients. Typically, such public orders comprise maps/plans that are too large to be copied without specialized equipment or consist of archival material that clients seek to have reproduced for display or publication purposes. Public orders are a fee-based service.

8.2 Policies and Procedures

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

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

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

8.3 Vital Records

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

Government Agency Archives Microfilming Program applications and the SRO's register for this program also constitute vital records.

8.4 Matters to be addressed

8.4.1 Review of copying strategies

At present, the SRO conducts copying of archives in the Collection via microfilming and digitization. The ongoing sustainability of microfilming as a copying strategy, and the suitability of this type of copying to meet the SRO's business needs, requires review. Such a review needs to be conducted in tandem with developing an Access Strategy for the Collection.

Action

Conduct a review of the SRO's copying strategies in alignment with an Access Strategy for the Collection. Plan and implement any changes in business practices that arise from the review.

8.4.1 Preservation survey of the Collection

As yet, no comprehensive preservation survey of the Collection has been undertaken although there have been specific surveys in previous years for discreet groups of records. Although a long-term and resource intensive exercise, a preservation survey would provide for a more holistic understanding of the preservation needs of the Collection and would flag potential preservation risks not yet identified.

Action

Scope the logistics and methodology to undertake a comprehensive preservation survey of the Collection.

9. Access

Under the terms of the Act, the State Archivist is required to facilitate public access to the Collection and to provide “appropriate facilities and services to enable them (the archives) to be effectively used for administrative requirements and for study and research.”⁶

9.1 Business practices and processes

9.1.1 SRO website

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

- Advice to the community on how to access the Collection at the SRO Search Room
- Detailed collection guides to frequently used areas of the Collection
- Information Sheets on specific topics / sets of records.

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

Website maintenance procedures are documented in the SRO recordkeeping plan.

9.1.2 Online catalogue

In 2004, the SRO launched its web catalogue to the Collection. This catalogue is accessible via the homepage of the SRO website. The web catalogue lists individual archives in the Collection as well as providing their contextual information. The catalogue also provides access to archives in the Collection that have been digitized.

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

9.1.3 SRO Search Room

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

⁶ Sect. 73(1)(c)(iii) of the Act.

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

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

9.1.4 Research services

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

9.1.5 Loans to government organizations

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

Prior to 2006, organizations were able to borrow any archives from the Collection which they previously had access to. Since then, the SRO has introduced a loans policy which sets limits on what an organization may borrow. For archives which cannot be lent under this policy, government staff are requested to view the material at the SRO Search Room.

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

9.1.6 Restricted access archives

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

Section 15(1) of the *State Records (Consequential Provisions) Act 2000* entailed that a review of the access status of all restricted access archives in the Collection be conducted within 5 years of proclamation of the Act. This review was completed in 2007 and the State Records Commission ratified all decisions relating to restricted access archives in the Collection.

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

As a result of the review, many archives in the Collection that were previously restricted are now open access archives.

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

9.1.7 Fees and charges

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

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

9.1.8 Public programs and outreach services

The SRO promotes access to the Collection via a series of annual public programs including:

- the Margaret Medcalf Award for Excellence in Research;
- The Cabinet Papers Release (from their 30 year access embargo);
- The Geoffrey Bolton Lecture; and
- Regular public seminars on aspects of the Collection or on research.

The SRO also participates in regional community-based talks and tours promoting access to the Collection. These talks and tours are conducted on demand.

9.2 Policies and procedures

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

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

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

9.3 Vital Records

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

9.4 Matters to be addressed

9.4.1 Access Strategy

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

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

- Client-preferred access mechanisms
- Consolidation of SRO finding aids and indexes
- The provision of web access to digitized copies of core sets of the Collection
- The introduction of 'digitization on demand' services (i.e. digitization of State archives) for public clients and government organizations
- Integration of digital access services with a Digital Archive
- Consideration of an ongoing outreach and public programs activities to support access to the Collection and to educate SRO clients
- Sustainable approaches for access and research services.

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

9.4.2 Monitoring of restricted access archive decisions

Subsequent to the review of restricted access archives that was conducted in 2007, the State Records Commission is required to review these restricted access decisions on a 5 yearly basis as per the requirement of Sect. 37(5) of the Act. A review of restricted access decisions was conducted in 2012.

Action
Conduct a further review of restricted access archive decisions, for records in the Collection, in 2017.