



STATE RECORDS COMMISSION

**General Disposal Authority  
for  
Source Records**

**RD 2016002**

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background**

The *State Records Act 2000* (the Act) provides for the keeping of State records and for related purposes.

With the general shift towards and reliance on digital records, State organizations may digitize records created or received in physical format (source records) as part of normal business processes and activities. Under the Act, a State organization's Recordkeeping Plan may provide for State records to be reproduced in another form and for the destruction of the source records if the reproductions are kept.

This *General Disposal Authority for Source Records* (this Authority) (RD 2016002) is the official and continuing authority that allows for the legal destruction of source records that have been successfully reproduced (digitized).

## **1.2 Definitions**

Refer to the *Glossary of Terms* produced by the State Records Office of Western Australia (the SRO).

## 2. USE OF THIS AUTHORITY

### 2.1 Scope of this Authority

This Authority only applies to source records created or received by a State organization which have been reproduced (i.e. a digitized version is created) and the organization intends to destroy the source records.

The destruction of source records **can only** be conducted if it is in accordance with:

- The State organization's Recordkeeping Plan; **and**
- This Authority; **and**
- The State Records Office Guideline - *Digitization Specification*; **and**
- The minimum compliance requirements of *State Records Commission Standard 8 - Principle 5*.

This Authority supersedes RD 2009027.

### 2.2 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

Legislation that affects the creation, retention and disposal of State records includes, but is not limited to, the:

- *Criminal Code Act 1913*;
- *Electronic Transactions Act 2011*;
- *Evidence Act 1906*;
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992*;
- *Local Government Act 1995*;
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*; and
- *State Records Act 2000* (the Act).

The retention and disposal of State records falls primarily under the Act. Under the Act, every State organization must have and operate an approved Recordkeeping Plan and the organization and its employees must comply with the Recordkeeping Plan.

Disposal authorities comprise the retention and disposal component of the Recordkeeping Plan. Disposal authorities identify which State records are State archives (i.e. permanent value records) and the retention periods for those records that are not State archives

(i.e. temporary value records). Temporary value State records must be retained for the designated minimum retention period before they may be destroyed.

State records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with:

- an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule for the functional records of a State organization; or
- an approved Sector Disposal Authority for the functional records of a group of State organizations within a defined sector; and
- the *General Disposal Authority for State Government Information*; or
- the *General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records* (for local government use only).

### **2.3 Compliance and Risk Assessment**

Before developing and implementing policy and procedures for the digitization and subsequent destruction of source records, organizations must conduct a compliance and risk assessment to ensure that the processes are appropriate for the organization's business needs.

Matters to be considered include the requirements of the organization's legislative, regulatory and policy environment for the conduct of its functions and business activities.

### **2.4 Quality Assurance**

Digitization program policies and procedures must be in place to ensure that the quality of the reproductions (i.e. digitized versions) meets the required standard, and that safeguards are in place to ensure the authenticity, integrity, reliability and usability of the reproduction, including but not limited to:

- comprehensive digitization procedures in accordance with best practice, such as AS/NZS ISO 13028:2012 *Information and documentation - Implementation guidelines for digitization of records*;
- staff training in digitization procedures;
- procedures for the creation and management of digital files;
- quality assurance checks to ensure that source records have been completely digitized – that is, all pages or parts of a record have been scanned;

- the registration of the reproductions in an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) or business information system; and
- the process is such that the reproduction can be certified as having the same evidential value as the source record.

### 3. THIS AUTHORITY

#### 3.1 Destruction of source records is permitted ONLY IF ALL these conditions are met:

1. The organization's digitization program / processes is approved by the organization's CEO (or authorized delegate) and is included in the organization's Recordkeeping Plan; **and**
2. The digitization program / processes meets the minimum compliance requirements of Principle 5 of *SRC Standard 8: Managing Digital Information*; **and**
3. The file formats of the reproductions meet the requirements of the *Digitization Specification*; **and**
4. The reproductions are registered or captured in an EDRMS or incorporated into an official corporate business information system at the time of digitization; **and**
5. The reproductions have the required degree of authenticity, integrity, reliability and usability necessary to substitute for the source records for the purpose for which the source records were created or kept; **and**
6. The source records are identified in, or covered by, an approved disposal authority; **and**
7. The reproductions will be kept and be accessible for as long as required under the relevant approved disposal authority.

#### 3.2 Destruction of source records is NOT PERMITTED IF ANY of these conditions are met:

1. The records are State archives which were created before the year 2000.

The original records must be retained by the organization as State archives until they are transferred in their original format to the State archives collection, or retained by the organization under *SRC Standard 7: State Archives Retained by Government Organizations*.

2. The records have significant aesthetic or intrinsic value in their original format.

That is, the records have a cultural, iconic, heritage or aesthetic value as a physical artefact (for example: original proclamations, charters, testimonials, intergovernmental treaties or artwork).

3. The records are subject to a legislative or Government requirement that the original record format be kept.
4. The records are State archives which are on loan to the organization from the State archives collection.
5. The records are not identified in, or are not covered by, an approved disposal authority (consult the SRO).

### **3.3 Responsibility for Destruction of State Records**

It is the responsibility of the principal officer of a State organization to ensure that State records are destroyed in accordance with this Authority and other relevant disposal authorities approved by the State Records Commission. Officers undertaking disposal are to ensure that source records identified for destruction have been quality checked in accordance with the organization's quality assurance methodology, and that the records do not fall within the scope of section 3.2 of this Authority.

Lists or schedules of source records due for destruction should be referred to an authorized senior officer for review and authorization of destruction. Evidence of the destruction of source records should be included as metadata in the relevant EDRMS and in any other relevant business information system.

*Note:* This Authority applies only to source records which are identified in, or covered by, an approved disposal authority. Please consult the SRO about any State records not covered by an approved disposal authority.

### 3.4 Retention and Destruction of Source Records

Source records are to be kept for an appropriate length of time after digitizing for quality control purposes, being:

No.	Source Record	Retention
3.4.1	<p>Day-to-day, high volume administrative “transactional” records.</p> <p>e.g. accounting records such as purchase orders, invoices, receipts, etc.</p>	<p>Retain source records until accuracy and integrity of the reproduction has been verified – only then may the source records be destroyed.</p>
3.4.2	<p>All other source records not included in 3.4.1.</p>	<p>Retain source records <b>at least 6 months</b> to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital reproductions have been created in accordance with the <i>Digitization Specification</i>; and</li> <li>• all quality control and assurance procedures and checks are successfully completed; and</li> <li>• re-digitization of the source records has been undertaken where needed.</li> </ul> <p>Only then may the source records be destroyed.</p>

#### **4. REFERENCES**

State Records Commission Standards and State Records Office Guidelines are available on the SRO website. <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au>

Standards Australia Limited and Standards New Zealand. *AS/NZS ISO 13028 Information and documentation - Implementation guidelines for digitization of records*, Standards Australia Limited, Sydney; Standards New Zealand, Wellington, 2012.

#### **5. MORE INFORMATION**

For more information relating to this Authority please contact the State Records Office of Western Australia ([www.sro.wa.gov.au](http://www.sro.wa.gov.au)).