



Loans of State Archives to Government Agencies

Policy

Updated 31 May 2011

1. Maintenance and Custody of the State Archives Collection

The State Records Office is charged with the responsibility for the proper maintenance and custody of records in the State archives collection. To ensure that this responsibility is being met, the State Records Office aims to minimize potential risks to the physical integrity of archives in the collection.

Section 50(3) of the *State Records Act 2000* states: "A government organisation that had access to a State archive before it was transferred to the State archives collection is, on application to the Director, entitled to have access to it at any reasonable time."

Section 51 of the *State Records Act 2000* then states: "For the purpose of ensuring the safe custody of and protecting the condition of a State archive, whether in the State archives collection or not, the Director may attach conditions to a person or a government organisation having access to it."

In essence, Section 50(3) provides a government organisation with the right of access to State archives under its administrative responsibility but Section 51 allows the State Records Office to determine how that access may be given. Further legislative references that also relate to this matter are stated in Section 32(6) and Section 36 of the *State Records Act 2000*.¹

¹ *State Records Act 2000* Section 32(6): "When a State archive is transferred to the State archives collection by a State organization: (a) the organisation's record keeping plan ceases to apply to the archive; and (b) the organization ceases to have control of it".
Section 36(1): "The Director has control of the State archives that are in the State archives collection."
Section 36(2): "The Director must keep the State archives that are in the State archives collection in accordance with the archives keeping plan."

2. Rationale

This policy has been produced to establish the criteria by which a government agency may borrow records from the State archives collection.

3. Criteria for Loan of State Archives

State archives will only be lent to government organisations in accordance with the following criteria:

- Government organisations may only recall for temporary loan those State archives that are under their administrative responsibility.

- Government organisations cannot on-loan State archives to other government organisations or third parties without prior permission of the State Records Office.

- The maximum period a government organisation may borrow a State archive is one calendar month unless the government organisation has sought and been granted permission from the State Records Office for an extended loan. In such cases, the State Records Office may impose a date by which the archive/s on loan must be returned to its custody.

- An overdue charge may be incurred if a government organisation does not return a State archive to the State Records Office by the due date stated..²

- All government organisations are required to ensure that State archives on loan are treated and handled with appropriate care as outlined in the State Records Office Preservation Policy..³

- Government organisations that have borrowed State archives must not alter the records in any way:
 - folios (pages) must not be added or removed;
 - file numbers or file titles must not be changed;
 - file covers must not be removed or replaced;
 - writing may not be added to any part of the record;
 - self-stick notes such as post-it notes must not be affixed to files.

- Government organisations that have borrowed State archives must not attempt to perform any repairs or physical treatments to the records without prior consultation and approval from the State Records Office. If government organisations have concerns about the physical state of records they have borrowed, or if they have identified damage to the records, these concerns should be reported directly to the State Records Office rather than the organisations attempting such repairs themselves.

² Overdue charge of \$10** per record per month applies (** as periodically reviewed)

³ State Records Office of WA Preservation Policy: <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/government/preservation-policy.asp>

- The following categories of State archives will not be lent to government organisations unless exceptional circumstances warrant such requests (in such circumstances, permission must first be sought from and granted by the State Records Office):
 - any archive older than 75 years;
 - bound volumes/registers;
 - maps, plans or records in similar format;
 - audio/visual material (including photographic prints or negatives);
 - any record that is shown to be in fragile or damaged condition, or
 - the loan of which may pose a risk to the physical integrity of the record.

- If State archives are not regarded as suitable for loan, government organisations may access these State archives in the State Records Office Search Room. In such circumstances, the same access and copying protocols apply to government organisations as for public clients.⁴

The State Records Office reserves the right to limit all or part of a government organisation's access to State archives to the State Records Office Search Room if the State Records Office considers that that government organisation has not abided by this policy.

⁴ State Records Office of WA Search Room conditions: <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/about/searchroom.asp>