



## Information Sheet

# Management of Information Following Administrative Change

## Administrative Change

An administrative change refers to a change in the way that government business is allocated between government organizations. It is also known as Machinery of Government change. Administrative change can occur at any time, depending upon government policy. There are several types of administrative change, including:

- transfer of business (or function) from one government organization to another;
- transfer of business (or function) to or from another government jurisdiction;
- abolition of a government organization, with its business (or function) being absorbed by central government; and
- boundary changes, in the case of local government.

When these changes occur it is essential that the majority of recorded information, relating to those business activities, remains with the government organization that created the records. Government organizations involved with administrative change must ensure the: effective business continuity; accountability of government and preservation of the historical record of government; and its provenance.

The following guidelines are provided to assist with maintaining the integrity of government records during administrative change.

## What happens to the records?

**NB:** the use of the term “Records” is intended to mean all government recorded information (hardcopy; digital; data; metadata; etc) relevant to a function or business activity.

The basic principle to remember with any administrative change is that, for the most part, records remain with the originating organization.

To assist with continuity of the function/s:

1. copies of records of current activities relating to the function/s being transferred can be provided to the organization that will be continuing the work;
2. alternatively, only the current and active records relevant to that function can be transferred;
3. non-current or legacy records relating to the function may be loaned to the receiving organization for a specified period of time;
4. loaned records must ultimately be returned to the originating organization; and
5. formal arrangements regarding the temporary custody of records and future access to legacy records should be established.

Where records of the function are maintained in electronic systems, consideration must be given to the applications, systems and media used to capture, store and manage those records. If there is little or no compatibility between the electronic systems of the respective agencies, transfer could be complicated.



## Organizations relinquishing a function

1. Identify **all** records relating to the function, regardless of format, currency or storage location.
2. Close all records relating to the function. Electronic records should be closed and access restricted to “read only” to prevent any alteration to existing records.
3. Prior to transfer, conduct a disposal program on those records legally able to be destroyed or identified for transfer to the State Archives Collection.
4. Consult with the organization receiving the function and provide a list of all records held relating to the function.
5. Where appropriate, provide **copies** of current records to enable the receiving organization to continue the function/s.
6. Where appropriate, provide the **current and active records only**, to the receiving organization.
7. Formalise arrangements for other, non-current or legacy records to be loaned to the receiving organization for a specified period of time.
8. Formalise arrangements for the receiving organization to access legacy records relating to the function after return of the loaned records.
9. Formalise arrangements for the relinquishing organization to gain access to transferred records for legal or functional purposes going forward.
10. Maintain a register of copied records; transferred records; and records loaned to the receiving organization.
11. Ensure the transfer of records is identified in the Retention and Disposal Schedule.
12. Ensure the transfer of records is identified in the Recordkeeping Plan.
13. Send a register of transferred records to the State Records Office.

**NB:** Please contact the State Records Office if records and data are being relinquished to a different tier of government or to another State or Territory jurisdiction.



## Organizations receiving a function

1. Consult with the organization relinquishing the function and negotiate the type and format of records required to continue the function.
2. Negotiate the format of, and conditions for, those records to be transferred – copies; current and active; short term loan; hard copy; digital etc.
3. Acquire a register of records to be transferred or loaned.
4. On transfer, check copied; transferred or loaned records for completeness against registers supplied by the relinquishing organization.
5. **Copies** of current and active records of the function/s received from the relinquishing organization should be incorporated into the receiving organization's recordkeeping system.
6. **Transferred Hard Copy Records** must be closed and maintained as though they were still records of the relinquishing organization.
  - 6.1. No attempt should be made to remove file covers, renumber, change file titles or in any way destroy the identity of those records.
7. **Transferred Electronic / Digital Records** should be maintained as read only until migration into the receiving organization's systems, without loss of data, is achieved.
8. **Transferred Records** must be managed in accordance with the relinquishing organization's Recordkeeping Plan, until the receiving organization's Plan is amended accordingly.
9. New records created and received in the course of continuing the function must be cross referenced to the transferred records for completeness.
10. New records created and received in the course of continuing the function should be registered and classified in accordance with the receiving organization's Recordkeeping Plan.
11. All records (except loaned records) relating to the function must be incorporated into the organization's records Retention and Disposal Schedule.
12. **Records loaned** to the receiving organization for the purpose of continuing the function **must not** be incorporated into the recordkeeping system.



## Organizations to be abolished

1. All records (administrative and functional) relating to the business activities of the organization to be abolished **must** be transferred to the government organization that is absorbing the functions and activities – please follow steps above.
2. Should the business activity along with the organization be abolished, all records (administrative and functional) **must** be transferred to the central government organization designated to accept responsibility for those records.  
**NB:** if there is no continuing government organization, contact the State Records Office for advice.
3. All records from the abolished organization must be closed. Electronic records should be closed and access restricted to “read only” to prevent any alteration to existing records.
4. No attempt should be made to remove file covers, renumber, change file titles or in any way destroy the identity of those records.
5. All records must be managed and disposed of in accordance with the former organization’s Recordkeeping Plan until they can be legally destroyed or lodged with the State Archives Collection.
6. Notify the State Archivist of the abolition of the organization and arrangements for the government records, as per section 8 of the *State Records Act 2000*.

## Archiving websites after an administrative change

As websites are considered a record documenting the interaction between a government organization and the Western Australian public, a snapshot of the old and new sites should be taken and maintained as a permanent record.

For further information, contact the State Records Office on (08) 9427 3661 or via email at [sro@sro.wa.gov.au](mailto:sro@sro.wa.gov.au)