



STATE RECORDS COMMISSION

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## **SRC Standard 2**

# **RECORDKEEPING PLANS**

**A Recordkeeping Standard for State Organizations**

**State Records Commission of WA  
Perth, Western Australia  
February 2002**

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Table of Contents**

Definitions	2
Purpose	4
Background	4
Scope	4
Principle 1 – Proper and Adequate Records	5
Principle 2 – Policies and Procedures	6
Principle 3 – Language Control	8
Principle 4 – Preservation	9
Principle 5 – Retention and Disposal	10
Principle 6 – Compliance	12
Bibliography	13

## SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans

### DEFINITIONS

**Disposal** – refers to the removal of records from the organization once they have reached the inactive phase, and their subsequent destruction, or permanent retention as State archives.

**Disposal Authority** – the document authorising the disposal of records. This may take the form of a Retention and Disposal Authority or Schedule, an Ad Hoc Disposal Authority or a Disposal List, which has been approved. The State Records Commission is the authorizing body for disposal authorities.

**File titling system** – is a listing or outline of file titles in use in the organization, regardless of format.

**General Disposal Authority** – a document designed to provide consistency throughout government organizations in disposal activities and decisions. It covers records common to all State organizations such as Human Resource Management and Financial and Accounting. The General Disposal Authority for Local Government covers records common to local governments and may eliminate the necessity for each to prepare its own Schedule.

**Government organization** – is an organization listed in Schedule 1 or Schedule 3 of the State Records Act 2000.

**Government record** – is a record created or received by a government organization or a government organization employee or contractor in the course of the work for the organization.

**List of authorized headings** – A list of authorized subject headings, sometimes known as a list of indexable headings or a thesaurus, is a simple alphabetical listing of terms derived, initially, from terms in the classification scheme. The meaning of the term must be prescribed and relationships between terms shown. It must allow control of the terminology used to name records, by establishing the terms acceptable to and used in the natural language of the organization.

**Parliamentary department** – is a department that is deemed to have been constituted in relation to the administration of Parliament for the purposes of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985* by regulations made under Section 3(2) of that Act.

**Parliamentary record** – is a record created or received by a parliamentary department or a person in the course of their work for the department, whether the person is employed under a contract of service or is engaged under a contract for services or otherwise.

**Record** – means any record of information however recorded and includes:

- a) any thing on which there is writing or Braille;
- b) a map, plan, diagram or graph;
- c) a drawing, pictorial or graphic work, or photograph;

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

- d) any thing on which there are figures, marks, perforations, or symbols, having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them;
- e) any thing from which images, sounds or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; and
- f) any thing on which information has been stored or recorded, either mechanically, magnetically, or electronically.

**State archive** – is a State record that is to be retained permanently.

**State organization** – is a parliamentary department or a government organization.

**State record** – is a parliamentary record or a government record.

**Thesaurus** – is a complex alphabetical listing of all terms derived from a classification scheme. Such tools act as a guide in the allocation of classification terms to individual records. In a thesaurus the meaning of the term is specified and hierarchical relationships to other terms shown. A thesaurus should provide sufficient entry points to allow users to navigate from terms that are not to be used to the preferred terminology adopted by the organization.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Standard, established under Section 61 of the State Records Act 2000, is to ensure that government organization recordkeeping plans submitted to the State Records Commission for approval, meet the requirements of the State Records Act 2000.

### **BACKGROUND**

The State Records Act 2000 is an Act to provide for the keeping of State records and for related purposes. Section 19 of the Act requires that every government organization must have a recordkeeping plan that has been approved by the State Records Commission.

Parliamentary departments are required under Section 12 of the Act to have a recordkeeping plan that is approved by the President of the Legislative Council or the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Government organizations listed in Schedule 3 are required, under Section 27 of the Act, to have a recordkeeping plan that is approved by their relevant Minister.

The State Records Commission is required under Section 25 of the Act, to have a recordkeeping plan that is approved by the Minister.

A government organization's recordkeeping plan sets out the matters about which records are to be created by the organization and how it is to keep its records.

The recordkeeping plan shall comprise one or more documents which, when assessed as a whole, will provide an accurate reflection of the recordkeeping program within the organization. More specifically, documentation regarding the organization's recordkeeping system/s, disposal arrangements, policies, practices and processes will be the essential components of the recordkeeping plan. The inclusion of such documentation will constitute evidence of compliance. Each government organization will be expected to present sufficient evidence that best practices have been implemented within the organization.

Extracts or complete documentation (where applicable) based upon the principles in this standard are to be compiled to form the recordkeeping plan.

### **SCOPE**

The principles and minimum compliance requirements in this Standard apply to all government organizations.

Parliamentary departments must prepare a draft recordkeeping plan in consultation with the Commission and taking note of any relevant principles and standards established by the Commission under Section 61 of the Act.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Principle 1 – Proper and Adequate Records**

**Government organizations ensure that records are created and kept which properly and adequately record the performance of the organization's functions and which are consistent with any written law to which the organization is subject when performing its functions.**

#### **Rationale**

Every government organization has roles and functions, usually mandated by legislation, regulation or government directive. There is a wide-ranging set of activities and transactions conducted in the performance of the roles and functions. Proper and adequate records of an organization's business activity must be created and kept to ensure sufficient evidence of an organization's performance of those functions.

To address matters about which records are or should be created, organizations are to identify and describe the internal and external sources of authority that have a bearing on the creation and keeping of its records. Particular attention should be paid to explicit requirements for recordkeeping.

An organization's recordkeeping policies and procedures and its Retention and Disposal Schedule will address specific details about which records will be created and kept.

Under Principle 1, an organization must identify and describe its broad recordkeeping requirements within the business and regulatory environments in which it operates.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

1. The recordkeeping plan will provide information about:
  - historical background of the creating body;
  - mission statement, strategic focus and main business activity of the organization;
  - functions and activities including those that are contracted out to other organizations; and
  - major stakeholders of the organization.
2. The recordkeeping plan will provide a list of:
  - enabling legislation (legislation that establishes the organization and its functions);
  - legislation administered by the organization;
  - other legislation affecting the functions or operations of the organization; and
  - major government or industry standards and codes of practice imposed on or adopted by the organization.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Principle 2 –Policies and Procedures**

**Government organizations ensure that recordkeeping programs are supported by policy and procedures.**

#### **Rationale**

A government organization's recordkeeping program is to be compliant with legislative requirements. It should be reliable, systematic and well managed within a framework for consistent and accountable implementation. To achieve this, policies and procedures governing recordkeeping matters in the organization should be in place.

A recordkeeping policy, in the form of one or more identifiable policy statements, should be authorized at an appropriate senior level, promulgated throughout the organization, and be available to all employees.

Recordkeeping policy statements should be comprehensive and provide the framework for underlying procedures. They should emphasize the corporate ownership of government records; that all records are corporate assets and as such, do not belong to individual employees. They should formally define the roles and responsibilities of all employees who manage or perform recordkeeping processes. Most importantly, they should establish an official position on the making and keeping of proper and adequate records of the organization's business activities.

Standard operating procedures for all staff to follow when carrying out recordkeeping tasks should be in accordance with the organization's recordkeeping policy and be based on best-practice standards.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

The recordkeeping plan must provide evidence to adduce that:

1. Policies and standard operating procedures governing recordkeeping in the organization are established, authorized at an appropriate senior level, and are available to all employees.
2. The policies and procedures define the roles and responsibilities of all employees who manage or perform recordkeeping processes.
3. The policies take into account relevant government policy and endorsed standards for the making and keeping of proper and adequate records.
4. The policies and procedures cover records in all formats and all aspects of their management, including:
  - creation of records;
  - capture and control of records;

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

- security and protection of records;
  - access to records; and
  - appraisal, retention and disposal of records.
5. The organizational scope of the policies and procedures has been addressed, i.e. whether they are applicable to the entire organization, including divisions, regional branches and offices, and outsourced contractors.
  6. The custodianship and management of government records has been addressed in regard to organizational restructures, the transfer of an organization's functions, the creation of new business units or the devolution of authority for managing government records.



## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Principle 3 –Language Control**

**Government organizations ensure that appropriate controls are in place to identify and name government records.**

#### **Rationale**

Appropriate mechanisms for controlling the language or terminology used to identify and name an organization's records should be in place to support the organization's business classification scheme.

Such mechanisms, for example, a thesaurus, an authorized list of (subject) headings, or a file titling system, should suit the complexity of the records of the organization and should reflect the terminology used to label the organization's business functions, activities and transactions.

Tools to control and maintain consistent use of language will assist organization-wide uniformity and result in improved indexing, tracking and retrieval of information. Organizations should ensure that the tools used for conventional records are also applicable to electronic records.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

The recordkeeping plan must provide evidence to adduce that:

1. An appropriate tool is in place whereby records are identified and named in a systematic and consistent way.
2. The tool is capable of being augmented and adjusted to reflect changing functions of the organization's business.
3. Any changes to the structure and content of the tool are controlled, authorized and recorded.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Principle 4 – Preservation**

**Government organizations ensure that records are protected and preserved.**

#### **Rationale**

Organizations and their employees are responsible for preserving government records for as long as required by law and business requirements. A major threat to the preservation of records is the risk of disaster, natural or otherwise.

Organizations are to establish and maintain a disaster management plan for the records of the organization.

A disaster management plan for records is a plan setting out the strategies and activities for preventing disasters, for preparing an appropriate response to and recovery from disasters, should they occur, and resuming normal business.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

The recordkeeping plan must provide evidence to adduce that:

1. The organization has identified and assessed the risks and impacts of disasters on its recorded information.
2. The organization has planned strategies and activities for the reduction and management of risks to its records.
3. The organization has planned quick-response strategies and activities for salvaging, recovering and stabilizing the condition of the organization's records should a disaster occur.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Principle 5 –Retention and Disposal**

**Government organizations ensure that records are retained and disposed of in accordance with an approved disposal authority.**

#### **Rationale**

A government organization's records are to be retained and disposed of in accordance with an approved disposal authority. The State Records Commission, via the State Records Advisory Committee, is the authorizing body for disposal authorities.

Every government organization shall operate an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule, being the records retention and disposal component of the recordkeeping plan. A Retention and Disposal Schedule is a systematic and comprehensive listing of categories or series of records created and/or kept by an organization, which plans the life of those records from creation to ultimate disposal.

For information and guidance on the preparation, format and content of a Retention and Disposal Schedule, organizations are to refer to Sections 8 and 9 in the *Records Disposal: A Handbook for Government Agencies*, published by the State Records Office.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

1. An approved records Retention and Disposal Schedule is operating in the organization.
2. The Retention and Disposal Schedule must:
  - identify the records of the organization and their formats;
  - identify those government records that will be State archives (in accordance with SRC Standard 3 – Appraisal of records);
  - identify those State archives that will be restricted access archives and the ages at which they will cease to be restricted access archives (in accordance with SRC Standard 4 – Restricted Access Archives);
  - identify those State archives that will not be transferred to the State archives collection (in accordance with SRC Standard 5 – Compulsory Transfer of Archives);
  - stipulate the retention period for those government records that are not State archives (in accordance with SRC Standard 3 – Appraisal of records);
  - identify other (previous and current) disposal authorities of the organization; and

## SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans

- refer to the appropriate General Disposal Authorities published by the State Records Office, and state that the retention and disposal of relevant records will conform to the standards set in these authorities.

**Note:** The **General Disposal Authority for Financial and Accounting Records** and the **General Disposal Authority for Human Resource Management Records** cover financial and accounting records and human resource management records, common to most government organizations and prescribe the authorized disposal of these records.

Organizations should not incorporate financial, accounting or human resource records into their Retention and Disposal Schedule unless there is particular justification for varying the retention period for any records covered by the General Disposal Authorities.

Local Governments should refer only to the **General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records**.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

### **Principle 6 –Compliance**

**Government organizations ensure their employees comply with the recordkeeping plan.**

#### **Rationale**

An organization and its employees must comply with the organization's recordkeeping plan.

Organizations should develop and implement strategies for ensuring that each employee is aware of the compliance responsibilities.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

The recordkeeping plan is to provide evidence to adduce that:

1. The efficiency and effectiveness of the organization's recordkeeping systems is evaluated not less than once every 5 years.
2. The organization conducts a recordkeeping training program.
3. The efficiency and effectiveness of the recordkeeping training program is reviewed from time to time.
4. The organization's induction program addresses employee roles and responsibilities in regard to their compliance with the organization's recordkeeping plan.
5. The organization includes within its annual report an appropriate section that addresses points 1-4.

## **SRC Standard 2 – Recordkeeping Plans**

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