



Standard No. 8

Standard on Managing a Records Management Program

Issued April 2004

Summary

This standard sets out principles for establishing and maintaining a records management program as required under section 12(2) of the *State Records Act 1998*. The principles are:

- The records management program is directed by policy
- The records management program is planned
- The records management program is staffed with skilled people
- The records management program is implemented
- The records management program is monitored and reviewed.

Each principle is supported by mandatory compliance requirements.

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Table of Commentary

A Table of Commentary on this standard can also be viewed and downloaded as a [single document](#) (35.6 KB).

Introduction

Purpose

S.12 (2) of the *State Records Act 1998* requires each public office to 'establish and maintain a records management program for the public office'. The purpose of this standard is to assist public offices to meet this obligation and to provide a benchmark against which a public office's compliance may be measured.

Authority

The standard is issued under s.13(1) of the [State Records Act 1998](#) which enables State Records to 'approve standards and codes of best practice for records management by public offices.'

Application

This standard applies to public offices as defined in s.3 of the State Records Act, to which Part 2 of the Act applies. This standard covers all State records on any topic and in any format.

Background

The standard was first issued to government agencies in 1998 under the Premier's Memorandum 98-16. Following the passage of the State Records Act 1998, it was approved for use by all public offices subject to Part 2 of the Act in 1999.

Following experience in implementation and consultation with public offices, the standard has been revised.

Structure

This standard sets out five principles for managing a records management program. Under each principle there is an explanation of the principle and identified compliance requirements.

Definitions

For definitions of general recordkeeping terms used in this document, see State Records' [Glossary of Recordkeeping Terms](#).

Further information

For more information on this standard, please [contact](#) State Records.

Using this standard

Overview

This section provides context for the requirements of the standard, explaining the meaning and benefits of a records management program.

Definition of a records management program

A records management program encompasses the management framework, the people and the recordkeeping systems required within an organisation to manage full and accurate records over time. The records management program covers all records and all recordkeeping systems in a public office. This includes the identification and protection of records with longer-term value that may be required as State archives.

A typical records management program establishes a framework within which a number of recordkeeping processes can be performed, including:

- Records creation and capture
- Registration
- Classification
- Storage and handling
- Access and use
- Tracking
- Disposal

Adequate records management infrastructure enables the public office to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of making and managing full and accurate records.

Benefits of a records management program

The benefits of a records management program are those of good recordkeeping. A records management program provides the necessary infrastructure to manage full and accurate records in recordkeeping systems. Full and accurate records:

- support business outcomes
- support decision-making
- support accountability, and
- Provide evidence.

Recordkeeping systems

Recordkeeping systems are not just records management software packages. Many business systems, e.g. personnel and payroll databases, financial

management systems, are also recordkeeping systems as records are made by and kept in these systems. Systems do not have to be technology based - some public offices use paper-based recordkeeping systems. For more information on designing and implementing recordkeeping systems see State Records' [Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual](#).

Principles

1 Directed by policy

The records management program is directed by policy

Policy is essential for directing how records will be managed in a public office. Policy establishes how records are created, captured, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the legal, regulatory and business needs of the public office. It informs everyone of the place of records management in the public office, both strategically and operationally. Policy may be specific to records management or policy for other organisational business may set out rules for recordkeeping.

Records management policy must be reviewed regularly to take account of changing business activities and priorities and to ensure that the records management program continues to fully support business needs.

Compliance requirements

1. Records management is directed by policy adopted at the corporate level.
 2. Policy statements direct that records are made, captured, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the legal, regulatory and business needs of the public office.
 3. Policy defines the responsibilities of all personnel who manage records or carry out recordkeeping activities.
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2 Planned

The records management program is planned

Records management planning ensures that records are made, captured, maintained and disposed of in accordance with organisational policy and that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support this. Objectives and performance targets for both the long term and the day to day activity of the program are essential parts of records management planning. These performance targets and objectives should support compliance with legal, regulatory and business needs.

Compliance requirements

1. Long and short term records management goals are identified and documented in the planning mechanisms of the public office.
 2. Adequate resources are allocated to achieve long and short term records management goals.
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3 Staffed by skilled people

The records management program is staffed by skilled people

Access to skilled people is critical to the success of records management. Overall responsibility for the records management program should be assigned to a senior manager with organisation-wide influence and appropriate strategic and managerial skills. State Records uses the term 'Nominated Senior Officer' to describe this role.

The public office should be able to access records management skills internally through recruitment, training and development or, if not, externally through appropriately qualified consultants, networking with other public offices or liaison with State Records. In a medium-large public office, this will require skilled records management position/s, in a smaller public office, this may be a role with other responsibilities.

The skills required will vary according to the nature and complexity of the public office. Skill levels should be appropriate to the complexity of the records management tasks for which staff are responsible.

Compliance requirements

1. Overall responsibility for the records management program is assigned to a Nominated Senior Officer.
 2. Specialist records management skills required to implement the records management program and its component recordkeeping systems are available to the organisation.
 3. Staff undertaking records management have appropriate skills for their positions and responsibilities and these are kept up to date.
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4 Implemented

The records management program is implemented

Successful implementation of policies and plans for records management is vital. These must be implemented systematically throughout the public office through the deployment of recordkeeping systems, records management processes and tools, services and training.

Implementation should align records management processes with business processes so that they support effective business operations. An understanding of organisational culture and attitudes towards recordkeeping and staff training can assist in the successful implementation of a records management program.

Note: Recordkeeping systems are not just records management software packages. Many business systems, e.g. personnel and payroll databases, financial management systems, are also recordkeeping systems as records are made by and kept in these systems. Systems do not have to be technology based - some public offices use paper-based recordkeeping systems.

Compliance requirements

1. Records are made, captured and maintained in official recordkeeping systems in accordance with legal, regulatory and business needs.
2. Business systems meet identified requirements for making and maintaining records.

3. Current retention and disposal authorisation is in place for all records, regardless of format, of the public office.
 4. Records are disposed of in accordance with authorised retention and disposal authorities and appropriate processes.
 5. Staff are trained in recordkeeping practices and procedures, and training is appropriate to their positions.
 6. Staff use official recordkeeping systems and services and have access to appropriate advice.
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5 Monitored and reviewed

The records management program is monitored and reviewed

Monitoring and review is a key principle in ensuring that records management continues to support the objectives of the public office. Monitoring must be done regularly to be of value to the public office and to maximise opportunities for improvement.

Planning documentation for a records management program offers useful indicators against which the operational effectiveness of records management policies, processes, training and services can be reviewed. Performance targets and indicators must be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are still relevant to the way records management operates and the public office conducts its business.

Compliance requirements

1. All aspects of the records management program are regularly reviewed against performance objectives.
 2. Opportunities are identified for improving the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of records management systems, processes and tools through regular monitoring and review.
 3. Areas for improvement are addressed in records management planning.
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Appendix A: List of compliance requirements

The table below lists the compliance requirements contained in this standard.

1	The records management program is directed by policy
1.1	Records management is directed by policy adopted at the corporate level
1.2	Policy statements direct that records are created, captured, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the legal, regulatory and business needs of the public office
1.3	Policy defines the responsibilities of all personnel who manage records or carry out recordkeeping activities
2	The records management program is planned
2.1	Long and short term records management goals are identified and documented in the planning mechanisms of the public office

2.2	Adequate resources are allocated to achieve long and short term records management goals
3	The records management program is staffed with skilled people
3.1	Overall responsibility for the records management program is assigned to a Nominated Senior Officer
3.2	Specialist records management skills required to implement the records management program and component recordkeeping systems are available to the organisation
3.3	Skills for staff undertaking records management are appropriate to their positions and responsibilities and are kept up to date
4	The records management program is implemented
4.1	Records are made, captured and maintained in official recordkeeping systems in accordance with legal, regulatory and business needs
4.2	Business systems meet identified requirements for making and maintaining records
4.3	Current retention and disposal authorisation is in place for all records, regardless of format, of the public office
4.4	Records are disposed of in accordance with authorised retention and disposal authorities and appropriate processes
4.5	Staff are trained in recordkeeping practices and procedures, and training is appropriate to their positions
4.6	Staff use official recordkeeping systems and services and have access to appropriate advice
5	The records management program is monitored and reviewed
5.1	All aspects of the records management program are regularly reviewed against performance objectives
5.2	Opportunities are identified for improving the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of records management systems, processes and tools through regular monitoring and review
5.3	Areas for improvement are addressed in records management planning

Appendix B: Implementing the Standard

This appendix is provided for advice only. It does not form part of the requirements of the standard.

A records management program will vary between public offices because of differences in size, complexity and ways of carrying out business. However the principles on which the records management program must be based will be the same for all NSW public offices.

The principles of the standard are focused on outcomes so that they are flexible enough to accommodate the different organisational contexts in which they will be implemented. This appendix gives some guidance on implementing the principles, including links to existing guidance within the Government Recordkeeping Manual.

The table below sets out some of the ways in which public offices may implement the requirements of the standard. It is emphasised that these are examples only, and other strategies or approaches may be used to achieve the requirements.

No.	Compliance requirement	Examples of how to comply	Further guidance...
1	The records management program is directed by policy		
1.1	Records management is directed by policy adopted at the corporate level	<p>Include statements about records management in the public office policy framework. This could be as a separate policy document or incorporated into other corporate policies.</p> <p>Make sure the policy statement include an 'authority' statement saying who issued the policy, e.g. the Board, the CEO, a senior manager, and that it is made available to all staff.</p>	<p>DIRKS Step F - Applying the policy strategy</p> <p>Create and Capture 4.2</p> <p>Examples of policy on State Records website</p>
1.2	Policy statements direct that records are created, captured, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the legal, regulatory and business needs of the public office	<p>Make it clear in policy that records must be made and maintained until their authorised disposal. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct staff to make records of their work and capture these into formal systems - inform staff of the recordkeeping systems in use in the public office, or those relevant to particular business units - direct staff to procedures and business rules that include recordkeeping. 	

1.3	Policy defines the responsibilities of all personnel who manage records or carry out recordkeeping activities	<p>Incorporate in policy, definitions of the responsibilities of staff appropriate to their roles, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the CEO: has overall responsibility - records management specialists: In a large public office they may set rules, provide records management services, develop tools, and conduct monitoring. In a small public office they may develop tools and conduct monitoring. - all staff: required to make records of their work and capture these into authorised recordkeeping systems. - contractors: required to know what the policy is and to adhere to it. (Establish business rules about ownership, making and capturing records.) <p>Note: If records management is performed through a shared services arrangement, set this out in the policy.</p>	
2	The records management program is planned		

2.1	Long and short term records management goals are identified and documented in the planning mechanisms of the public office	<p>Identify the objectives of the records management program and develop action plans to help you achieve these. These may be relevant at a number of levels - the high level planning documentation, plans for business units, individual work plans. They may be separate plans or integrated into other planning documentation.</p> <p>Develop performance indicators for recordkeeping against which progress can be measured. Establish indicators that will help you determine how effective the program has been and what can be improved. These may be quantitative (e.g. number of files created, time taken to retrieve files) or qualitative (e.g. user satisfaction surveys).</p>	DIRKS Tools and Tips - Management Plan Examples of plans on State Records website Create and Capture 3.2 Monitoring Recordkeeping Performance guidelines
2.2	Adequate resources are allocated to achieve long and short term records management goals	How resources are allocated will depend upon how records management is organised in your public office. This is likely to be through a separate central budget (possibly part of a corporate services or administration budget head), through allocations to each business unit or a combination of these two.	
3	The records management program is staffed with skilled people		
3.1	Overall responsibility for the records management program is assigned to a Nominated Senior Officer	<p>This will depend upon how records management is organised in your public office. Examples of positions to which this role is often assigned include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - director of corporate services - chief information officer - director of finance - the senior records manager - executive officer. 	
3.2	Specialist records management skills required to implement the records management program	The primary method of acquiring records management expertise is through the recruitment of suitably qualified staff and/or training of staff. Other ways include:	Building better records management skills

	and component recordkeeping systems are available to the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consultants, to address particular problems or develop records management tools - State Records' resources - talking to staff, publications and forums - contact with other NSW public sector records managers - professional bodies and discussion lists. 	Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA) website RMAA discussion list RMAA Local Government group (email contact for RMAA NSW branch) Health Information Management Association of Australasia (HIMAA)
3.3	Skills for staff undertaking records management are appropriate to their positions and responsibilities and are kept up to date	<p>Staff need regular access to information and training. Sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Records' short course training - formal records management qualifications - generic training that improves skills, e.g. management, ICT, communications. - the information and networking resources of State Records and professional associations. See 3.2 	State Records training courses RIB 1: Education and training opportunities
4	The records management program is implemented		
4.1	Records are made, captured and maintained in official recordkeeping systems in accordance with legal, regulatory and business needs	Identify what records are required by the public office and implement rules to ensure these are made and kept in formal authorised recordkeeping systems. This will depend on legal, regulatory and business requirements.	DIRKS Step C Identifying recordkeeping requirements Standard on Full and Accurate Records
4.2	Business systems meet identified requirements for making and maintaining records	When new business systems are developed, or existing systems are upgraded, look at the business activities that will be carried out using the systems and consider what records they will be making and managing (see 4.1) and either	DIRKS Step D and Doing DIRKS to develop new systems

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make sure that the business system itself can meet this need by having appropriate recordkeeping controls in place and capturing adequate records metadata, - or, if not, make sure the business systems are integrated with a records management system that can manage the records. This may involve setting rules for recordkeeping as part of the business process. E.g. at a certain stage of a transaction, print out form X and attach it to file Y. 	
4.3	Current retention and disposal authorisation is in place for all records, regardless of format	<p>For councils, universities and the public health sector, disposal coverage is authorised through general retention and disposal authorities (GDAs).</p> <p>Other NSW public offices must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have a current functional retention and disposal authority, or - be in the process of developing a functional retention and disposal authority, or - have a plan to develop a functional retention and disposal authority <p>for records of their core functions.</p> <p>FRDAs must be reviewed regularly, and at least within 10 years of issue. There are GDAs for common administrative functions.</p>	Procedures for disposal authorisation State Records general disposal authorities
4.4	Records are disposed of in accordance with authorised retention and disposal authorities and appropriate processes	Use GDAs and a functional retention and disposal authority to sentence records. Document disposal decisions.	Implementing a disposal authority guideline
4.5	Staff are trained in recordkeeping practices and procedures. and	The amount of recordkeeping responsibility will vary between positions. All staff must be aware of what they need to do to make	DIRKS Step F - Develop a training strategy

	training is appropriate to their positions	<p>and maintain records of their work. Useful methods are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - induction training - publish information on public office Intranets or distribute fliers. - issue leaflets or brochures on available services or particular topics - provide training for groups of staff who need particular information, e.g. contractors, different business units, regional offices. 	<p>State Records slideshow - How to get ahead with recordkeeping</p> <p>Leaflets with records management advice</p>
4.6	Staff use official recordkeeping systems and services and have access to appropriate advice	<p>Incorporate recordkeeping rules into standard operating procedures for different parts of the public office, as appropriate.</p> <p>Make information on recordkeeping rules available to all staff, e.g. through training, through Intranet or printed sources.</p> <p>Make the use of recordkeeping systems an element in the Code of Conduct or performance management system.</p>	<p>See requirement 4.5</p> <p>See the Standard on Full and Accurate Records</p>
5	The records management program is monitored and reviewed		
5.1	All aspects of the records management program are regularly reviewed against performance objectives	<p>Establish a cycle for a wholesale review of the program, e.g. every year, every 3 years. Link to the planning cycle.</p> <p>Decide what information you need to collect about the records management system. E.g. the use of the records management part of the Intranet, number or proportion of staff trained, number of enquiries from staff, adverse or favourable publicity relating to recordkeeping. Gather feedback from users and use this to improve services.</p>	<p>Monitoring recordkeeping performance guidelines</p>

5.2	Opportunities are identified for improving the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of records management systems, processes and tools through regular monitoring and review	<p>Analyse the data about how records management systems and processes are operating and work out whether, for example, there are any</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gaps in data collection - more efficient ways of doing things - new or revised tools or training needed, e.g. thesauri. 	
5.3	Areas for improvement are addressed in records management planning	Make the link between planning and performance. Use the data and analysis to develop new services or make existing services and tools better.	

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