

RECORDS DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Disposal Schedule No. 2004/14

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ABOUT THIS DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Disposal Schedule is to enable regular, planned and authorised disposal of Complaints Management Records of the Office of the Ombudsman for the Northern Territory.

SCOPE

Application of this Disposal Schedule is mandatory for records of the Office of the Ombudsman for the Northern Territory relating to the function of Complaints Management.

This Disposal Schedule applies to all Complaints Management Records in all formats, including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The regulatory basis for this Disposal Schedule is defined in:

- ▶ Ombudsman (NT) Act
- ▶ Information Act 2002
- ▶ Australian Standards AS ISO 15489:2002-Records Management

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Disposal Schedule is to be read in conjunction with:

- ▶ NT Government Records Management Standard – Records Disposal
- ▶ policies and procedures of the Ombudsman for the Northern Territory
- ▶ current authorised disposal schedules for administrative records of the NT Government
- ▶ NT Archives Service Guidelines on Normal Administrative Practice for Records Disposal

RESPONSIBILITY

The Ombudsman for the Northern Territory is responsible for the content and implementation of this Disposal Schedule.

AUTHORITY

This Disposal Schedule was approved by the Director of the NT Archives Service and the Ombudsman in November 2004 and is effective immediately.

EXPLANATION

This schedule has been developed using the functional structure is based on the business classification scheme of the Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms produced by the State Records Authority of NSW and modified for use by NT Government public sector organisations.



Records disposal schedules are policy documents that describe each class of records held, using thesaurus classifications based on business analysis. The schedules set out minimum requirements for the creation, maintenance, retention or destruction actions to be taken in relation to existing or future records described in each class.

Either permanent or temporary status is assigned to each class of records. Records appraised with permanent status have been identified as archives and must be transferred to NT Archives Service not later than 30 years after creation. Temporary records will be destroyed at an appropriate time determined by the disposal action identified in the schedule and by consultation with relevant operational business employees responsible for the records.

NT GOVERNMENT DISPOSAL SCHEDULES

There are two types of records disposal schedules:

- ▶ “general” disposal schedules that apply to records common to most or all NT Government public sector organisations, and
- ▶ records disposal schedules specific to an NT Government public sector organisation or function.

There are presently five disposal schedules which provide disposal coverage for records common to most or all NT Government public sector organisations – the General Disposal Schedule for Information Management Records, the General Disposal Schedule for Financial Management Records, the General Disposal Schedule for Human Resource Management Records, the General Disposal for Administrative Records and the Disposal Schedule for Records of Short Term Value. These can be used by all NT Government public sector organisations to assist with the disposal of administrative records.

SENTENCING RECORDS

- ▶ Records should be sentenced with this records disposal schedule using the following five steps:
- ▶ Determine the appropriate function and activity of the records. This can be done by examining an existing record or when creating a new record.
- ▶ Identify the disposal class.
- ▶ From the disposal action in the class, identify the trigger event and a date when the record can be disposed of, alternately, identify that the record is to be retained permanently as archives.
- ▶ If the trigger event has already occurred (such as action is completed), confirm and implement the disposal action.



- ▶ If the trigger event has not occurred (eg. the record is still in active use), set a review date for the future.

NORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE

Some records and ephemeral documents can be destroyed as a normal administrative practice if they are:

- ▶ duplicate (eg information or reference copy)
- ▶ obviously unimportant (eg telephone message slips)
- ▶ of short term facilitative value (eg compliment slips)
- ▶ a combination of these

The guiding principle is that organisations should be sure that destroying these records will not destroy evidence that might be needed.

Records of this nature that have been captured into a recordkeeping system should be destroyed using the Disposal Schedule for Records of Short Term Value unless the class of records has been identified in a specific disposal schedule. The reason for their destruction must be recorded in full on the relevant control records. Normal administrative practice can be applied to electronic records as well as paper records (eg information on word processing systems where a hard copy has been captured into a recordkeeping system)

NOTIFICATION OF DESTRUCTION

Formal notification of destruction of all records should be provided to NT Archives Service.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Ombudsman for the Northern Territory wishes to acknowledge the use of material produced by National Archives of Australia, and Standards Australia in the development of this schedule.

This schedule was drafted principally by the Ombudsman for the Northern Territory in consultation with the NT Archives Service.

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COMPLIANCE**Compliance Checklist**

- ❑ Implement a records disposal program to ensure regular appraisal, sentencing, destruction and transfer of all records
- ❑ Assign responsibility for the management and application of regular records disposal action using authorised records disposal schedules, to an appropriately skilled records manager who consults with the NT Archives Service
- ❑ Familiarise all employees of the organisation with the authorised records disposal schedules relevant to the organisation's records
- ❑ Identify and sentence all records described in this schedule in all formats including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records
- ❑ Apply this records disposal schedule to records in the organisation's records management systems, including systems for the management of paper records, electronic records, or records in any other format
- ❑ Apply this records disposal schedule to records in the organisation's business systems, either directly or by linking the business system to a records management system
- ❑ Implement quality assurance mechanisms to periodically check that the disposal class originally assigned at the creation of the records is still applicable at the time of sentencing of the record
- ❑ Implement review or quality control procedures in electronic recordkeeping systems to ensure disposal actions are implemented correctly.
- ❑ Identify records series that require resentencing
- ❑ Stop applying sentences from previous schedules that have been revoked or amended
- ❑ Retain all records in good order and condition to be available for retrieval during the retention period.
- ❑ Identify and update control records so that you can demonstrate what happened to each record, whether paper or electronic
- ❑ Select and implement an appropriate and approved strategy for retention of records of continuing value, eg. preservation in original form migration to new systems conversion to long term medium
- ❑ Dispose of all records sentenced according to this schedule in all formats including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records
- ❑ Transfer records of permanent value to NT Archives Service not later than 30 years after creation for retention as archives
- ❑ Inactive records can be transferred to offsite service providers providing they have been sentenced
- ❑ Destroy time expired temporary records in a secure manner that ensures complete deletion/destruction beyond any possible reconstruction
- ❑ Notify NT Archives Service of destruction of all records
- ❑ Do not destroy records that are not described in an authorised records disposal schedule unless they are ephemeral documents that are obviously duplicate and/or unimportant



1. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The function of receiving, assessing, investigating and resolving complaints from members of the public about the administration of NT Government departments, statutory authorities, correctional services, community councils, local government and members of the police force serving under the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

1.1 ENQUIRIES

The activities associated with the handling of requests for information about the organisation and its services by the general public or another organisation.

Class No.	Description of Records	Status and Disposal Action
1.1.1	Records relating to complaints received where the Ombudsman decides not to investigate the action. Includes records of correspondence and file notes.	TEMPORARY Destroy 5 years after action completed
1.1.2	Records relating to complaints received where the Ombudsman resolves the complaint expeditiously and does not lead to an investigation. Includes records of correspondence and file notes.	TEMPORARY Destroy 5 years after action completed
1.1.3	Records relating to complaints received where the Ombudsman is not authorised to investigate the action or it is out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. Includes records of correspondence and file notes.	TEMPORARY Destroy 2 years after action completed

Use COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT – INVESTIGATIONS for investigations conducted by the Ombudsman's office into administration of departments, statutory authorities, correctional services, community councils, local government and NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

Note: All entries apply to records in any format, including electronic media, unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of all public sector organisations to ensure that all records are readily accessible for the retention periods specified.

1. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The function of receiving, assessing, investigating and resolving complaints from members of the public about the administration of NT Government departments, statutory authorities, correctional services, community councils, local government and members of the police force serving under the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

1.2 INVESTIGATIONS

The acts and processes involved in ascertaining facts by inquiry or examination.

Class No.	Description of Records	Status and Disposal Action
1.2.1	Records relating to investigations into complaints that arise from an "own motion" that set a precedent, raise jurisdictional or legal issues, or lead to a policy, procedure or legislative change. Includes tapes, video recordings of interviews and/or evidence, transcripts and photos. See 1.2.7 for "own motion" investigations that do not set a precedent, raise jurisdictional or legal issues or lead to policy, procedure or legislative change.	PERMANENT Transfer to NT Archives Service 5 years after action completed
1.2.2	Records relating to an investigation into a complaint where the Ombudsman prepares a report to the Minister to be presented to the Legislative Assembly. Includes tapes, video recordings of interviews and/or evidence, transcripts and photos. See 1.2.8 for investigations that do not lead to policy procedural or legislative review and are not reported to the Legislative Assembly	PERMANENT Transfer to NT Archives Service 5 years after action completed
1.2.3	Records relating to investigation of complaints referred to the Ombudsman by the Legislative Assembly. Includes formal reports to the speaker of the Legislative Assembly.	PERMANENT Transfer to NT Archives Service 5 years after action completed

Note: All entries apply to records in any format, including electronic media, unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of all public sector organisations to ensure that all records are readily accessible for the retention periods specified.

1. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The function of receiving, assessing, investigating and resolving complaints from members of the public about the administration of NT Government departments, statutory authorities, correctional services, community councils, local government and members of the police force serving under the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

1.2 INVESTIGATIONS

The acts and processes involved in ascertaining facts by inquiry or examination.

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| 1.2.4 | Records relating to joint investigations conducted by the Northern Territory Police Fire & Emergency Services, and the Ombudsman's Office in relation to complaints of an action or inaction of the NT Police Fire & Emergency Services or a member, that is of a serious, complex nature. Includes investigation reports endorsed by NT Police, recommendations, recordings of interviews, transcripts, photographs and copies of members' notes. | TEMPORARY

Destroy 15 years after action completed |
| 1.2.5 | Records relating to investigations conducted by NT Police Fire and Emergency Services of complaints received about an action or inaction of the NT Police Fire & Emergency Service or a member where the issue is of a serious, complex nature, and where the Ombudsman monitors the investigation's progress. Includes investigation reports endorsed by NT Police, recommendations, recordings of interviews, transcripts, photographs and copies of members' notes. | TEMPORARY

Destroy 10 years after action completed |
| 1.2.6 | Copies of records relating to investigations conducted by the Northern Territory Police Fire & Emergency Services regarding complaints received or referred, of an action/inaction of the NT Police Fire & Emergency Service and/or member, whereby the complainant agrees to resolve the complaint with NT Police Fire and Emergency Services. Includes copy of investigation report endorsed by the NT Police, recommendations, recordings of interviews, transcripts, photographs and copies of members' notes. | TEMPORARY

Destroy 10 years after action completed |

Note: All entries apply to records in any format, including electronic media, unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of all public sector organisations to ensure that all records are readily accessible for the retention periods specified.

1. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The function of receiving, assessing, investigating and resolving complaints from members of the public about the administration of NT Government departments, statutory authorities, correctional services, community councils, local government and members of the police force serving under the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

1.2 INVESTIGATIONS

The acts and processes involved in ascertaining facts by inquiry or examination.

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| 1.2.7 | Records relating to "own motion" investigations conducted by the Ombudsman's office that do not set a precedent, raise jurisdictional or legal issues or lead to policy, procedure or legislative change. Includes investigations conducted by the Ombudsman, copies of compilation of existing complaints, supporting documentation, reports and recommendations. | TEMPORARY | Destroy 5 years after action completed |
| | See 1.2.1 for "own motion" investigations that set a precedent, raise jurisdictional or legal issues or lead to policy, procedure or legislative change. | | |
| 1.2.8 | Records relating to investigations into complaints against the administration of a department, statutory authority, correctional service, community council or local government that do not lead to policy procedural or legislative review and are not reported to the Legislative Assembly. Includes correspondence, supporting documentation, reports and recommendations. | TEMPORARY | Destroy 5 years after action completed |
| | See 1.2.2 for investigations that lead to policy procedural or legislative review and/or raise jurisdictional or legal issues and are reported to the Legislative Assembly | | |
| | Use COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT – ENQUIRIES for complaints received that do not lead to an investigation | | |

Note: All entries apply to records in any format, including electronic media, unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of all public sector organisations to ensure that all records are readily accessible for the retention periods specified.



OMBUDSMAN FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY