

Archives Management Standard

**Disposal of Government Records
Created Prior to 1 July 1978**

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For information and advice, please contact

NT Archives Service
GPO Box 874
Darwin NT 0801

Telephone: (08) 8924 7677
Facsimile: (08) 8924 7660
Website: <http://www.nt.gov.au/dcis/nta/>

This standard is issued in pursuance of
Section 137 of the *Information Act*.

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DEFINITIONS

Appraisal	The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept to meet business needs, to maintain organisational accountability and community expectations.
Archive	A record of permanent value that forms part of the Territory Archives. ¹
Disposal	A range of processes associated with implementing authorised decisions about records retention, destruction, rearrangement, migration or transfer of custody or ownership.
Disposal schedule	A formal policy, authorised jointly by the Chief Executive of an NT Government public sector organisation and the NT Archives Service, that defines the temporary or permanent status, retention period and consequent disposal actions authorised for classes of records.
Open access period	The period during which the public can routinely access government archives held in the custody of the NT Archives Service. The open access period begins after the end of the restricted access period.
Permanent records	Records of permanent value which are in the custody of a public sector organisation. When permanent records are transferred into the custody of the NT Archives Service, they are considered an archive and form part of the Territory Archives (see <i>Archive and Territory Archives</i>).
Public sector organisation	An agency as defined in s.5 of the <i>Information Act</i> .
Record	Recorded information in any form (including data in a computer system) that is required to be kept by a public sector organisation as evidence of the activities or operations of the organisation, and includes part of a record and a copy of a record.
Responsible public sector organisation	Public sector organisation (as defined above) that is responsible for the function to which the record or archive relates.
Restricted access period	The period during which decisions on access to government archives held in the custody of the NT Archives Service are made by the public sector organisation responsible for the archives (s.144 of the <i>Information Act</i>).
Series	Those records or archives having the same provenance which belong together because: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ they are part of a discernible filing system (alphabetical, numerical, chronological, or a combination of these);▪ they have been kept together because they result from the same activity, or▪ they are of similar formats and relate to a particular function. A series may consist of only one item. ²
Territory Archives	Records held on behalf of the Territory by the archives service. ³

¹. s. 4 *Information Act*

². Judith Ellis (ed.) *Keeping Archives 2nd Edition*, (Australian Society of Archivists and DW Thorpe, Melbourne 1993), p.479

³. s. 4 *Information Act*

ABOUT THIS STANDARD

Purpose

The purpose of this standard, established in pursuance of the *Information Act*, is to define policies and compliance requirements for the disposal of government records created prior to the commencement of the Northern Territory Government on 1 July 1978.

Scope

Application of this standard is mandatory for all NT Government public sector organisations, including NT Government departments or agencies, NT Government statutory bodies, NT Government business divisions, NT Government owned corporations and NT local government authorities.

This standard applies to all NT Government records in all formats, including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records.

Regulatory Framework

This standard complies with the provisions of the *Information Act*.

The NT Archives Service endorses the Australian Standard *AS ISO 15489: 2002—Records Management*.

Related Documents

This standard is to be read in conjunction with:

- ▶ the complete set NT Government Archives Management Standards and Advices

- ▶ NT Government Records Management Standards
- ▶ policies and procedures of individual organisations
- ▶ access agreements for government archives which are the responsibility of the public sector organisation
- ▶ series consignment lists for archives series in the custody of the NT Archives Service which are the responsibility of the public sector organisation.

Responsibility

The NT Archives Service is responsible for establishing this standard including the provision of advice and training, and for monitoring NT public sector organisation compliance.

Implementation of this standard is the responsibility of the Chief Executive of each NT Government public sector organisation.

Authority

This standard was approved by the Minister for Corporate and Information Services on 1 August 2007 and is effective immediately.

This standard has been endorsed by the NT Information Commissioner.

POLICY STATEMENT

Public sector organisations must ensure that disposal of records created prior to the establishment of the Northern Territory Government does not occur without written permission of the NT Archives Service and current disposal schedules are not applied to these records due to their age.

EXPLANATION

Many Northern Territory Government public sector organisations have custody and responsibility for records created prior to the establishment of the Northern Territory Government on 1 July 1978.

Government records which were created prior to 1 July 1978 (self-government) in the custody of NT public sector organisations were created by previous administrations of the Northern Territory.

Administration	Date Range
Colony of New South Wales	1788-1862
Colony of South Australia	1863-1901
State of South Australia	1901-1910
Commonwealth of Australia	1911- 30 June 1978
Northern Territory of Australia	1 July 1978*-

*Some agencies were established prior to the 1 July 1978 to assist in the transition to the new government administration.

Due to the age of these records, they should be appraised as a priority to ensure the preservation of any permanent records.

The *NT Government Records Management Standard: Records Disposal* requires that all public sector organisations

...develop and apply authorised records disposal schedules to suit the business records of the unique functions of each organisation...

While authorised records disposal schedules ensure the appraisal and appropriate and timely disposal of government records, they are developed for the records currently or recently created by an organisation, with consideration for the current functions and responsibilities of an organisation.

These current schedules cannot be applied to records created by previous administrations of the Northern Territory as additional factors need to be taken into account when appraising these records.

Records disposal schedules prepared for records of Northern Territory Government public sector organisations should not be applied to records created prior to 1 July 1978 by other government administrations of the Northern Territory, eg Commonwealth of Australia, or State of South Australia.

No disposal action must be undertaken on pre self-government records without written permission from the NT Archives Service.

The NT Archives Service will appraise pre self-government records in consultation with the responsible public sector organisation and issue an Appraisal Decision for the records.

Specific class descriptions may be included in authorised records disposal schedules for records created prior to 1 July 1978, where the classes of records continue to be created in

the same manner. These classes must specify the date range of the records to alert to the age of the records.

Transfer of permanent records created prior to self-government will be undertaken as a priority by the NT Archives Service.

For further information regarding the appraisal of records please contact the NT Archives Service.

COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

NT Government public sector organisations need to satisfy the following requirements to comply with this standard.

- Public sector organisations document any records created prior to 1 July 1978 which are in their custody.
- Appraisal of pre 1978 records is prioritised.
- Current disposal schedules are not applied to pre 1978 records unless the class description specifically refers to the date range of the records.
- Specific written permission is sought from the NT Archives Service prior to any disposal of pre 1978 records.

