

Archives Management Standard

Transfer of Archives

August 2007



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*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Definitions	1
About This Standard	2
Purpose	2
Scope	2
Regulatory Framework	2
Related Documents	2
Responsibility	2
Authority	2
Acknowledgments	2
References	3
Policy Statement	4
Explanation	5
Compliance Checklist	6

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 (<i>see 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 transfer of archives from Northern Territory Government public sector organisations to the NT Archives Service.

This standard is intended to guide public sector organisations to comply with s.141 of the *Information Act* which provides for the management of archives.

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. However, specific requirements have yet to be prepared for electronic records and records in business systems.

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 of NT Government Archives Management Standards and Advices
- ▶ NT Government Records Management Standards
- ▶ policies and procedures of individual organisations.

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 Officer 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 Information Commissioner.

Acknowledgments

The NT Archives Service acknowledges other government archives and records authorities which have had a significant influence on the establishment of the NT Government Archives Management Standards:

- ▶ Archives New Zealand
- ▶ National Archives of Australia
- ▶ Public Record Office of Victoria
- ▶ State Records of New South Wales
- ▶ State Records Commission of Western Australia
- ▶ State Records of South Australia.

References

British Standards Institute – *BS 5454:2000
Recommendations for the storage and
exhibition of archival documents*, London,
2000

National Archives of Australia (NAA) –
Archives Advices

Standards Australia – *AS ISO 15489.1-2002
Records Management, Part 1 – General*

Standards Australia – *AS ISO 15489.2-2002
Records Management, Part 2 – Guidelines*

State Records Commission of WA – SRC
Standard 5 Compulsory Transfer of Archives,
Perth 2002

POLICY STATEMENT

Public sector organisations must manage their archives with care to ensure their preservation and accessibility for use by the responsible agency and eventual public access.

Archives are records that have permanent or continuing value for the organisation that created them and for the community.

Archives of public sector organisations are identified in authorised records disposal schedules that have been approved by the NT Archives Service and the responsible public sector organisation (see *NT Government Records Management Standard: Records Disposal*), and are therefore eligible for inclusion in the Territory Archives.

Disposal of records created prior to self-government must be approved by NT Archives Service. Records disposal schedules may only be applied to records created by the Northern Territory Government, commencing from 1 July 1978 (See *Archives Management Standard: Disposal of Government Records Created Prior to 1 July 1978*).

A public sector organisation may transfer a record to the archives service for inclusion in the Territory Archives at any time but not later than 30 years after the record was created (unless an extension has been granted by the archives service).

Public sector organisations must follow the procedures for the preparation and physical transfer of archives set by the NT Archives

Service (see *Transfer Procedures for NT Government Records*).

Where a public sector organisation identifies archives over 30 years old that are required to be retained by the organisation in their original format, the organisation may apply to the NT Archives Service for an extension of the transfer period (see *Archives Management Standard: Exemption from Compulsory Transfer of Permanent Records to the NT Archives Service*).

EXPLANATION

Archives are records of permanent value that have long term value as evidence of the activities of government. They have value for research by the general public and future generations beyond the immediate business needs of the public sector organisation that created them. These archives are stored and handled appropriately to ensure their preservation (in compliance with s.133 (1)(a) of the *Information Act*).

Public sector organisations will provide the best opportunity for preserving their archives if they apply basic principles, such as:

- ▶ use of good quality materials for creating the records (eg. archival paper)
- ▶ storage of archives in a stable, safe, secure location with the correct environmental conditions
- ▶ careful handling
- ▶ prohibiting consumption of food or drink while using archives.

When archives are identified in public sector organisations, the organisation must ensure that they are clearly identified to staff as archives, and handled with appropriate care while being used to carry out the business of the organisation.

In order to ensure their preservation, archives must be transferred to the custody of the NT Archives Service when they are no longer required for the conduct of business by their

responsible public sector organisation. This should not be later than 30 years after the record was created (unless an extension has been granted).

The NT Archives Service will provide the appropriate storage environment, security and disaster prevention strategy to ensure the preservation of archives and facilities for public access when appropriate.

Where archives are exempted from transfer to the NT Archives Service they remain of continuing value to the Territory and the community, and they should be managed as though they were part of the Territory Archives and remain subject to statutory access provisions (see *Archives Management Standard: Exemption from Compulsory Transfer of Permanent Records to the NT Archives Service*).

COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

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

Standard: Exemption from Compulsory Transfer of Permanent Records to the NT Archives Service).

- Archives of public sector organisations are identified in authorised records disposal schedules.
- Archives are transferred on a routine basis for inclusion in the Territory Archives.
- The organisation complies with the procedures established by the NT Archives Service for the preparation and transfer of archives.
- The organisation complies with procedures established by the NT Archives Service for access to archives in their custody (see *Archives Management Standard: Access to Government Archives in the Custody of the NT Archives Service, and Lending Procedures for Agency Access to Government Archives*).
- Organisations that transfer administrative functions to other public sector organisations notify the NT Archives Service of this change and identify the archives in the custody of the NT Archives Service which are affected (see s.135 and s.157 of the *Information Act*).
- Organisations which have a business need to retain archives over 30 years old apply to the NT Archives Service for an exemption from compulsory transfer of up to 5 years (see *Archives Management*

