

**Queensland State Archives**

# **Guideline for Recordkeeping**

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## Information security

This document has been security classified using the Queensland Government Information Security Classification Framework (QGISCF) as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the QGISCF.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

A QGEA Guideline provides information for Queensland Government agencies on the recommended practices for a given topic area. Guidelines are generally for information only and agencies are not required to comply. They are intended to help agencies understand the appropriate approach to addressing a particular issue or doing a particular task.

This Guideline specifies considerations for public authorities in addressing their obligations under [Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping \(IS40\)](#) and [Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records \(IS31\)](#). This Guideline should be used in conjunction with the documents and tools available on the Queensland State Archives website ([www.archives.qld.gov.au](http://www.archives.qld.gov.au)) to assist public authorities with planning, implementing and monitoring compliance with these recordkeeping Information Standards and the [Public Records Act 2002](#).

## 1.2 Audience

This document is primarily intended for:

- Chief executives of public authorities, as defined by the [Public Records Act 2002](#)
- Chief Information Officers and senior responsible officers for recordkeeping functions
- Records unit managers and staff
- All public sector staff.

## 1.3 Scope

### 1.3.1 In scope

This Guideline relates to the recordkeeping domain in the Information Policy Framework of the [Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture \(QGEA\)](#). It applies to all entities defined as a public authority under the Schedule 2 of the [Public Records Act 2002](#). That is:

- (a) the Governor in his or her official capacity; or
- (b) the Executive Council; or
- (c) a Minister; or
- (d) a Parliamentary Secretary; or
- (e) the registrar or other officer of a court with responsibility for official records of the court; or
- (f) a commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950; or
- (g) an entity, other than the parliamentary service, that—
  - (i) is established by an Act; or
  - (ii) is created by the Governor in Council or a Minister; or
- (h) a GOC; or
- (i) a department; or
- (j) an entity established by the State and a local government; or
- (k) a local government; or
- (l) an entity declared under a regulation to be a public authority for this Act.

### 1.3.2 Out of scope

The following are out of scope of the current Guideline:

- Specific advice on the application of individual principles. This information is provided through subject based policy advice on the [Queensland State Archives'](#) website.

## 2 Background

Public records are the corporate memory of government and the cornerstone of government accountability. A public record is any form of recorded information, both received and created, that provides evidence of the decisions and actions of a public authority while undertaking its business activities. Effectively managed public records and recordkeeping systems:

- assist in the delivery of government services
- enable business continuity
- contribute to the cultural resources of Queensland
- facilitate and support transparent and accountable government and public participation
- allow the capture and management of the intellectual property of a public authority represented in its corporate information (records)<sup>1</sup>.

This Guideline replaces the *Best Practice Guide to Recordkeeping*, published in 2002.

## 3 Recordkeeping in the public sector

Recordkeeping in the Queensland public sector is governed by the [Public Records Act 2002](#) (the Act). The Act covers all public records irrespective of the technology or medium used to generate, capture, manage, preserve and access those records. All public authority employees have some responsibilities for making, keeping and managing the public records that they receive or create.

Under Section 25 of the Act, the State Archivist has the power to issue policies, standards and guidelines about the making, keeping, preserving, managing and disposing of public records. Under this section the State Archivist issues the recordkeeping Information Standards and various policy advice for application across Queensland's public sector. The recordkeeping Information Standards are also issued by the Director-General, Department of Public Works under the [Financial and Management Standard 1997](#).

Public authorities are required to be familiar with these requirements and to develop their own recordkeeping regime. This Guideline provides an introduction for public authorities considering their compliance obligations. Current policy advice on specific topics is available from the [Queensland State Archives'](#) website.

### 3.1 Legislation

All public records, including electronic records, are subject to legislation and to legal processes such as discovery and subpoenas. Legislation applicable to recordkeeping in the public sector may include a variety of Acts and Regulations, in addition to the [Public Records Act 2002](#), such as those listed in the Implementation Advice for Principle 1 of [Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping](#). It is the responsibility of the public authority to research and understand the legislative environment in which it operates, and determine and document the resulting compliance obligations.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information on managing intellectual property within State Government agencies refer to *Information Standard 25: Intellectual Property*.

## 3.2 Information Standards

[Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping](#) is the umbrella recordkeeping policy for public authorities in Queensland as defined in Schedule 2 of the [Public Records Act 2002](#). It applies to records in all formats and defines principles for recordkeeping regardless of the environment in which public records are created or managed. Under [Information Standard 40](#) public authorities are required to:

- comply with legal, administrative, cultural and business recordkeeping requirements
- establish and maintain reliable recordkeeping systems, and
- ensure that full and accurate records are adequately captured, preserved and made accessible for as long as those records are required for business, legislative, accountability and cultural requirements.

[Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records](#) relates specifically to the appraisal, retention and disposal of public records. The [Public Records Act 2002](#) prohibits the disposal of public records without the permission of the State Archivist. This permission is usually given through authorised Retention and Disposal Schedules. The appraisal of records and development of a Retention and Disposal Schedule is a partnership between the public authority and Queensland State Archives. Queensland State Archives publishes guidelines for the development and implementation of Retention and Disposal Schedules, and other policy advice, some of which is detailed in Section 7 of this Guideline.

There are a number of other relevant Information Standards which public authorities should consider in developing policies related to their management of information. These include [Information Standard 18: Information Security \(IS18\)](#); [Information Standard 25: Intellectual Property \(IS25\)](#); [Information Standard 34: Metadata \(IS34\)](#).

## 4 Managing the recordkeeping process

Full and accurate public records must be made and kept to ensure the business of government is adequately documented and the resulting evidence in the form of public records is effectively managed. The [Australian Standard for Records Management AS/ISO 15489](#) identifies that records management governs the practice both of records managers and of any person who creates or uses records in the course of their business activities. Records management in an organisation includes:

- a) setting policies and standards
- b) assigning responsibilities and authorities
- c) establishing and promulgating procedures and guidelines
- d) providing a range of services relating to the management and use of records
- e) designing, implementing and administering specialised systems for managing records, and
- f) integrating records management into business systems and processes.

Staff of public authorities seeking to implement the recordkeeping Information Standards in their organisation need to be familiar with the legislation and standards outlined in Section 3, and the nature of the business performed by their agency. Once the legislative and organisational environments are understood, a practical approach to recordkeeping can be developed and implemented. This will include agreeing on the strategic direction for recordkeeping (which would be determined through a regular planning process) and the development of local policies and procedures to address the minimum requirements listed in [Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping](#) and [Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records](#).

Public authorities subject to the [Public Records Act 2002](#) and the Information Standards are a diverse group, in size, complexity and the nature of their business. As a result, Queensland State

Archives provides general advice on many topics relating to recordkeeping, and public authorities can use this advice in considering specific issues relevant to their business practices and activities. In addition to the key documents listed above, other advice is provided in the format of Public Record Briefs, templates, tools and guidelines. A selection of this advice is listed in Section 7 of this Guideline. Public authorities are encouraged to use these publications, available from the [Queensland State Archives'](#) website, in the development of their recordkeeping plans, policies and procedures.

## 5 Managing records in all formats

Requirements under the [Public Records Act 2002](#) and [Information Standards 40 and 31](#) apply to records in all formats, including technology-dependent records. Technology-dependent records include records in electronic formats, such as email, office documents and records in business systems, as well as audio and video recordings and microfilm / microfiche. While the same requirements apply, different strategies and techniques may be required to ensure that these formats are created, captured and remain accessible for their full retention periods in accordance with authorised Retention and Disposal Schedules.

For this reason, a number of Queensland State Archives guidelines focus on records in particular formats. For example, as highlighted in section 7, guidelines are available on managing email, records of online resources and services, and records in business systems, among other specific guidance. It is acknowledged that sound ICT management practices, including access controls, backups and audit logs, support the authenticity and evidential integrity of records managed in electronic systems. [Information Standard 18: Information Security](#) and its associated implementation advice provides useful guidance in this area.

The conversion of records from one format to another is also an issue that requires particular attention. [Queensland State Archives](#) has issued guidelines on digitisation - the process of converting records from an analogue (usually paper) form into an electronic form - and microfilming. Public authorities are reminded that, if they wish to dispose of original paper records after digitisation or microfilming, specific authorisation is required from the State Archivist and policies are available outlining requirements for authorisation.

## 6 Compliance monitoring and reporting

When Information [Standards 31 and 40](#) were released in 2001, there were clear compliance timelines articulated in the Standards. State Government agencies and Local Governments were required to achieve compliance with seven recordkeeping principles set down in IS40 by December 2006. Statutory entities and Government Owned Corporations were required to achieve full compliance by December 2007. In support of this process, Queensland State Archives developed a [Compliance Guideline for Queensland Public Authorities](#) and [Compliance Checklist for Queensland Public Authorities](#). These publications may assist public authorities in identifying practical compliance activities to be undertaken within their organisation.

The identified attributes in the checklist provide a basis for assessment against existing work practices, documentation, systems, staff knowledge and skills. Compliance must include public records in the public authority's formal registry files, and also records outside the recognised recordkeeping systems, for example, records in business or information systems or in databases. All public records, regardless of their format, carry evidence of decisions or business activities that public authorities need to capture and manage.

Under the [Public Records Act 2002](#) the State Archivist is required to report on the status of Government recordkeeping in Queensland. Periodically, Queensland State Archives will conduct

assessment and review activities to inform this report on recordkeeping. Public authority Chief Executives will be contacted regarding any compliance monitoring activity to be undertaken.

In conjunction with the review of the recordkeeping Information Standards in 2009, a new Recordkeeping Assessment Framework is being developed to foster continuous improvement in public sector recordkeeping.

## 7 Queensland State Archives policies and advice

Queensland State Archives maintains the whole-of-Government Recordkeeping Policy Framework which includes a range of detailed and succinct advice to support public authorities in meeting their recordkeeping obligations. Some of the key policies developed as part of this framework are listed below however there is a significant range of other current advice available from the Queensland State Archives' website.

### 7.1 Queensland Recordkeeping Metadata Standard and Guideline

The [Queensland Recordkeeping Metadata Standard and Guideline \(QRKMS\)](#) provides advice to public authorities on what recordkeeping metadata is required to identify public records and manage them through time. The document is split into two parts: a Technical Standard which identifies and defines metadata elements and specifies whether they are mandatory or optional, and a Guideline on understanding and applying recordkeeping metadata.

### 7.2 Guideline for Managing Records in Business Systems

Compliance with [Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping](#) requires agencies to manage all public records, irrespective of the format. Queensland State Archives, in conjunction with the National Archives of Australia and with the support of the Australasian Digital Recordkeeping Initiative, has developed the [Guidelines and Functional Requirements for Records in Business Systems](#). The *Guidelines and Functional Requirements* is a best-practice guide to assist agencies with the management of records in business systems.

### 7.3 Managing Emails that are Public Records

Emails are part of the corporate recordkeeping responsibilities of public authorities and the [Managing Emails that are Public Records](#) policy provides directions to ensure that business transactions occurring through email systems are captured, preserved and maintained to meet legislative, cultural and accountability requirements.

### 7.4 Managing Records of Online Resources and Services

This policy has been developed to assist public authorities to capture records of the resources and services that are made available online. Web pages and websites may be public records and, therefore, in accordance with legislative, accountability, business and cultural requirements must be captured, preserved and maintained for as long as they are required. The [Managing Records of Online Resources and Services](#) policy provides public authorities with principles and guidelines to ensure that those records generated on Government web pages and websites are treated and maintained in accordance with recordkeeping requirements.

### 7.5 Digitisation Disposal Policy

This policy on the disposal of original paper records after digitisation, or scanning, provides advice to public authorities which are considering digitising public records to realise benefits including greater

accessibility to information and savings on storage and processing costs while meeting retention and disposal requirements.

## 7.6 Microfilming Disposal Policy

Queensland State Archives has developed the [Microfilming Disposal Policy](#) to ensure that the early disposal of original paper records which have been microfilmed, is carried out in an authorised and accountable manner. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Queensland State Archives' [Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records](#), which provides advice on acceptable microfilming practice.

## 7.7 General Retention and Disposal Schedule

There are many administrative records common to public authorities. The [General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records](#) has been developed to assist public authorities in identifying and sentencing these records for disposal. This Schedule has been approved by the State Archivist under Section 13 of the [Public Records Act 2002](#) for use by all public authorities.

## 7.8 Sector and Agency Specific Retention and Disposal Schedules

Queensland State Archives works with public authorities to develop Retention and Disposal Schedules that relate specifically to their core business. Where a number of public authorities carry out similar functions, for example local governments or universities, sector schedules are developed in conjunction with the relevant sector. All Retention and Disposal Schedules are authorised by the State Archivist in accordance with Section 13 of the [Public Records Act 2002](#). A number of current sector and public authority specific schedules are available from Queensland State Archives' website.

## 7.9 Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Retention and Disposal Schedules

IS40 and IS31 state that records must be retained for as long as they are needed to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations. Retention periods are determined by the evidence requirements associated with the business activity that the records document and approved by the State Archivist in a Retention and Disposal Schedule. Queensland State Archives' [Guideline for the Development of Retention and Disposal Schedules](#) and [Guideline for the Implementation of Retention and Disposal Schedules](#) provide advice for public authorities on developing, reviewing or implementing a Retention and Disposal Schedule.

## 7.10 Guideline for the Disposal and Transfer of Public Records

Under the [Public Records Act 2002](#) public authorities may transfer records appraised as permanent to the custody of the Queensland State Archives. This Guideline provides specific advice to public authorities on setting Restricted Access Periods and transfer procedures for material. It includes instructions for specific tasks such as listing and boxing records, and procedures for retrieving material held at Queensland State Archives.

## 7.11 Compliance Guideline, Checklist and Survey for Queensland Public Authorities

When the initial compliance deadlines for [Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping \(IS40\)](#) expired in December 2006 and 2007, a self-assessment checklist was issued to public authorities. The checklist identifies each of the seven recordkeeping principles in IS40 and provides supporting policy

explanations. A number of attributes that indicate compliance follow each principle. Public authorities which submitted a completed checklist were issued with a formal survey on recordkeeping compliance. These tools are available on the Queensland State Archives' website to allow agencies to review their compliance and consider activities to foster improved recordkeeping practices.

## 7.12 Training and awareness raising

Queensland State Archives provides a variety of opportunities for public sector staff, records practitioners and information management specialists to attend and participate in training and awareness-raising activities. These activities are usually subject specific. There are many formats for interaction between Queensland State Archives staff and public authorities including Recordkeepers' forums, Queensland State Archives listserv, seminars, masterclasses, online training and participation in face-to-face education opportunities. For more information on these opportunities visit the [Queensland State Archives'](#) website. Queensland State Archives also provides advisory services to public authorities.

## Version history

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