



Australian Government



NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES  
OF AUSTRALIA

## Case Study

# National Archives Recordkeeping Policy – 2005

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## NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA RECORDKEEPING POLICY

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the creation and management of records within the National Archives of Australia. The Archives is committed to establishing and maintaining recordkeeping practices that meet its business needs, accountability requirements and stakeholder expectations.

### Policy Statement

The National Archives' records are a major component of its corporate memory and as such are a vital asset that support ongoing operations and provide valuable evidence of business activities over time. The Archives is committed to implementing best practice recordkeeping systems to ensure the creation, maintenance and protection of records with appropriate evidential characteristics.

The Archives recognises its regulatory requirements as a Commonwealth agency under the *Archives Act 1983*. It is committed to the practices set out in the Australian Standard AS ISO 15489-2002, *Records Management*, and the standards and guidelines promulgated by the National Archives to all agencies. The Archives, as the lead agency for recordkeeping in the Commonwealth, also seeks to ensure that its own recordkeeping practices set an example of best practice.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Archives' staff, all aspects of Archives' operations, all records created to support business activities and all business applications used to create records.

### Policy Context

The Archives supports a holistic approach to the management of all corporate information, and seeks to integrate its recordkeeping policies and procedures within the broader information management regime of the organisation. This Recordkeeping Policy is an important component of the Archives' *Information Management Strategic Framework* document, supporting its objectives, principles and strategies.

### Legislation and Standards

The Archives is committed to following the laws related to recordkeeping including the *Archives Act 1983*, the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the *Evidence Act 1995* and the *Electronic Transactions Act 1999*. The Archives also recognises its obligations to be openly accountable for its actions under the *Public Service Act 1999*. The Archives is committed to developing and maintaining recordkeeping systems that capture and maintain records with appropriate evidential characteristics in accordance with the requirements of these legislative Acts.

The Archives is also committed to developing its recordkeeping systems in accordance with Australian Standard AS ISO 15489–2002, *Records Management*, and the National Archives of Australia 'e-permanence' suite of recordkeeping standards and policies.

### Recordkeeping Systems

The primary recordkeeping system of the National Archives is the electronic recordkeeping system (RkS). The RkS is the internal recordkeeping system where all corporate administrative records are captured and stored. In addition to capturing electronic records the RkS captures digital surrogates of original paper-based records through digital imaging. Paper files are only created and maintained for classified records or by special arrangements with the Information Management section.

While the RkS constitutes the Archives' preferred primary recordkeeping system for all corporate administrative records, there are a number of databases, software applications and paper based systems which operate outside the RkS and function as recordkeeping systems. These include: RecordSearch, which captures and maintains records relating to the Archives' core functions; and Finance1 for corporate finance records.

All of the Archives' records should be created and maintained within the preferred recordkeeping systems outlined above or as specified by the Information Management section. Records should not be maintained in share areas (shared folders), H drives, hard drives, or Temp Docs. These electronic storage facilities do not contain recordkeeping functionality to ensure that records will be captured and maintained. They are therefore unable to provide access to, and evidence of, business activities over time.

The Archives' recordkeeping systems are dedicated to creating and maintaining authentic, reliable and useable records which meet the needs of internal and external stakeholders. Records are maintained for as long as they are required to effectively and efficiently support the business functions and activities of the Archives.

The Archives' recordkeeping systems manage the following processes:

- the creation and capture of records ;
- the storage of records;
- the protection of record integrity and authenticity;
- the security of records;
- access to records; and
- the disposal of records in accordance with approved disposal authorities.

The Archives' recordkeeping systems assist in making full and accurate records. Full and accurate records should be:

- **compliant** with the recordkeeping requirements arising from the regulated and accountable environment of the Archives;
- **adequate** for the purposes for which they are kept;
- **complete** in content and contain the structural and contextual information necessary to document a transaction;
- **meaningful** with regards to information and/or linkages that ensure the business context in which the record was created and used is apparent;
- **comprehensive** in documenting the complete range of business for which evidence is required by the organisation;
- **accurate** in reflecting the transactions that they document;
- **authentic** in providing proof that they are what they purport to be and that their purported creators did indeed create them; and
- **inviolable** through being securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration or removal.

#### Responsibilities

*The Director-General of the National Archives of Australia shall:*

- authorise the Recordkeeping Policy;
- provide sufficient support and resources for ensuring a successful records management program; and
- promote compliance with the Archives' recordkeeping policies and procedures.

*The Director, Information Management shall:*

- develop strategies to support the Recordkeeping Policy;
- ensure that the Archives' recordkeeping practices comply with its obligations and responsibilities as a Commonwealth agency;
- oversee the recordkeeping functionality of the Archives' recordkeeping systems;
- ensure all staff are aware of the Archives' recordkeeping requirements; and
- establish the Archives as a site of best practice recordkeeping.

*The Information Management section shall:*

- create and maintain recordkeeping procedures documenting the Archives' recordkeeping requirements and containing recordkeeping rules and practices that all Archives' employees are obligated to follow;
- promulgate the Archives' recordkeeping policies and procedures to all staff;

- monitor staff compliance with the Recordkeeping Policy;
- deliver recordkeeping training and advice to all staff;
- maintain, monitor and review the Archives' recordkeeping systems; and
- ensure that records are kept for only as long as the Archives, government and the public require them, as established by disposal authorities.

*ICT support staff, including system administrators shall:*

- maintain the technology used to support systems that capture and keep records electronically ensuring that all documents are reliable, available and accessible to staff when required.

*All managers and supervisors of National Archives of Australia employees shall:*

- include in their performance agreements the core expectation 'To promote and demonstrate genuine participation in the performance management scheme (including regard for the APS and Archives values) and better practice recordkeeping';
- monitor staff under their supervision to ensure that they understand and comply with the Archives' recordkeeping policies and procedures for the creation and maintenance of records; and
- support and foster a culture within their workgroup that promotes good recordkeeping practices.

*All employees of the National Archives of Australia shall:*

- understand the recordkeeping obligations and responsibilities that relate to their position;
- adhere to organisational policies, procedures and standards in keeping records documenting their daily work, and specifically create and capture records into identified recordkeeping systems for the following business activities:
  - approval or authorisation
  - guidance, advice or direction
  - information relating to projects or activities being undertaken
  - formal business communications between staff and external recipients
  - formal business communications between staff; and
- only destroy records under an authorised disposal authority or through the application of normal administrative practice.

### Monitoring

Staff and system compliance with this Recordkeeping Policy should be regularly monitored. Following established procedures, monitoring activities should be carried out by supervisors, the Information Management section and by senior management through the Audit Committee.

### Review

The Information Management section will review this Recordkeeping Policy every three years, or earlier if required.

### Authorisation

This policy has been approved by -

[signed]

Ross Gibbs  
Director-General  
National Archives of Australia

Date - [30 September 2005]

## Glossary

The following definitions have been mainly drawn from either the Australian Standard AS ISO 15489–2002, *Records Management* or the Australian Standard AS 4390–1996, *Records Management*.

**Accountability** is the principle that individuals, organisations and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others. (AS ISO 15489 Part 1: 3.2)

**Business activities** is an umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of an organisation and its employees. (AS 4390 Part 1: Clause 4.6)

**Capture** is a deliberate action which results in the registration of a record into a recordkeeping system. For certain business activities, this action may be designed into electronic systems so that the capture of records is concurrent with the creation of records. (AS 4390 Part 1: Clause 4.7)

**Disposal** refers to the range of processes associated with implementing records retention, destruction or transfer decisions which are documented in [disposal] authorities or other instruments. (AS ISO 15489 Part 1: 4.9)

**Information Management** describes the measures required for the effective collection, storage, access, use and disposal of information to support agency business processes. The core of these measures is the management of the definition, ownership, sensitivity, quality and accessibility of information. (*Office of Information Technology, Information Management and Technology Framework Guidelines*, pp. 4-5)

**Records** are the information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. (AS ISO 15489 Part 1: 3.15)

**Recordkeeping** is the making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. (AS 4390 Part 1: 4.19)

**Recordkeeping systems** are information systems that capture, manage and provide access to records through time. (AS 4390 Part 1: 4.20)

## Resources

*National Archives Information Management Strategic Framework*

National Archives of Australia, *e-permanence* suite of products

Australian Standard AS ISO 15489–2002, *Records Management*

Australian Standard AS 4390–1996, *Records Management*

*Archives Act 1983*

*Privacy Act 1988*

*Freedom of Information Act 1982*

*Evidence Act 1995*

*Electronic Transactions Act 1999*

*Public Service Act 1999*

*Australian Public Service Code of Conduct & APS Values*

*National Archives Values*

## Further information

For further information please contact the Director, Information Management.