



Government of South Australia

GPO Box 2343
ADELAIDE SA 5001
Tel (08) 8204 8791
Fax (08) 8204 8777 DX:467
srsaRecordsManagement@sa.gov.au
www.archives.sa.gov.au

State Records
of South Australia



Introduction to General Disposal Schedule No. 15

For State Government Agencies in South Australia

Effective 14 November 2006 to 30 June 2013

7th Edition



Table of Contents

Approval for the commencement of this schedule.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	3
Overview.....	4
<i>State Records Act 1997</i>	4
Previous General Disposal Schedules revoked.....	4
Effective life of Schedule.....	5
Scope.....	5
Records excluded from the Schedule.....	6
Notification of Proposed Destruction of Records.....	8
Retention periods.....	11
Destruction of records.....	14
Relationship to agency-specific Records Disposal Schedule.....	15
Relationship of Schedule to the <i>Keyword AAA Thesaurus</i>	15
Layout.....	17
Agencies not using the <i>Keyword AAA Thesaurus</i>	20
Cross-references and notes.....	20
Custody and transfer of records.....	20
Adequate Records Management.....	23
Implementing General Disposal Schedule No. 15.....	23
Training.....	26
Availability of General Disposal Schedule No. 15.....	26



Amendments and on-going review of General Disposal Schedule No. 15	26
References	27
State Records contacts	28
Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)	29
What is NAP?	29
NAP in electronic media	30
The NAP test	30
Examples of NAP	31
Authority to use NAP	32
Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	33
Records relating to Native title.....	33
Determining relevance of records.....	34
Relationship between GDS 15, agency specific RDS, and GDS 16.....	36
What type of Disposal Schedule should I use? RDS or GDS?	37
Acronyms	38
Glossary	40



© 2006 Government of South Australia

General Disposal Schedule No. 15 may be copied for use by South Australian Government agencies and for reasonable study or research purposes. No part of this Schedule may be reproduced or distributed for profit or gain or for any other purpose without the permission of the Manager [Director], State Records of South Australia.

Terms and Scope Notes taken from *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms, revised edition 1998*, are reproduced under a licence agreement between State Records of South Australia and the State Records of New South Wales.



Approval for the commencement of this schedule

STATE RECORDS ACT 1997

Government of South Australia

GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULE NO. 15, 7TH EDITION

for

State Government Agencies in South Australia

14 November 2006 to 30 June 2013

Approved by

Chair, State Records Council

Director, State Records



Acknowledgments

The advice and assistance of the many officers of South Australian State Government agencies who assisted with the development and review of the Schedule is acknowledged with much appreciation.

The advice of officers from our sister agencies in other states, the Commonwealth Government and the Northern Territory is also gratefully acknowledged.

General Disposal Schedules 10 - 14 and general schedules in operation in other Australian jurisdictions were used as valuable references in the development of General Disposal Schedule No. 15.

State Records of South Australia
November 2006



Overview

State Records Act 1997

The *State Records Act* was proclaimed in October 1997 to provide for the preservation and management of official records. General Disposal Schedule No. 15 7th Edition is issued as a determination under Section 23 of the Act.

Section 23 of the *State Records Act, 1997* states that no official record may be disposed of without the approval of the State Records Council. General Disposal Schedule No. 15 was developed by State Records to provide State Government agencies with the means of disposing of their general administrative records in an orderly and accountable manner. The State Records Council approved General Disposal Schedule No. 15 on 10 November 1998. The 7th Edition was approved on 14 November 2006.

Previous general disposal schedules revoked

General Disposal Schedules 10 – 14 issued in 1993, were revoked by General Disposal Schedule No. 15. General Disposal Schedule No. 17 issued in September 1999 was revoked in 2001 by the 5th Edition of General Disposal Schedule No. 15. Agencies are advised that disposal arrangements put in place in accordance with General Disposal Schedules 10 - 14 and 17 and previous editions of General Disposal Schedule No. 15 may need to be updated in the light of the 7th Edition of General Disposal Schedule No. 15. Further direction on re-sentencing is provided in *Re-sentencing of Records Guidelines* (June 2002) available from State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>).



Effective life of schedule

General Disposal Schedule No. 15 7th Edition is effective from 14 November 2006 to 30 June 2013 unless revoked earlier. Amendments approved by the State Records Council may be issued during that period.

Scope

General Disposal Schedule No. 15 applies to general administrative records made or received by all State Government agencies in South Australia. The Schedule does not apply to unique agency-specific records that document core agency functions.

The Schedule applies to records in any format - including paper, microform, audiovisual, graphic, and electronic media - which document the functions described in the Schedule.

Scope notes detailing general administrative records **excluded** from General Disposal Schedule No. 15 follow in this Introduction and are reinforced in relevant descriptive entries throughout the Schedule.



Records excluded from the schedule

Records more than 50 years old

General Disposal Schedule No. 15 **does not automatically authorise** destruction of records if 50 years have passed since the end of the calendar year in which the records came into existence. TEMPORARY records more than 50 years old must be re-appraised and will require an agency operational [Records Disposal Schedule](#) (RDS). Records of any age, which fit a description given in a PERMANENT disposal class, may be retained in accordance with General Disposal Schedule No. 15.

Records relating to Aboriginal people

State Records endorses *Bringing Them Home, the report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*. Recommendation 21 of the Inquiry states:

- ▶ *That no record relating to Indigenous individuals, families or communities or to any children, Indigenous or otherwise, removed from their families for any reason, whether held by government or non-government agencies, be destroyed.*

It is not anticipated that agencies will locate records relating to indigenous individuals (except under compensation, OH&S, personnel or staff development) amongst administrative records. Records created to document employment by the State are to be dealt with under the provisions of this General Disposal Schedule.



Records to be protected under Recommendation 21 are most likely to be found in agency operational records under functions like community and family services, health management or correctional services. State Records will not authorise the destruction of records that are of relevance to re-establishing family links. Agencies are required to consult State Records if any doubt arises as to the retention status of any record likely to document an aspect of the separation issue or of potential value in re-establishing family links.

Records relating to Native Title claims are dealt with at page 30 in this Introduction.

Retention of records relating to asbestos

The 5th Edition of General Disposal Schedule No. 15 was revised to include provisions for the preservation of records that may be relevant to asbestos related legal claims.

Due to the length of time that elapses between exposure to asbestos and the development of medical conditions, it is essential that South Australian government agencies ensure that relevant official records are preserved.

The use of asbestos as a building material ceased in 1986. With this in mind entries have been included in this schedule requiring that records that relate to building construction, maintenance, fit out, make good and movement, on buildings constructed before 1986, be retained until 2040. At that time their continuing retention will be reviewed in light of asbestos related claims that may have developed over the intervening forty years. Records relating to buildings constructed after 1986 have retention periods that are shorter and do not include asbestos considerations.



Agencies need to note that whilst some records that could be relevant to an asbestos related claim are designated for temporary retention, they cannot be destroyed prior to the review being conducted in 2040.

Retention of records relating to limitations of action

The 7th edition of GDS 15 includes provisions for the preservation of records that may have relevance to limitations of actions related claims. In settling disposal periods State Records, with the advice of the Crown Solicitor, has sought to find a balance between the best practice of taking limitations into account on the one hand, and between what is practical in terms of storage space on the other.

Retaining records for two years longer than the limitation period achieves that balance and a formula of “the limitation period plus two years” has been used to calculate the relevant disposal actions.

The basic limitation periods in the Limitation Act are two or six months, or two, three, six or fifteen years. State Records has eliminated from consideration the periods of two and six months, and two and three years. It has adopted the periods of six or fifteen years, to which a further two years has been added by our formula. The basic disposal periods are therefore eight years and seventeen years, depending on the cause of action. These retention periods apply to ordinary contracts not under seal (simple contracts) and contracts under seal (specialty contracts) respectively. Throughout the Schedule, contracts are identified as specialty or simple.

*Agencies **must** note two important issues:*

- a. If a record relates to a plaintiff under a legal disability, the disposal period needs to be much longer, ie a maximum of 30 years from the date of the event that gives rise to the cause of action



- b. Several entries in the GDS whose disposal action is 2 years remain unchanged from the 6th edition, although a risk assessment note for agencies to consider has been added, eg **14.82.2 PUBLICATION – Public Reaction**, advises agencies to conduct their own risk assessment:

<< Agencies are advised to assess the risk arising as a result of the topic of the records within the Agency context for determining the retention beyond this minimum period.>>

Retention of records relating to criminal history and other personal checks

The 7th edition of GDS 15 includes provisions for the preservation of records that may have relevance to the conduct of personal checks on personnel relating to their criminal history or drug and other medical use.

Criminal history checks, medical checks and drug use checks are included in GDS 15 (7th edition). Such checks are conducted by or on behalf of various agencies throughout the State Government and are a relatively routine occurrence.

Checks are conducted either when a person is being considered for employment within the public sector or when someone is already a public sector employee.

This edition of the GDS 15 recommends for the disposal of criminal history check information as outlined in the schedule body at item 12.94.3. It is recommended that these records be maintained **separately from the personal file** (which are retained until the person is 75 years of age). Summaries of a criminal history check, including outcome of the check, however, are disposed of in accordance with item 12.16 and may be retained on the personal file.



Records relating to medical, drug use or other personal checks are disposed of in accordance with item 12.16 and may be retained on the personal file.

Notification of proposed destruction of records

Native Title Discovery Section, Crown Solicitor's Office

Prior to the destruction of any records described in General Disposal Schedule No. 15, it is important to consider General Disposal Schedule No. 16 (Native Title Guidelines). If after this you are still unsure as to whether you should destroy records, enquiries should be made of the Native Title Section, Crown Solicitor's Office, for advice in respect of native title issues relating to current and prospective claims. Please contact the Native Title Section on (08) 8207 1691.

Civil Litigation Section, Crown Solicitor's Office

Prior to the destruction of any records described in General Disposal Schedule No.15, it is also important to consider General Disposal Schedule No. 27 for records required for legal proceedings or *ex gratia* applications relating to alleged abuse of former children whilst in State Care. For advice on implementing GDS 27, including identifying records of relevance (or likely relevance), contact the Civil Litigation Section, Crown Solicitor's Office (Ph: (08) 8207 1694).

State Records

When official records in an agency's custody or housed in secondary storage are due to be destroyed in accordance with the provisions of this or other disposal determinations, State Records is required to be notified via an *Intention to Destroy Records Report*. This form is available on the State Records website (www.archives.sa.gov.au). An



agency is then required to wait for State Records' written approval to destroy the records. The records must not be destroyed until such approval is received.

Agencies need to note that it is not necessary to notify State Records of the intention to destroy records either in accordance with [Normal Administrative Practice](#) or under authority of General Disposal Schedule No. 15 where the disposal action allows destruction after 1 year or less.

Retention periods

Retention periods for TEMPORARY records shown in the Schedule are the minimum periods for which records should be retained before they are destroyed. Retention periods are triggered by disposal actions listed in the Schedule. If a record is reactivated after its retention period has commenced the destruction date is recalculated from the date of the subsequent disposal trigger.

There is no requirement to destroy temporary records if an agency has a need to retain them longer than the designated minimum retention period.

However, in the interests of efficient and economic records management, agencies should take all steps to reduce the storage costs of time-expired records.

Records with a retention period of PERMANENT need to be retained indefinitely, with the objective that they ultimately become part of the Government archives collection housed and maintained by State Records.

Before implementing retention periods (either by destruction in the case of temporary records or transfer to State Records in the case of permanent records) agencies need to take into consideration the following factors.



Official records in electronic format ¹

Data, information and documents, whether digital or paper-based, become official records when they are created or received in the conduct of South Australian Government business.

Electronic records are a critical element in the conduct of the business of the Government of South Australia both for accountability and in the ongoing documentary heritage of the State. The Government, therefore, needs to strategically manage its electronic records. Electronic records can include e-mail messages, electronic documents, websites, spatial information, databases, online forms, and so on.

Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring that electronic records and their associated metadata are properly created and captured into official recordkeeping systems, survive without alteration or degradation, and remain in a readily accessible format (which includes content, structure and context) for the duration of prescribed retention periods.

State Records has released a number of standards and guidelines on specific types of electronic records and recordkeeping issues. These are available from State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>).

¹ Adapted from *General Disposal Authority for Administrative Records RD 2003016* State Records Office of Western Australia, 2003



Legal deposit

Legal deposit refers to statutory provisions that oblige publishers to deposit copies of their publications in libraries in the country in which they are published. Under the Commonwealth *Copyright Act 1968* and various Australian State Acts, a copy of any work published in Australia must be deposited with (a) the National Library of Australia and (b) the appropriate State Library. Legal deposit extends not only to commercial publishers but also to private individuals, clubs, churches, societies and organisations.

In South Australia, one copy of publications produced for external use should be deposited with the State Library and the Parliamentary Library (s.35, *Libraries Act 1982*). Publications include books, newspapers, magazines, journals, pamphlets, maps, plans, charts, printed music, records, cassettes, films, video or audio tapes, computer software, CD-ROMs, compact discs and other items made available to the public.

Legal purposes, inquiries and investigations

Official records cannot be destroyed if they are likely to be required for legal purposes. If an investigation, inquest, commission or inquiry is in progress (or forecast in Parliament or the press) all relevant records need to be identified and retained until the action, and any subsequent actions, are completed or appeal periods have lapsed.

Agencies should obtain legal advice if there is any possibility that destruction of a record could be prejudicial to the interests of the Government or its clients.



Destruction of records

Subject to the notification requirements given above (page 10), records authorised for destruction by General Disposal Schedule No. 15 may be destroyed when the designated retention period has elapsed. Agencies must ensure that all destruction is secure and confidential, and that private contractors provide a certificate of destruction confirming confidential destruction. Standard methods for destruction of paper are shredding, pulping or burning. Agencies should ensure that methods of destruction used are environmentally sound.

Records in electronic format must be destroyed by reformatting or rewriting to ensure that the data and any “pointers” in the system are destroyed. “Delete” instructions do not offer adequate security as data may be restored or recovered.

Agencies should keep their own record of all records destroyed (see the Schedule – item 9.34.3) noting the relevant disposal authority. Proof of destruction may be required for legal purposes, or in response to FOI applications. When records are destroyed systems (see the Schedule – item 9.26.1) that control them should also be updated by inputting destruction dates and relevant disposal authority entries applied.



Relationship to agency-specific records disposal schedule

General Disposal Schedule No. 15 (GDS 15) authorises disposal of only those general administrative records identified in the schedule. Records created to document the unique or “core” functions of individual agencies must not be sentenced using a General Disposal Schedule. Agency-specific operational records may only be disposed of under the authority of a Records Disposal Schedule (RDS) specific to those records. For example *Traffic Incident Reports* created by the South Australian Police Department are disposed of according to a schedule specific to that agency, and *school student files* are disposed of according to a schedule specific to the Department of Education and Children’s Services.

To enable authorised disposal of its unique records each agency will need to develop its own operational RDS to be used in conjunction with GDS 15. A set of decision charts for determining whether to use an [RDS or GDS](#) and illustrating the [relationship between GDS 15, agency operational RDS and GDS 16](#) are provided elsewhere in this Introduction (pages 33 – 34).

Relationship of schedule to the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus*

In structure and arrangement General Disposal Schedule No. 15 relates closely to *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms* developed by the State Records Authority of NSW. State Records recommends the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus* to South Australian agencies as the preferred method for classifying files and documents, which are common to all agencies.

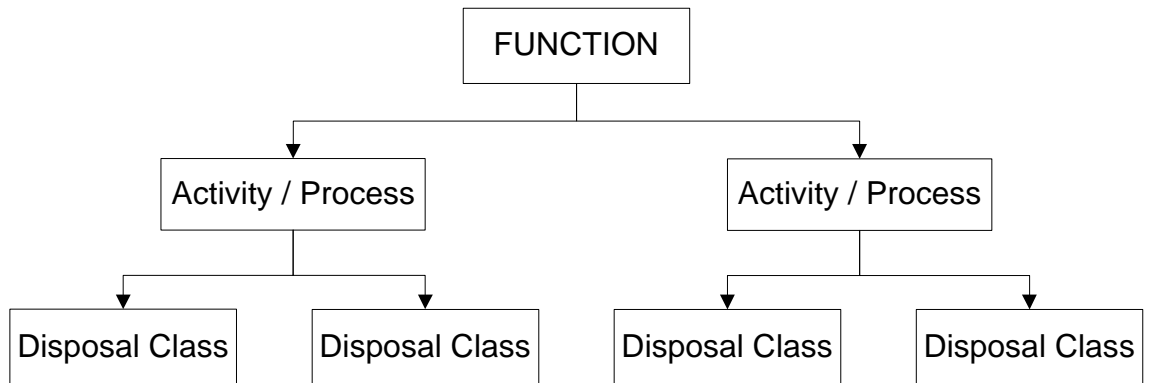


The Thesaurus is function-based and has a hierarchical structure that allocates a number of business activities to each general function. Similarly, the Schedule is function based in that it incorporates the functions and activities taken from the top two levels of the Thesaurus. It is significantly different from the subject based General Disposal Schedules previously in use.

The three level numbering system of the Schedule reflects its hierarchical structure:

- ▶ Level one comprises 17 broad general business functions
- ▶ Level two comprises activities and processes necessary to carry out those functions
- ▶ Level three comprises the disposal classes applicable to each function/activity combination.

Descriptions of the three levels move from the very broad to the specific.



The Schedule structure is shown in the following model:

The function-based approach reflects the business context in which the records are created. It is a departure from classifying records by subject and embraces the *Australian Standard AS/ISO15489: 2002* in relation to classification based on business activities.

Layout

The schedule is included as a separate document to the Introduction, for ease of use. The schedule is laid out as follows:

Item No:

Numbering in the Schedule is hierarchical:

- ▶ functions have single level numbers,
- ▶ activities and/or processes have two level numbers,
and
- ▶ disposal classes have three level numbers.

See [example](#) for item 1.4.3 below.



FUNCTION: The 17 general functions are shown in block letters at the start of each section.

Activity/Process: The activities and processes relating to each function are shown in title case and are arranged numerically and alphabetically under each section. Each activity has a unique number, which relates to that activity irrespective of where it sits under a function. This is to ensure ease of application and amendment of the schedule and identification of activities. It will also aid the searching capabilities within software applications for on-line application of the schedule.

Description: All function and activity definitions are taken from the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus*. Descriptions are in three levels ranging from broad functions to specific disposal classes:

- ▶ definitions of functions are shown at the start of each section in bold,
- ▶ definitions of activities are located adjacent to the activity title in italic, and
- ▶ descriptions of each disposal class are arranged in sequence under the activity definitions.

Tables of [acronyms](#) and [glossary](#) are also provided to assist interpretation.



Disposal action: Disposal actions relate to the disposal classes arranged under the activity descriptions. Status of the class is either PERMANENT or TEMPORARY with a disposal trigger and retention period given for all temporary records.

Example: On page 3 of the Schedule there are three disposal classes listed under the function of COMMUNITY RELATIONS and the activity - Addresses (presentations). The first two disposal classes relate to important addresses and the third is for routine addresses.

The disposal action for records relating to routine addresses presented to community groups is therefore identified as follows:

Item No.	FUNCTION Activity/Process	Description (Disposal Class)	Disposal Action
1	COMMUNITY RELATIONS		
1.4	Addresses (presentations)		
1.4.3		Routine addresses and presentations	TEMPORARY Destroy 2 years after last action



Agencies not using the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus*

Although it is designed to sentence records classified with the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus* General Disposal Schedule No. 15 is applicable to all general administrative records irrespective of the classification system used. A contents list and index are included to assist all users.

Cross-references and notes

Many activity descriptors in the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus* are applicable to several functions when classifying records. Some activities such as “Policy” apply to all 17 functions. However, the disposal class descriptions have been tailored to describe transactional records appropriate for each function.

Notes: located following activity descriptions in the Schedule further define the scope of some items. Notes mostly refer to types of records excluded from a disposal class or provide additional definitions of terms used in a record description.

See also: references are provided to alert users to related disposal classes.

Custody and transfer of records

Section 19 of the *State Records Act 1997* includes provisions for the transfer of custody of official records either once they are no longer required for current administrative purposes or once they are 15 years old, whichever first occurs.



Permanent value records

Official records that have been sentenced as permanent, in accordance with an approved disposal schedule, are required to be transferred to State Records.

For instructions on the transfer process agencies need to refer to the *Records Creation to Archive Flow Chart - HTML Version*, downloadable from State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>).

Temporary value records

The custody of official records that have been sentenced as temporary, in accordance with an approved disposal schedule, is the responsibility of agencies. A policy and standards framework for the management and storage of temporary value official records has been established by State Records as documented in *Records of Temporary Value - Management & Storage: Standard and Guidelines* (May 2002). Agencies need to comply with these policy documents, also available from State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>).

Electronic records

The custody of official records on networks or hard drives is currently the responsibility of agencies. Agencies need to ensure that records in electronic format remain accessible to authorised users for the duration of the designated retention period. State Records is, however, currently examining options for the transfer of permanent value electronic records in digital form to its custody.



Records during administrative change

Elections or decisions of the South Australian Government can result in ‘administrative changes’ to South Australian agencies. An ‘administrative change’ refers to a change in the responsibilities for the administration of government functions. These changes can occur as a result of:

- ▶ a function being transferred from one agency to another
- ▶ a whole agency being transferred from one portfolio to another
- ▶ the government undertaking new functions
- ▶ the abolition of a function.

When such changes occur, the records relating to the function in question need to be transferred to the new agency responsible for the function. Agencies, therefore, will need to relinquish control of and transfer official records to other agencies.

For further advice agencies should refer to State Records’ guideline *Managing Records During Administrative Change* (2006), available from State Records’ website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>).



Adequate Records Management

Outcome 3 of the *Adequate Records Management Standard (Adequate Records Management: Meeting the Standard, State Records, 2002)* requires records to be disposed of systematically in accordance with the *State Records Act 1997*. As a large quantity of each agency's records document administrative actions common to most agencies, an important aspect of compliance with the Standard is the application of General Disposal Schedule No. 15 as a routine part of an agency's records management program. Retention periods in General Disposal Schedule No. 15 may be applied to administrative records on creation and registration for later review; alternatively records may be sentenced when they become non-current.

Implementing *General Disposal Schedule No. 15*

The main difference between General Disposal Schedule No. 15 and previous General Disposal Schedules is that it is function and not subject based. That is, the descriptions relate firstly to an agency's functions, secondly to the activities/processes required to carry out those functions, and thirdly to the ongoing transactions that are documented in the records. Functions and activities define business processes and disposal classes describe categories of records that relate to those business processes.

Agency staff engaged in sentencing records should be experienced records administrators who have a good understanding of business process so that they are able to identify the functions and activities described in the Schedule. State Records has an ongoing training program and may certify competency for staff to be engaged in records sentencing.



As sentencing involves matching records with the applicable disposal class there is obvious value in using corresponding terms for both classification and disposal. Where only one disposal class applies to a particular function and activity it should be possible to sentence records at creation. Where more than one disposal class applies to a particular function and activity, the similarity in classification and disposal terms narrows down the number of disposal classes the sentencer has to consult.

The following points should be kept in mind when sentencing records:

- ▶ read definitions of the function and activity as well as descriptions of the disposal classes
- ▶ consult all the disposal classes in one group, ie. those with the same two first numbers, to ensure that the correct disposal class is identified
- ▶ consult other function/activity combinations in the Schedule if there is any ambiguity
- ▶ always sentence records by their content, not just their titles - titles can be misleading and the status of records may change after a title is given to a record
- ▶ examples and notes are given in disposal classes as a guide to assist users, however disposal classes relate to all records which document the transaction described and are not limited to the examples given
- ▶ watch out for types of information that have permanent value, eg. policy, precedent cases, exceptional decisions and events, Cabinet submissions, heritage related items, minutes of high level committees, etc. **However**, be wary of the distinction between policy etc. and circulars and instructions



- ▶ watch out for records that are **excluded** from the Schedule, eg. records more than 50 years old, records relating to Native Title discovery, records relating to agency-specific operational programs and projects, etc
- ▶ never try to make unique operational agency records “fit” into classes in the General Disposal Schedule - put the records to one side until an agency-specific operational [Records Disposal Schedule](#) is developed
- ▶ retention periods for temporary records must be carefully calculated from the disposal action trigger, eg “Destroy 2 years after [last action](#)” or “Destroy 2 years after revoked or superseded”, remembering that in paper files the date of last action may not be the date on the last item added to a file
- ▶ where a record contains information that falls into two or more disposal classes, in General Disposal Schedule No. 15 it must be sentenced in accordance with the disposal class with the longest retention period, **BUT**
- ▶ where a record contains information covered by a disposal class within both General Disposal Schedule No. 15 and an agency operational Records Disposal Schedule (RDS) it must be sentenced in accordance with the disposal class within the RDS (refer to [decision chart](#))
- ▶ sentencing on automated records management systems must always be subject to review and manual override before any disposal takes place
- ▶ retention periods in the Schedule are the **minimum** time that records have to be retained, and agencies may delay disposal for administrative or legal purposes.

Sentencers annotating disposal authority detail on hard copy records should use pencil, and make the markings in the area provided on the file cover.



Before undertaking large backlog sentencing projects, contact State Records' Records Management Services for advice.

Training

Agencies are urged to contact State Records to discuss their training needs in all records management areas including implementing General Disposal Schedule No. 15. A number of training options are available. Initial contact can be made with the Training Registrar on (08) 8204 8791 or rsraTrainingEnquiries@sa.gov.au.

Availability of *General Disposal Schedule No. 15*

General Disposal Schedule No. 15 is accessible on State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>) and can be downloaded and printed off by agencies, free of charge. Copies may be purchased directly from State Records in hard copy or disk formats. A register will be maintained of all recipients obtaining copies from State Records and any amendments released during the effective life of the Schedule will be forwarded to registrants.

Amendments and on-going review of *General Disposal Schedule No. 15*

Notice of amendments will be posted on State Records' website or as a circular distributed to officers of South Australian government agencies. An amendment date will be included at the top of each changed page of the Schedule. Agencies using copies printed off the website should monitor the site regularly to keep informed of any changes.



Changes in disposal class description and/or retention period made between Editions 6 and 7 are available on State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>) as a comparison table.

All requests for changes to the Schedule should be made on the *General Disposal Schedule No. 15 Review Form* which is available on State Records' website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>). Agencies are asked to ensure that a separate copy of the form is used for each correction, new entry or change to an entry that is required. State Records is committed to a process of revising and reviewing this General Disposal Schedule and will be using the review forms supplied by agencies in this process.

References

- ▶ *State Records Act 1997*
- ▶ State Records Authority of NSW. *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms, revised edition*. 1998
- ▶ Standards Australia. *AS 4390 1-6: Australian Standard - Records Management*. 1996
- ▶ Standards Australia. *AS/ISO 15489-2002 Records Management*. 2002
- ▶ State Records. *Adequate Records Management: Meeting the Standard*. 2002
- ▶ National Archives of Australia. *Administrative Functions Disposal Authority*. February 2000
- ▶ State Records Office of Western Australia. *General Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records RD 2003016*. 2003



State Records contacts

For advice on implementing General Disposal Schedule No. 15, as well as advice on all aspects of records appraisal, disposal, transfer and storage, contact State Records:

Phone: +61 8 8204 8791

Fax: +61 8 8204 8777

E-mail: srsaRecordsManagement@sa.gov.au

GPO Box 2343

ADELAIDE, South Australia 5001

DX: 467 Adelaide



Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)

What is NAP?

NAP is the concept that material can be destroyed according to “normal administrative practices”. This provides for the routine destruction of drafts, duplicates and publications, with the test that it is obvious that no information of continuing value to the organisation will be destroyed². Originating in the National Archives of Australia the term is in general use in Commonwealth Government agencies and has been adopted by some Australian states.

Material that can be disposed of under NAP comprises items of an ephemeral or transitory nature created, acquired or collected by agency officers in the course of their official duties. Such material has no ongoing value and is not usually incorporated into the agency recordkeeping system. NAP falls into seven main groups:

- ▶ transitory or short term items, eg. phone messages, notes, compliment slips, office notices and circulars
- ▶ rough working papers and/or calculations created in the preparation of official records
- ▶ drafts not intended for further use or reference, **excluding** official version drafts of agreements, submissions and legal documents
- ▶ duplicate copies of material retained for reference purposes only

²From “Glossary” in Judith Ellis, Ed., *Keeping Archives*, second edition, 1987.



- ▶ published material which does not form an integral part of an agency record
- ▶ system printouts used to verify or monitor data, or answer ad hoc queries, that are not part of regular reporting procedures and not required for ongoing use
- ▶ transitory electronic data.

NAP in electronic media

Just as telephone conversations or other verbal communications that contain information of ongoing value should be documented, so voice mail, e-mail, facsimiles, word processed documents, spreadsheets, etc. should be captured into corporate recordkeeping systems when they contain information of ongoing value.

Agency induction and procedures must ensure that all officers are aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities and that electronic records with ongoing value are captured and retained in an appropriate way.

Only data included in the seven categories outlined above may be deleted from electronic systems according to Normal Administrative Practice.

The NAP test

Where the information is not duplicated in the agency recordkeeping system, ask:

- ▶ Does the material form part of an agency transaction?
- ▶ Does it add value to an existing record?



- ▶ Does it show how a transaction was dealt with?
- ▶ Does it show how a decision was made?
- ▶ Does it show when or where an event happened?
- ▶ Does it indicate who was involved or what advice was given?
- ▶ Is it a formal draft of a Cabinet submission, an agreement or a legal document?
- ▶ Is the material included in a disposal class in General Disposal Schedule No.15 or in an agency operational Records Disposal Schedule?

If the answer to any of these questions is *YES* then the material **must not** be destroyed according to NAP.

Examples of NAP

Items that **may be** destroyed under NAP include:

- ▶ word processing documents and spreadsheets in electronic format after updating, printing, or transfer to electronic recordkeeping systems
- ▶ drafts and rough notes not intended for further use
- ▶ brochures, catalogues, price lists, unsolicited promotional material, etc. received from external sources
- ▶ superseded copies of instructions, guidelines, standards, etc., not included in a general or agency records disposal schedule
- ▶ extra copies of records no longer required for reference purposes
- ▶ copies of published items kept for personal reference



- ▶ unimportant messages and notes, eg. those required for a only a few hours or a few days
- ▶ system printouts used to verify or monitor data, or answer ad hoc queries, that are not part of regular reporting procedures and are not required for ongoing use
- ▶ transitory electronic data or documents not relating to or supporting the business.

Remember that NAP is provided in the interests of efficient recordkeeping and extends to material of ephemeral and transitory value only.

Authority to use NAP

Destruction of material according to the above guidelines for Normal Administrative Practice is authorised by General Disposal Schedule No. 15.



Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

There are two issues relating to people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent that must be considered at the time of disposal of **any** record: Native Title and the Separation of Families. Records with relevance to these two issues are unlikely to be specifically identified as “Native Title” or “Separation” records. Rather, agencies will be required to assess records created for specific business reasons against their needs and obligations in regard to these two issues. Agencies should note that some records with relevance to Native Title will not have relevance to Separation of Families and some records with relevance to Separation of Families will not have relevance to Native Title. **However, some records will have relevance to both issues.**

For further information and assistance with issues relevant to the Separation of Families agencies should refer to *Native Title, the Separation of Families, and Official Records Information Sheet*, State Records, May 2003 available on State Records’ website (<http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>).

Records relating to Native Title

Government agencies in South Australia have a crucial role to play in relation to Native Title claims. As a party to Native Title claims, as well as holding the largest information source for indigenous claimants, it is vital that government agencies properly manage records relevant to Native Title claims. To enable this to happen State Records, in consultation with the Crown Solicitor’s Office, has developed guidelines to help identify records with potential relevance to a claim. Agencies must ensure that they are taking measures to retain those records that may help to support or defend a claim, as destruction of such records may expose their agency and the government in general to large financial and legal penalties.

Effective 14 November 2006 to 30 June 2013

7th Edition



Determining relevance of records

Agencies must use the guideline *Identifying documents which may be relevant to Native Title* attached to General Disposal Schedule No. 16 to assess whether records are potentially relevant to a Native Title claim.

Instances where an agency using the guideline determines potential relevance or is unsure of the potential relevance of records to Native Title

In these cases the agency **must**:

- ▶ seek a legal opinion from the Crown Solicitor's Office - Native Title Section as to the relevance of the records; and
- ▶ retain the records until the opinion has been provided; and
- ▶ should the opinion determine actual relevance of records to Native Title then the agency **must** sentence the records using General Disposal Schedule No. 16.

Staff of the agency, however, need to be aware that the body with the final authority to determine relevance of records to a claim is the Native Title Section of the Crown Solicitor's Office.

The Native Title Section can be contacted on (08) 8207 1691. **Unless the Native Title Section of the Crown Solicitor's Office indicates otherwise, the agency must preserve these records until 31 December 2024.**

If, upon review by the Crown Solicitor's Office, no relevance to a claim is established then the original disposal sentence applied to the records shall come into force.



Note: Should records of permanent value also be identified as being of relevance to Native Title **without** an opinion being sought from the Native Title Section of the Crown Solicitor's Office, a detailed listing of the records must still be referred to that section.

Instances where an agency determines no relevance of records to Native Title

South Australian agencies are authorised to determine that records do not have relevance to a claim, but this decision **must** be made through the use of the guideline *Identifying documents which may be relevant to Native Title*. In these instances the original sentence applied to the records will remain in force, resulting in the immediate destruction of some records, temporary retention and permanent retention of records.

Exclusions

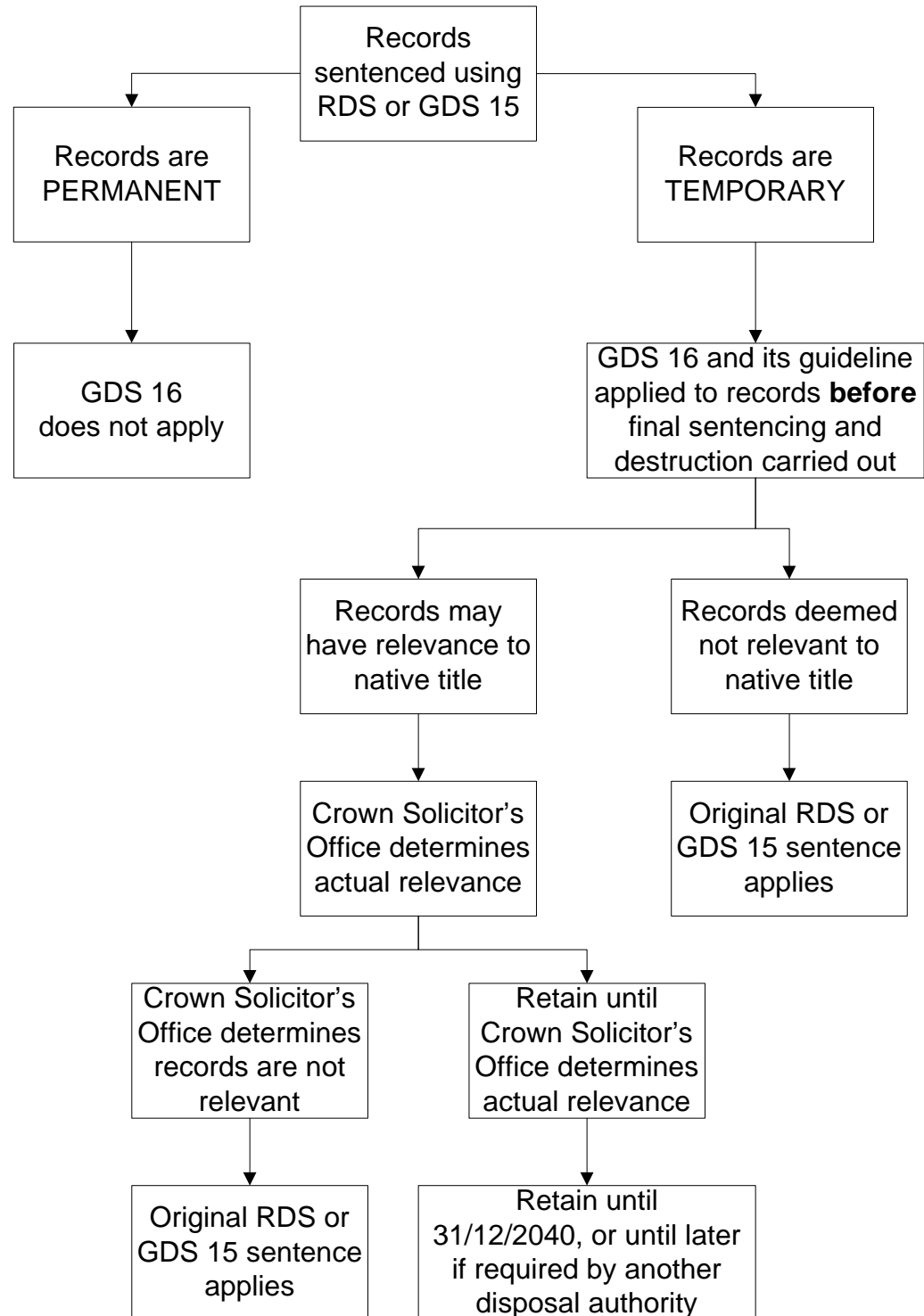
It is important to note that the record retention timeframe in General Disposal Schedule No. 16 is confined to records that have already been sentenced as temporary value records. Records that have been sentenced as permanent value records retain their permanent status, even after they have been identified as relevant to a Native Title claim.

Sentencing of records

Agencies must ensure that the guideline entitled *Identifying documents which may be relevant to Native Title* and the record retention requirements of General Disposal Schedule 16 are only applied **after** a record has already been sentenced according to the relevant entry/ies in this GDS or some agency specific Records Disposal Schedule/s.



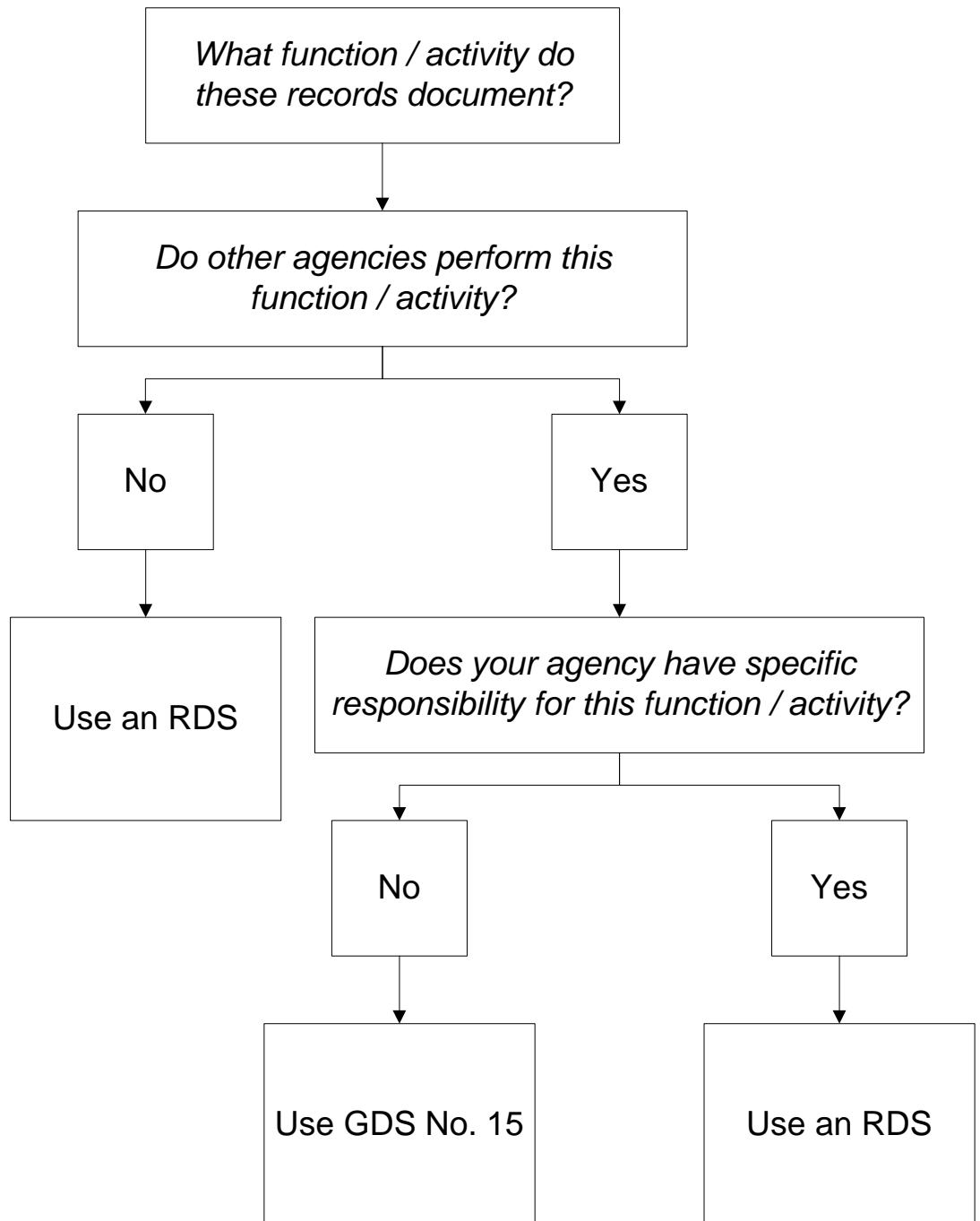
Relationship between GDS 15, agency specific RDS, and GDS 16



Effective 14 November 2006 to 30 June 2013



What type of Disposal Schedule should I use? RDS or GDS?





Acronyms

ABN	Australian Business Number
AS/ISO15489	Australian Standard/International Standard on records management
CD-ROM	Compact Disk Read Only Memory
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
eg	For example
etc	And the rest
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDS	General Disposal Schedule
GST	Goods and Services Tax
GSTwise	GSTWise is a database of existing contracts provided to facilitate the introduction of <i>A New Tax System</i> .
HRMS	Human Relations Management System
ISO	International Standards Organisation
LAN	Local Area Network
NAP	Normal Administrative Practice



OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
PAYG	Pay As You Go
RDS	Records Disposal Schedule
SA	South Australia
TAFE	Training and Further Education
VPN	Virtual Public Network
WAN	Wide Area Network
Y2K	Year 2000



Glossary

Readers should note that definitions in *Italics* are taken from *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms, revised edition 1998*, terms with a # hash are taken from *AS/ISO14589 Australian Standard/International Standard on records management –2002*, and terms with an * asterix are taken from the *State Records Act 1997*.

Acquisitions “Acquisitions” - includes the goods and services purchased by an agency or business unit. These include creditable acquisitions, GST free acquisitions and acquisitions for making input taxed supplies.

Action completed A disposal action directing the legal destruction of records documenting a particular set of transactions linked to a function and activity set when all business action has been completed.

National Archives of Australia, Administrative Functions Disposal Authority,
February 2000

Activity A task or operation performed to execute some or all of a function. An activity may be performed in relation to one or more administrative or operational functions.



Agency*

An agency means:

- ▶ the Governor
 - ▶ a Minister of the Crown
 - ▶ a court or tribunal
 - ▶ a person who holds an office established by and Act
 - ▶ an incorporated or unincorporated body established for a public purpose by or under an Act; or established subject to control or direction by the Governor
-



Agency*
(contd)

-
- ▶ a Minister of the crown or any instrumentality or agency of the Crown
 - ▶ a department or other administrative unit of the public service
 - ▶ the police force
 - ▶ a municipal or district council
 - ▶ a person or body declared to be an agency
 - ▶ It does not mean:
 - ▶ a House of Parliament or a committee of the Parliament or a House of Parliament
 - ▶ a present or former officer of a House of Parliament
 - ▶ a present or former member of a House of Parliament (other than a Minister in respect of records made or received in his or her capacity as a Minister)
 - ▶ a present or former member of staff of a House of Parliament or the joint parliamentary service.

HOWEVER, in the context of this General Disposal Schedule Local Government is not covered.



Audit

SCOPE NOTE The activities associated with officially checking financial, quality assurance and operational records to ensure they have been kept and maintained in accordance with agreed or legislated standards and correctly record the events, processes and business of the organisation in a specified period. Includes compliance audits, financial audits, operational audits, recordkeeping audits, skills audits, system audits and quality assurance audits. See also inspections.

SENTENCING TIP The Audit activity deals with records.

Contract let

A contract is let when the tender process is completed, agreement is reached and the contract is signed.

Contracting-
Out

SCOPE NOTE The activities involved in arranging, procuring and managing the performance of work or the provision of services by an external contractor or consultant, or by using external bureau services. Sometimes referred to as outsourcing.

SENTENCING TIP The Contracting-Out activity revolves around managing the performance of work or services outsourced. Contract documentation is incorporated in the activity “Tendering”.

Complex

A complex case is one that involves a multiplicity of uncertain areas of fact, law or both.



Committees

SCOPE NOTE The activities associated with the management of committees and Task forces (internal and external, private, local, state, Commonwealth etc). Includes the committee's establishment, appointment of members, terms of reference, proceedings, minutes, reports, agendas etc. See also Meetings.

SENTENCING TIP The Committees activity involves a formal arrangement bringing together expertise to deal with a subject or activity.

Compliance

SCOPE NOTE The activities associated with complying with mandatory or optional accountability, fiscal, legal, regulatory or quality standards or requirements to which the organisation is subject. Includes compliance with legislation and with national and international standards, such as the ISO 9000 series. See also Standards.

SENTENCING TIP Use the Compliance activity when assessing conformity with standards and requirements.



Dispose*

Dispose of an official record means destroy or abandon the record; or carry out an act or process as a result of which it is no longer possible or reasonably practicable to reproduce the whole or a part of the information contained in the record; or transfer or deliver ownership or possession of or sell the record, or purport to do so. Does not include transferring or delivering the record to State Records or between one agency and another. “Dispose”, beyond the definition of the *State Records Act 1997*, can also include the permanent retention of a record.

Disposal class

Classes of records performing or recording similar activities or transactions (for example, a register or set of forms) and therefore having the same retention period and disposal action.

Evaluation

SCOPE NOTE The process of determining the suitability of potential or existing programs, items of equipment, systems or services in relation to meeting the needs of the given situation. Includes ongoing monitoring. See also Modelling.

SENTENCING TIP The Evaluation activity is used when assessing suitability of something to meet a need.

Function

The largest unit of business activity in an agency or jurisdiction. Functions represent the major responsibilities that are managed by the agency to fulfil its goals. Functions are high level aggregations of the agency’s activities.



GSTWise	GSTWise is a database of existing contracts provided to facilitate the introduction of <i>A New Tax System</i> .
High level	Describes issues or matters that involve Ministers, Cabinet or Across-Government bodies.
Inspections	<p>SCOPE NOTE The process of official examinations of facilities, equipment and items, to ensure compliance with agreed standards and objectives. See also Audit.</p> <p>SENTENCING TIP Use the Inspections activity for <u>examinations</u> of equipment, items and facilities.</p>
Landmark	<p>A landmark case is one that clarifies or provides guidance on what hitherto has been an uncertain area of law.</p> <p>Landmark structures have cultural and historical significance and include the Adelaide Railway Station, the State Bank (now known as the Santos) Building and the “Treasury Building”.</p>
Last action	A disposal action referring to the date of the last recorded action.
Major/minor	Major refers to transactions which are greater in importance, impact, or which have added significance to the activity being documented. Minor includes all the other transactions of a routine nature.

National Archives of Australia, Administrative Functions Disposal Authority,
February 2000



Meetings

SCOPE NOTE The activities associated with gatherings held to formulate, discuss, update, or resolve issues and matters pertaining to the management of the section, department, or organisation as a whole. Includes arrangements, agenda, taking of minutes etc. See also Committees.

SENTENCING TIP The Meetings activity deals with less formal gatherings pertaining to the management of some thing.

Modelling

SCOPE NOTE The processes involved in designing, testing and evaluating sample model profiles of systems under analysis. See also Evaluation.

SENTENCING TIP The Modelling activity is used when testing newly designed systems to confirm adequacy.



Official
record*

A record made or received by an agency in the conduct of its business, but does not include:

- ▶ A record made or received by an agency for delivery or transmission to another person or body (other than an agency) and so delivered or transited; or
- ▶ A record made by an agency as draft only and not for further use or reference;
- ▶ A record received into or made for the collection of a library, museum or art gallery and not otherwise associated with the business of the agency; or
- ▶ A Commonwealth record as defined by the Archives Act 1983 of the Commonwealth, as amended from time to time, or an Act of the Commonwealth enacted in substitution for that Act; or
- ▶ A record that has been transferred to the Commonwealth.

Permanent
record

A record that has archival value and will be retained permanently for research by the general community subject to appropriate access restrictions.



Record*

- ▶ written, graphic or pictorial matter; or a disk, tape, film; or
- ▶ other object that contains information or from which information may be reproduced (with or without the aid of another object or device).

Recordkeeping metadata#

Data describing contexts, content and structure of records and their management through time.

Register

A register, traditionally maintained as a volume or set of index cards and more recently as a database, is a mean of control and information retrieval. It provides consolidated identification detail for a range of activities, including the management of assets, equipment and stores, and identification of contracts, staff and volunteers.

Sealed contract or documents

The term “contract under seal” or “sealed document” has a particular legal meaning and a specific retention period depending on whether they are governed by a State or Federal Act. Contracts or documents “under seal” have an official seal or impression located adjacent to the signatures.

Sentence

The act of applying the relevant disposal schedule to records.



Significant or substantial

Significant or substantial involves public interest or controversy and may include cases where there was extensive parliamentary debate and/or coverage in the media, such as occurred in relation to: the South Australian Bank litigation; the establishment of the Across-Government computer (EDS) contract; the sale/lease of the Electricity Trust of South Australia entities; or the dismissal/resignation of a Minister.

Standards

SCOPE NOTE The process of implementing industry or organisational benchmarks for services and processes to enhance the quality and efficiency of the organisation. See also Compliance.

SENTENCING TIP Use the Standards activity when applying or implementing standards.

Supplies

Includes the goods and services sold by an agency or business unit, such as taxable supplies, GST free supplies and input taxed supplies.

Temporary record

A temporary record does not have archival value and may be destroyed when a prescribed retention period has elapsed.

Transaction

The smallest unit of business activity.

Visits

Visits are “official” when the visitors are guests of the Government.



Website

A generic term that refers to all types of web-based sites, including public websites, Virtual Public Networks, extranets and intranets.

Workflow

The automation of a business process in whole or part, during which documents, information or tasks are passed from one participant to another for action, according to a set of procedural rules.