



Supplementary Issues to Remember when Preparing a Records Disposal Schedule

INTRODUCTION

In preparing an operational Records Disposal Schedule (RDS), schedule authors need to use the State Records' issued RDS template. The template includes instructions on what information needs to be included in the different sections of the RDS document. Schedule authors need to also refer to *Recordkeeping Advices 18–21* and *Appraisal of Official Records: Policy and Objectives* (available from State Records website www.archives.sa.gov.au) for information on both appraisal considerations and the schedule approval process.

It is State Records' expectation that a schedule author has practical experience in preparing schedules or has at least completed appropriate training in schedule development.

As a supplement to the above requirements, State Records has prepared this information sheet to advise schedule authors of additional issues that need to be considered when preparing an RDS. These issues were identified as part of a review of 2005 Internal Disposal Meetings (IDM).

Schedule authors need to use the attached checklist to ensure all of the issues in this information sheet have been addressed as part of an RDS development.

GENERAL

As stated above, an RDS needs to be prepared using State Records' current RDS Template (available on request). Variations to the template (eg RDS in landscape and/or with the addition of a 'Record Examples' column) need to be approved by the State Archivist. Permission to vary the template may not be granted. If the Template can be varied an RDS still needs to be submitted as a single document. State Records will not accept a schedule as multiple documents.

RDS CONSULTATION/COVERING MINUTE

External stakeholder/historian comments

External Stakeholder/Historian Comments need to be provided in accordance with *Recordkeeping Advice 21*, ie if an external stakeholder/historian agrees with a schedule and makes no recommendations for change they need to communicate this in a fax/email/letter; if an external stakeholder/historian recommends changes then they need to use the template (Schedule Body part of the RDS template with additional comments column added). In addition, in the RDS Covering Minute it needs to be summarised if changes have been recommended by the external stakeholder/historian and whether these have been incorporated and, if not, the rationale for not making some or all of the changes.

Intra and inter-agency consultation

For names of staff consulted with, whether as part of inter or intra-agency consultation, the following needs to be included:

- staff name
- position title and
- agency name (if different than agency being covered by the RDS).

If no external-agency consultation is conducted it needs to be stated in the Schedule Covering Minute why this has not been conducted.

RDS covering minute

An RDS Covering Minute needs to be submitted the same time as an RDS to be considered as part of the IDM process. One of the main purposes of the Covering Minute is to demonstrate that necessary consultation on an RDS has occurred. An RDS is not ready for submitting to the Internal Disposal Meeting if all relevant consultation has not been conducted and the outcomes of such consultation documented in the Covering Minute.

Privacy and/or secrecy Issues

The Covering Minute should also indicate whether an RDS contains any personal information or whether it is subject to any specific secrecy requirements under applicable legislation.

RDS PREAMBLE

Function, activity, process and description example in the preamble

The Preamble largely contains standard text that does not need to be changed. However the function, activity, process and description example under “Using the Schedule – Layout” does need to be revised so that the examples given are specific to the RDS.

RDS CONTEXT STATEMENT

Checking of GRSs in State Records’ custody

It needs to be determined whether the RDS being developed is to cover existing Government Record Series (GRS) held in the custody of State Records. Such checking may be done by searching *Archives Search*. In some instances a schedule author may need to visit State Records at either Leigh Street or Gepps Cross (may need to be Gepps Cross depending on quantity of records to be viewed as well as fragility/size) in order to view records from relevant series. Sufficient information about affected GRSs will need to be included in the RDS (ie GRS number, series title and date range). It will also need to be determined whether the relevant GRSs will need to be resentenced as a result of the RDS (because of change to disposal action).

Checking for other RDSs that are either complementary or to be superseded

It needs to be determined whether there are other RDSs that are either complementary or to be superseded. Where other RDSs are identified, sufficient information needs to be

included in the RDS being developed (ie RDS number, version number (if included), agency name and date RDS was approved).

Any existing RDSs for an agency that were approved prior to October 1997 must be superseded by the current RDS under development.

The other RDSs need to have been inspected in order to understand the relationship (complementary or being superseded) between them and the RDS under development.

GRGs

Series in State Records custody that are Government Record Groups (GRGs) are covered by a general disposal determination approved by the State Records Council in 1999. They therefore do not need to be covered by the RDS. However, reference should be made to the existence of GRGs relevant to the agency. The following standard statement about relevant GRGs should be included under the RDS Context Statement heading of “Coverage of the RDS”:

RDS [No] does not cover records already in the custody of State Records as part of Government Record Group/s [insert relevant number/s]. These records have been deemed permanent in accordance with a disposal determination made for all GRGs by the Manager [Director] of State Records and approved by the State Records Council on 9 November 1999.

Predecessor agencies

When listing predecessor agencies, the start and end year for each predecessor, eg 1949-1965, needs to be included. In addition, it should be checked whether those predecessor agencies have been registered with State Records and therefore have a Government Agency (GA) number.

Inclusion of RDS item numbers under RDS context statement heading of “Comments Regarding Disposal Recommendations”

For both ‘Permanent Records Rationale’ and ‘Temporary Records Rationale’ the relevant schedule item numbers in brackets need to be included after the disposal classes/record types being referred to, eg “Records contained in this schedule (items 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, and 1.5.2) document the law-making process in South Australia. They describe how legislation is drafted with the assistance of Parliamentary Counsel and how it is passed and brought into operation. In essence they provide evidence of the source of authority, foundation and machinery of the South Australian Government. Therefore, they meet Objective 1 of State Records’ *Appraisal of Official Records: Policy and Objectives* guideline”.

Permanent records rationale under “Comments Regarding Disposal Recommendations”

As part of explaining what disposal class items are recommended as permanent, the *Appraisal of Official Records: Policy and Objectives* guidelines need to have been taken into account as part of appraisal. As a minimum records recommended as permanent need to have met at least one of the Objectives in the *Appraisal...* guidelines. Other reasons for recommending permanent retention beyond the objectives of the guideline can also be included.

Acronyms

Acronyms can be used in the RDS Context Statement. However, at first mention include in full with acronym in brackets afterwards, eg 'Justice Information System (JIS)'.

Acronyms can also be used in the Schedule Body. However, any acronyms used must be included in the Scope Note under the "Acronyms Used" heading.

Definitions of terms specific to the RDS

When describing records as "significant" or "non-significant" a definition of each term must be included under the above heading. The standard definitions from General Disposal Schedule (GDS) 15 may be used as a basis. However, examples of records specific to the schedule must be included as part of the Description.

Legislation

Legislation listed in the RDS Context Statement needs to be included in italics in the following format, eg *State Records Act 1997*.

If the legislation is federal it should be cited as "*Copyright Act 1968* [Cwlth]".

SCHEDULE BODY

Use of disposal triggers "last action" and "action completed"

GDS 15 definitions for "last action" and "action completed" are included in the glossary for the GDS. Both terms and their definitions are taken from the National Archives of Australia's *Administrative Functions Disposal Authority* (February 2000). In general, "last action" is meant to be used for short term, 'minor' or 'routine' transactions often in Financial Management while "action completed" is for transactions that are not 'routine' or low risk. "Action completed" requires more checking by an agency/sentencer to determine there is no outstanding business relating to the transaction documented by the records while "last action" only requires noting the date of the last 'recorded' action.

The difference between the two disposal triggers needs to be considered and used accordingly when preparing an RDS.

Practicality of disposal triggers

Disposal triggers used in an RDS need to be applicable, particularly in the case where records may not be sentenced until they have become inactive, eg "Destroy 10 years after building is demolished" – is information of when a building is demolished kept and able to be checked by a sentencer with relative ease?

Disposal classes relating specifically to records in electronic/digital format

If a disposal class relates specifically to records in electronic/digital format one of the following statements needs to be included in the Disposal Action column:

- if Temporary – "Maintain and reformat as required for administrative purposes"
- if Permanent – "Actively manage and migrate to ensure ongoing accessibility for evidentiary and/or historical purposes".

Simple/ordinary and speciality contracts and Limitation of Actions Act

Further to a minor review of GDS 15 (6th edition) RDS disposal actions for classes relating to simple and speciality contracts need to be extended. Simple/Ordinary Contracts (not under seal) need to change from ‘Destroy after 7 years’ to ‘Destroy after 8 years’ and Speciality Contracts (under seal) need to change from ‘Destroy after 15 years’ to ‘Destroy after 17 years’.

Use of terms ‘significant’, ‘major’, ‘precedent-setting’, ‘landmark’, ‘substantial’, ‘routine’, ‘minor’, ‘non-significant’ and provision of examples

Disposal classes may often include such terms as ‘significant’, ‘major’, ‘precedent-setting’, ‘landmark’, ‘substantial’, ‘routine’, ‘minor’, and ‘non-significant’ to differentiate between permanent and temporary categories or longer-term temporary and short-term temporary categories. If such terms are used, the relevant disposal classes need to include agency-specific examples to illustrate the difference between ‘major’ and ‘minor’, etc for the State Records Council as well as to assist sentencers.

Cross references to GDS 15

If including cross-references to GDS 15 (can be a “see” or “see also” scope note within the Schedule Body) references need to be specific where possible, eg “See also **GDS 15: 14.60 PUBLICATION - Joint Ventures** for...”.

If more than one function in GDS 15 applies but the activity is the same refer as follows “See also **GDS 15 Control** under various functions...”.

If the same function applies but the sentencer needs to refer to multiple activities refer as follows “See also **GDS 15 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT** under various activities for...”.

Disposal classes that cover registers/indexes

If a disposal class relates to a particular index or register it needs to include details about what summary data is contained, eg “Contracts Register, which includes such details as date contract commenced, name and contact details of successful contractor, summary of work covered by contract, and contract expiry date”.

Use of *Keyword AAA (KWAAA)* terms

KWAAA functional keywords cannot be used in an RDS.

KWAAA activity descriptors can be used if both the term and its description are consistent with what is in *KWAAA*.

An activity descriptor from *KWAAA* cannot be used if the accompanying description is changed to make it specific to the agency. A *KWAAA* activity descriptor, however, can be modified to make it specific to the agency/RDS, eg “Reporting (Housing)”.



RDS Issues Checklist

Check

General

- 1 The RDS template has been used to prepare the RDS. *Go to 3.*
- 2 If the RDS template is not used approval has been sought from the State Archivist to vary the template.
- 3 The RDS has been prepared as a single document.

RDS Consultation/Covering Minute

- 4 Any personal information and/or specific secrecy requirements incorporated in the RDS have been noted in the Covering Minute.
- 5 Details of agency staff consulted with, as intra-agency consultation, have been included in the Covering Minute.
- 6 Outcome of intra-agency consultation has been included in the Covering Minute.
- 7 Changes recommended by intra-agency consultation and whether or not these have been incorporated in the RDS have been summarised in the Covering Minute.
- 8 Details of agency staff consulted with, as inter-agency consultation, have been included in the Covering Minute.
- 9 Outcome of inter-agency consultation has been included in the Covering Minute.
- 10 Changes recommended by inter-agency consultation and whether or not these have been incorporated in the RDS have been summarised in the Covering Minute.
- 11 If no inter-agency consultation has taken place include explanation of why in Covering Minute.
- 12 External Stakeholder/Historian Consultation has been conducted in accordance with *Recordkeeping Advice 21*.
- 13 The External Stakeholder/Historian recommended no changes and has provided a letter/fax/email to that affect. *Go to 8.*
- 14 The External Stakeholder/Historian has recommended changes and has provided their comments using the Template (Schedule Body section of the RDS template).
- 15 Outcome of external stakeholder/historian consultation has been documented in the Covering Minute.
- 16 Changes recommended by external stakeholder/historian and whether or not these have been incorporated in the RDS have been summarised in the Covering Minute.
- 17 All necessary RDS consultation has been conducted and the Covering Minute is complete and ready to submit with the completed RDS Template.

RDS Issues Checklist (contd)

RDS Preamble

- 18 The Function, Activity, Process and Description Example has been completed.

RDS Context Statement

- 19 Relevant GRSs have been checked and included in the RDS.
- 20 RDSs that are either complementary or to be superseded have been checked and included in the RDS.
- 21 A GRG statement (if relevant) has been included in the RDS.
- 22 Predecessor agency information has been completed, ie data range/s and GA number/s (if relevant) have been included with agency name.
- 23 Schedule item numbers in brackets have been included under 'Permanent Records Rationale' and 'Temporary Records Rationale'.
- 24 *Appraisal of Official Records: Policy and Objectives* has been referred to as part of the appraisal of records recommended as permanent.
- 25 Acronyms have been appropriately used.
- 26 Where the terms "significant" and "non-significant" have been used in the RDS a description of each has been provided under "Definitions of terms specific to the RDS".
- 27 Legislation has been appropriately cited.

Schedule Body

- 28 Disposal triggers "after last action" and "action completed" have been used appropriately.
- 29 Disposal triggers can be applied with relative ease by a sentencer, whether at creation or when the records have become inactive.
- 30 Statements for temporary and permanent electronic/digital format records have been included where relevant.
- 31 Disposal actions for any classes relating to simple and speciality contracts recommend retention periods of 8 years and 17 years respectively.
- 32 Agency-specific examples are included where terms such as Significant, 'Major', 'Precedent-Setting', 'Landmark', 'Substantial', 'Routine', 'Minor', and 'Non-Significant' are used.
- 33 Appropriate cross-references to GDS 15 have been included where relevant.
- 34 Disposal classes covering Registers/Indexes are adequately described.
- 35 *Keyword AAA* terms and descriptions have been used appropriately.