

Information Management Advice 10 Disposal of Unscheduled Records

Introduction

This advice provides guidance and information about the process for the disposal of State Records not covered by an authorised disposal schedule (unscheduled records). It should be read in conjunction with State Records Guideline No.2: Retention and Disposal of State Records.

State Records Guideline No.2 requires Tasmanian government agencies to obtain authorisation from the State Archivist to dispose of State Records as defined in The Archives Act 1983. One of the key tools for records disposal is an authorised disposal schedule. Where possible, records should be identified for destruction or transfer using a current disposal schedule. However, where unscheduled records need to be disposed of as a priority and it is impractical to develop a disposal schedule, an Agency may apply for a Destruction Authority from the State Archivist. To do this, officers must complete the necessary TAHO forms which are available for download from the TAHO website. The following steps provide an overview of the process.

1. Determine whether a Destruction Authority is required

Prior to requesting a Destruction Authority, agencies should assess whether such an Authority is necessary. In many cases records can be disposed of under existing general disposal schedules.

- For records derived from common administrative functions see Disposal Schedule DA2157.
- For records of short term value see Disposal Schedule DA2158.
- For source records that have been either copied, converted into another medium or format, or migrated from one system to another see Disposal Schedule DA2159.

Remember that no records created prior to 1960 can be disposed of using any of these disposal schedules.

2. Appraise the Records

Agencies need to assess the value of the records that are submitted for destruction. They must no longer have an ongoing value to the agency, the Tasmanian Government or the general public. Appraisal needs to determine:

- If the agency still uses the records for business or administrative purposes;
- If a law, policy, regulation, or court order requires the records are retained for a certain period or permanently;

- If the records provide evidence of the legal rights and obligations of an individual or of the Government;
- If the records are needed to meet a financial or accounting requirement;
- If the records are significant in their illustration of Agency policy, activities, functions, or new, innovative, or past events or cases for example, they could be of particular value for research into Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government, or the Tasmanian people;
- If the information within the records is held elsewhere or if other records are better sources, or adequate summaries, of this information;
- If the records are needed to make other records accessible (i.e. indexes, registers);

If your agency has its own appraisal checklist, please feel free to use it or one that is available for download from the TAHO website

Any assessment of the value of records should not depend on the format of the records.

Instead, records should be assessed on the basis of the function that they record, and the current and future value of the information they contain. Only in exceptional circumstances should a record be retained for its value as an artefact. Records which are voluminous, or are fragile, or need special storage cannot be destroyed simply on this basis.

Complete the Checklist

To complete the appraisal checklist include details of why these records must be disposed of as a priority and why it is impractical to develop a disposal schedule.

A separate entry is required for each type of record to be appraised. In completing this section, you should identify the records by the title by which they are known in your office, and any reference symbols you use for the items to be appraised. The date range of the items should also be included. A detailed listing of identical records requiring appraisal is not required, you can include a range.

The checklist is designed to provide TAHO with a basic understanding of the records to be appraised and any other relevant information that may impact on the appraisal such as previous disposal action, precedents for destruction or legislative provisions applying uniquely to the records. The more detail you can provide the more likely it is that the Authority will be approved in a timely manner. Once complete, email your application to the Government Information Strategy Unit.¹

¹ gisu@education.tas.gov.au

4. Application to dispose of Unscheduled State Records

Following receipt of the application TAHO Will contact you to discuss the application. Applications for disposal of unscheduled records will be assessed by the State Archivist either:

- Issuing a Destruction Authority for the records
- Advising that the records need to be retained for a longer period, or
- Arranging for the transfer of the records to the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office as permanent State Archives.

Records recommended for destruction must not be destroyed, or their accessibility diminished, until a Destruction Authority has been received from the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.

Further Advice

For more detailed advice please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
91 Murray Street
HOBART TASMANIA 7000
Telephone: 03 6165 5581
Email: gisu@education.tas.gov.au

Information Security Classification

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