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For the Record October 2014

For The RECORD

Managing records in the New South Wales public sector

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Transferring records to the State archives collection

With the opening of the Digital State archives for business, we thought it would be a good time to give some tips about transferring records – both hard-copy and digital. There is plenty of room in our state of the art (dust-free) repository at the Western Sydney Records Centre (interior shot of the Repository below) and we also have [regional repositories](#) in Armidale, Broken Hill, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.



Records that are required as State archives in a functional or general disposal authority can be transferred to State Records once they are no longer required for current business. This includes Council minute books and rate books, school admission registers, hospital admission and discharge registers, board minutes, and many other key organisational records. If you are unclear about what records are required as State archives please contact govrec@records.nsw.gov.au for advice.

There are one-off costs associated with preparation of the records for transfer to State Records but once they are with us storage is free and records that are open for public access can be made available through our search rooms.

[Transferring hard copy records](#) involves preparation, boxing and listing the records, and the [transfer of digital State archives](#) begins with agreeing on a migration project.

Access directions are also required prior to transfer. [Access Directions](#) are directions that a series, group or class of records are open to public access after a certain number of years.

One set of records that are required as State archives for all public offices, state owned corporations, universities and Councils are annual reports. Annual reports (and other publications that have been digitised or are born digital and are required as State archives) can be uploaded to the [OpenGov](#) website that is managed by State Records.



The [City of Rockdale](#) recently transferred a collection of records (shown at left on the shelves at Kingswood). This included Council Minute books from 1871 to 2011, Committee Minute Books from 1905 to 1994, Mayoral Minutes from 1919 to 1930, and Inspectors' Reports from 1909 to 1917. The impetus for the transfer was a lack of appropriate storage space for the records due to a refurbishment, and an awareness that providing suitable storage conditions could be met more easily by State Records than Council. Rockdale digitised all the Council Minute Books and had them rebound prior to sending them to State Records. The public can now view the digitised minute books

in the Rockdale library.

Are your records facing technological obsolescence?

In honour of [UNESCO's World Day for Audiovisual Heritage](#) on 27 October, State Records' Conservator Elizabeth Hadlow has prepared the following advice for this issue of For the Record.

Records have been created on media other than paper – and in many cases this media is facing technological obsolescence which is putting the content at risk of total loss.

Records facing technological obsolescence include:

- Cinematographic film: Super 8, 16mm, 35mm, Moviepak
- Magnetic tape video storage: open reels, cassettes (e.g. VHS, Betamax®, U-matic®, Betacam®)
- Magnetic tape data storage: open reels, cartridges and cassettes
- Magnetic tape audio storage: open reels (e.g. ¼ inch tape), cassettes
- Digital video: DVCPRO, Digital Betacam
- Digital data discs: 5 ¼, 3 ½ and 8 inch floppy discs, laser discs, mini discs

Technological obsolescence is considered the primary threat to these formats. Deterioration of the plastic base they are stored on is certainly a concern, however accessing and transferring the data content usually requires proprietary or specific playback machines. The end of video manufacture and changes in other proprietary devices has made sourcing and maintaining the playback machines increasingly difficult and expensive. Parts, specialist operators and maintenance staff are required to keep these machines working. In the past year alone Sony and Panasonic have both ceased manufacture and support of popular formats – Sony's Digital Betacam and Panasonic's DVCPRO.

What does this mean for record managers?

In order that information is not lost these formats require urgent attention. If you know of any records on these formats that are required for long or permanent retention you must arrange for them to be transferred to current archival formats as soon as possible. Please contact [State Records](#) for further information about what is required.

Further information about the preservation of these formats can be found on the [National Film and Sound Archive website](#)

Dealing with floods, wet records, sticky tape, chewing gum and even blood

Increasingly we are managing born-digital records but there is still a lot of paper out there and we are approaching flood season in some of the regions around the state. State Records' blog Archives Outside contains a number of useful resources for dealing with emergencies large and small.

These include:

- [Conservation Tip No 5: Removing mould from records and archives.](#)
- [Conservation Tip No 1: Sticky Tape Removal](#) and [Tip No 9: Sticky Tape \(Quick Facts\)](#)
- [Conservation Tip No 3: Removing blood from paper documents](#)
- [Conservation Tip No 8: Removing chewing gum from paper documents](#)

Our advice page on [Disaster management](#) contains advice on dealing with large and small scale disasters, including protocols for insurance assessors, a recovery checklist and what to do if records that have not yet met their minimum retention periods are damaged or lost.

Standards update

The new draft *Standard on records management* was approved by the Board of the State Records Authority in October. It will be issued for use to all public offices in early 2015 and we are currently preparing advice and an implementation guide to assist public offices.

The new standard consolidates requirements from five existing standards into a more streamlined document which will better support NSW Government digital business processes in complex business and information environments. It will replace the:

- *Standard on full and accurate records*
- *Standard on managing a records management program*
- *Standard on counter disaster strategies for records and recordkeeping systems*
- *Standard on the appraisal and disposal of State records*
- *Standard on digital recordkeeping.*

State Records consulted with public offices about the draft standard in August and September and would like to thank all the organisations who responded to our request for feedback and input. We received strong commitment and support for the draft standard. A small number of issues were raised and these have been addressed by:

- changing the title from *Records management standard for the New South Wales public sector* to *Standard on records management*
- additional advice about why the standard refers to both records and information.
- reinstating the compliance requirement that identifies the need for organisations to have suitably skilled staff or access to appropriate skills to support the performance of information and records management
- amending the language in the explanatory text for Principles and some Minimum compliance requirements, and the addition of further examples of how a public office can demonstrate compliance with the requirement, to ensure greater clarity and understanding of requirements.

There will be a compliance timetable for the new standard but it should be noted that for the most part the requirements are not new but are expressed differently so that they apply more clearly to the digital business environments and various services arrangements in which records and information need to be managed. Many of the compliance requirements build on or further refine requirements which have been in existence since 2004.

Until the new standard is issued in early 2015, public offices should continue to comply with current requirements in the existing standards.

For further information or questions on the *Standard on records management*, contact Catherine Robinson at catherine.robinson@records.nsw.gov.au or (02) 8257 2991.

Disposal authorities approved

State Records recently approved a disposal authority documenting the function of election management for the Electoral Commission.

Copies of our retention and disposal authorities are available from the [Retention and Disposal Authorities](#) page on our website.

