VAGO has issued a new version of this better practice guide.

This document should be considered historical information only and is not representative of current better practice.

Records Management Checklist

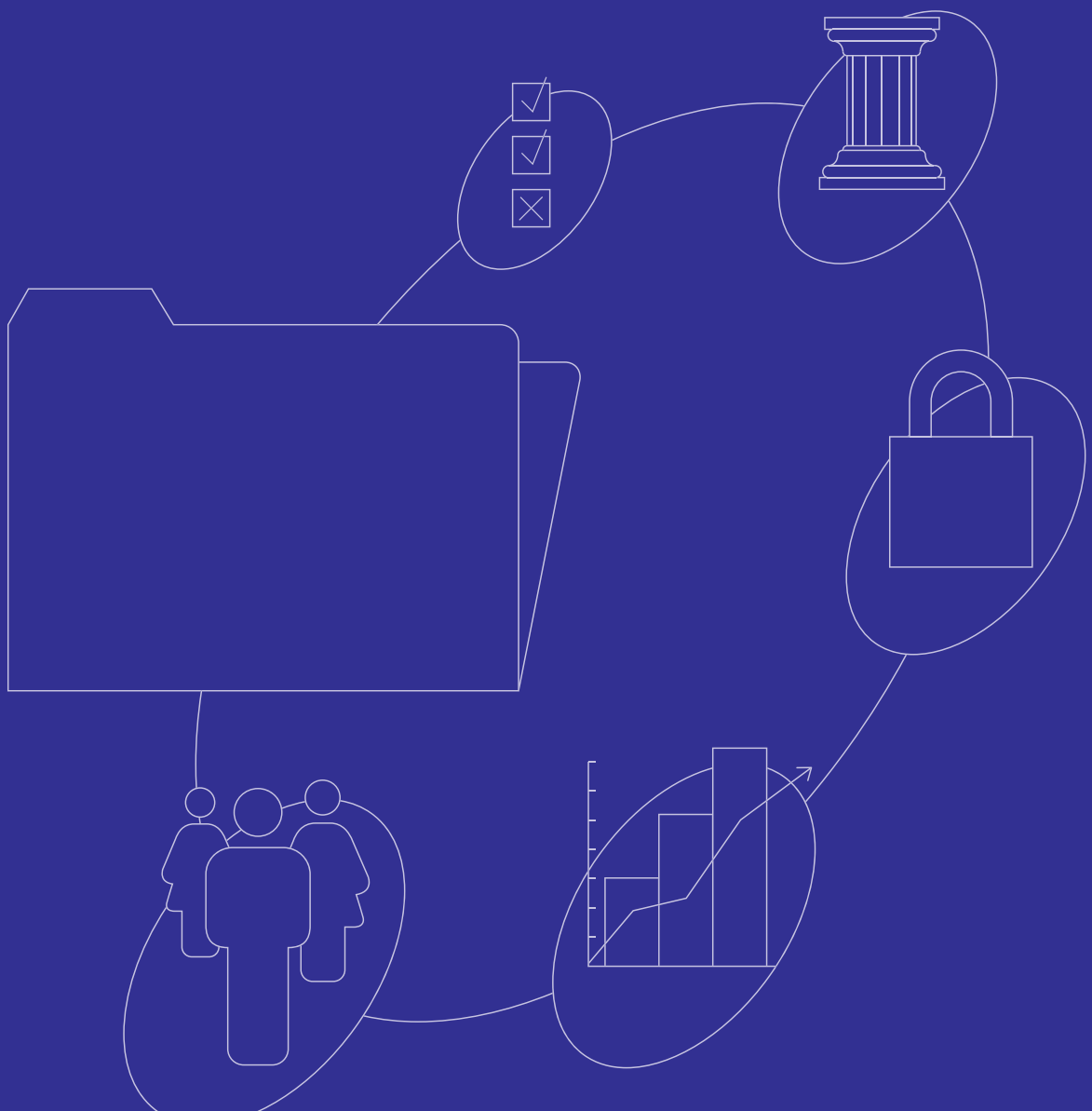
A tool to improve records management

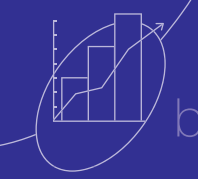
VAGO

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Auditing in the Public Interest

preservation people





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Foreword

Every government agency is responsible for the management of public records. These records are used by agencies to conduct their business and to support agency communications, actions and decisions. Some of these records are historical and culturally important documents that need to be preserved as a record of significant actions and events in Victoria's history.

The Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) has legislative responsibility to ensure the effective and efficient management and preservation and use of the State's public records. It does this by establishing records management standards and assisting agencies via the provision of training, consultancy services and general advice and guidance.

The checklist has been designed to assist government agencies to fulfil their obligations under the *Public Records Act 1973* and to improve the management of their records. It was developed by my office with advice from records managers and in consultation with PROV, selected government agencies and consultants. The checklist formed the basis for undertaking my performance audit titled *Records Management in the Victorian Public Sector* which was tabled in Parliament in March 2008.

To maximise the value of this checklist, it should be used in conjunction with the relevant standards, guidelines and advices issued by PROV.

I hope the checklist will help agencies to assess the procedures and practices established by them to manage their records.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those involved in the preparation of the checklist.

DDR PEARSON
Auditor-General

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Introduction

Recordkeeping is a fundamental function of all government entities and the responsibility of all agency staff. Government records are both an important business asset and the cornerstone of truly accountable government.

It is generally recognised that recordkeeping has three broad objectives:

- providing information to enable agencies to conduct their business
- supporting agency communications, actions and decisions (public accountability)
- preserving historically and culturally important documents.

Without proper recordkeeping, government agencies cannot be assured that they are operating effectively and are meeting the requirements of the *Public Records Act 1973* and the numerous other acts and regulations that include recordkeeping requirements. While a sound records management framework will not of itself ensure agencies' records are well managed, the existence of appropriate policies, procedures and processes increases the likelihood that this outcome will be achieved.

Establishing and maintaining an effective records management framework represents a significant business challenge for many agencies. This task is made more difficult by the changing legislative and other requirements on public administrators and the ongoing developments in information technology.

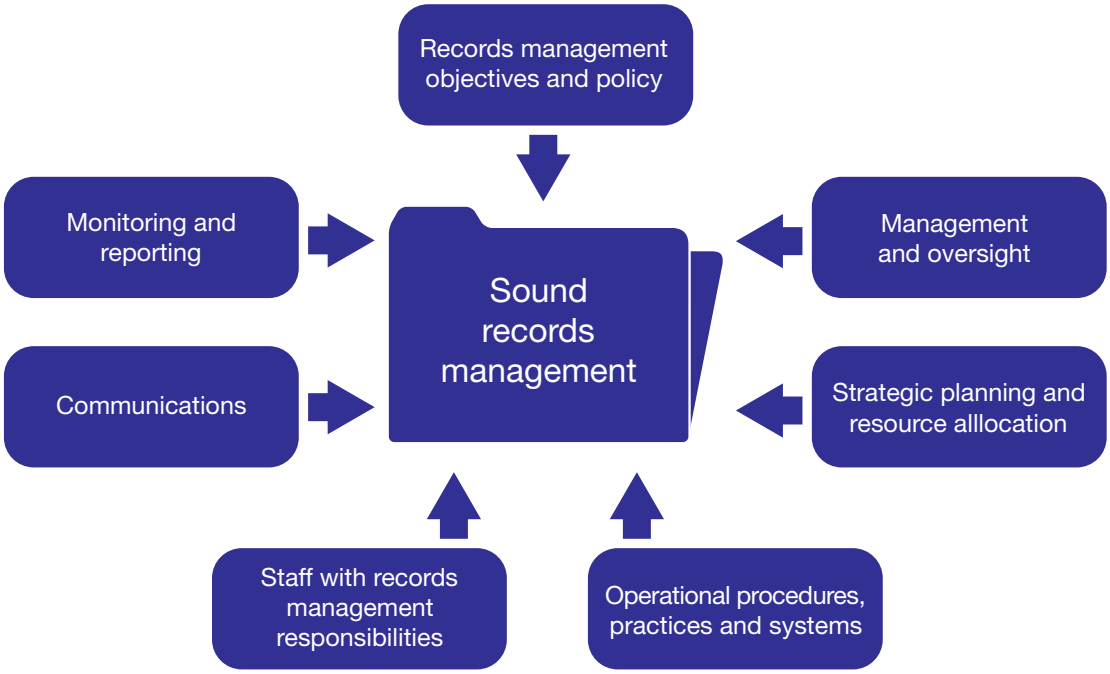
The Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) has a statutory role to establish records management standards and assist agencies better manage their records. PROV provides a range of services to agencies including training and consultancy, assistance in managing electronic records, general advice and guidance.

Purpose of the checklist

This checklist has been developed by VAGO to assist government agencies to assess the administrative frameworks established by them to manage their records. Use of the checklist will help agencies comply with the records management standards issued by PROV and to identify areas where their management of records can be improved. **The checklist is not a substitute for the records management standards but is designed to complement and support them.**

The checklist can be used to assess the processes, procedures and mechanisms established by agencies to manage their records against seven principles. These principles are outlined below.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS



Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

The principles are consistent with the *Australian Standard for Records Management* (AS ISO 15489) and standards, guidelines and advice issued by PROV. To maximise the benefit of the checklist, it should be used in conjunction with the relevant standards and guidance material referred to in this document.

As the checklist assesses agency records management frameworks against a set of principles, rather than requirements, it can be used by agencies of all sizes. The checklist has also been designed to be used by agencies with a centralised records management function and those that incorporate their records management functions within their major business units.

The elements underpinning each of the principles reflect the minimum requirements, that is, the essential elements that all agencies should have in place to manage their records.

Historically, records were managed by records managers controlling paper records and the agency mail rooms. However, contemporary records management requires records managers to have knowledge of the business and how it operates and the risks facing it. This includes an understanding of the information needed to run the business, its electronic and other systems and its critical records. It also involves risk analysis and strategic planning.

As a result, records managers need input from various parts of the business including staff involved in IT, information management, corporate services and the agency's various business units. In order to maximise the benefits of the checklist, staff working in these areas will need to provide input into its completion.

Structure of the checklist

The checklist is divided into seven sections. Each section represents one of the seven principles of sound records management. For each section, the checklist provides:

- a description of the principle and its significance and relevance to recordkeeping and records management
- a listing of the critical elements—these are the processes, procedures and mechanisms, which agencies need to have in place to demonstrate achievement of the principle
- for agencies to indicate whether or not the critical elements are in place.

Using the results to improve records management within the agency

Once agencies have completed the checklist they should:

- determine the reasons why the process, procedure or mechanisms referred to are not in place
- develop strategies and actions to establish them
- assign responsibility and timeframes for their establishment.

The missing elements should also be prioritised to enable the most critical elements to be established first.

The results of the assessment should be communicated to the agency's senior management so it is aware of the state of the agency's records management and the action required to improve it.

The use of the checklist to identify areas for improvement could form part of each agency's continuous improvement program.

Acknowledgement

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office would like to acknowledge Ms. Judith Ellis of Enterprise Knowledge Pty. Ltd. and staff from PROV for their assistance in the preparation of this document.

Principle 1

Records management objectives and policy

1

Records management objectives set out what the agency's records management function is trying to achieve. These objectives should be clearly defined, measurable, achievable, relevant and set with a time frame in mind. The objectives should be aligned with the agency's business outcomes.

For these objectives to be achieved it is important that they are translated into a high-level policy that articulates the principles and objectives for good records management. The policy should:

- acknowledge records as an important business asset
- acknowledge sound recordkeeping as a fundamental function of government agencies and the responsibility of all staff
- outline the main aims of recordkeeping and indicate how good recordkeeping will help the agency to achieve its key objectives
- identify the core principles for good recordkeeping.

Critical elements		Element in place
1.1	**Records management objectives, principles and priorities have been developed and documented.**	☐
1.2	**A recordkeeping policy has been developed that:**	
	• outlines the agency's overall goals, vision and purpose of recordkeeping	☐
	• indicates the value the agency places on recordkeeping and outlines its commitment to the sound management of records	☐
	• outlines the key recordkeeping functions (i.e., creation, capture, classification, access, storage, security/maintenance, transfer and disposal/preservation)	☐
	• acknowledges that all staff have a responsibility for recordkeeping	☐
	• covers all of the agency's operations and includes all record formats (paper and electronic, including emails and web-based records) and agency locations	☐
	• requires recordkeeping operational policies, procedures and systems to be compliant with legislation, standards and other agency requirements (i.e., information security.)	☐
1.3	**Recordkeeping objectives and policy are endorsed by the chief executive officer or equivalent.**	☐
1.4	**Recordkeeping objectives and policy are reviewed annually and updated where required.**	☐
1.5	**Recordkeeping obligations are identified and acknowledged in other key agency policies such as privacy policy, freedom of information policy, procurement policy and ICT policy.**	☐
1.6	**An information management framework has been established that:**	
	• outlines the long-term vision and goals for managing the agency's information assets	☐
	• recognises records as a key component of information management	☐
	• regularly identifies the agency's information needs and strategies to meet them.	☐

Principle 2

Management and oversight

2

To ensure recordkeeping activities operate as intended and are aligned with the agency's records management objectives and policy, there needs to be appropriate management and oversight. Effective records management depends on the appropriate assignment of responsibility for records management within the agency, senior management support for records management and recognition that records management is a key organisational function.

Critical elements		Element in place
2.1	**The chief executive officer or equivalent is identified as having ultimate responsibility for records management in the agency.**	☐
2.2	**Senior management support and champion the management of records within the agency by:**	
	• approving the recordkeeping policy	☐
	• promoting sound recordkeeping at staff meetings, in discussions with agency staff and in corporate communications	☐
	• adequately resourcing the records management function.	☐
2.3	**The management of records is identified as a key organisational requirement and priority by:**	
	• recognising the management of records as a key result area in organisational planning (i.e., within the corporate plan and business plans)	☐
	• establishing key performance indicators for: - staff with records management responsibilities - senior agency staff overseeing records management functions.	☐ ☐
2.4	**The organisational structure facilitates good management of records by:**	
	• assigning responsibility for the oversight of records management to a senior executive officer	☐
	• assigning responsibilities for the development of recordkeeping policy, processes and systems	☐
	• including consideration of records management requirements in other agency-wide activities such as: - corporate governance - risk management - information management - information technology.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
2.5	**All audits and reviews of agency functions and activities include an assessment of the agency's compliance with its records management policy and procedures.**	☐
2.6	**Senior and middle management performance agreements require them to ensure their staff comply with the agency's records management policy and procedures.**	☐
2.7	**Recordkeeping responsibilities are included in all staff position descriptions.**	☐
2.8	**Recordkeeping responsibilities are included in staff performance agreements.**	☐
2.9	**Key performance indicators are established for recordkeeping and the records management function.**	☐

Principle 3

Strategic planning and resource allocation

For agencies to make the best use of their resources and to improve recordkeeping outcomes, they need to adopt a strategic approach to the management of their records. Strategic planning enables agencies to know what to do so they can plan to make it happen.

Adoption of such an approach provides senior management with comprehensive information about the state of the agency's recordkeeping, systems and controls in place, weaknesses and risks associated with current practices, and actions that can be taken.

Without a strategic approach to the management of records:

- there is a greater likelihood that an agency's records management operations will fail to respond adequately to ongoing changes in the regulatory and business environment that may have recordkeeping implications
- resources needed to adequately operate the records management function may not be received and the resources available may not be used effectively.

A strategic approach to records management involves:

- gaining an understanding of the agency's business
- identifying records management needs and risks
- assessing the adequacy of the existing recordkeeping environment and practices
- developing a strategic plan to ensure records management objectives and needs are addressed.

Critical elements		Element in place
3.1	**An understanding of the agency business has been obtained by:**	
	• identifying the legal, regulatory, business and political context of the agency	☐
	• defining the business functions, activities and processes for which records must be created and managed	☐
	• assessing the internal business environment of the agency, including the identification of business systems used to store records, their records management functionality and relationships between systems.	☐
3.2	**Records management needs and requirements have been determined by:**	
	• identifying the legislative and other requirements that impact on recordkeeping in the agency	☐
	• identifying relevant internal and external stakeholders and their recordkeeping requirements	☐
	• assessing the agency's recordkeeping risks and identifying priorities. The priorities will be based on an evaluation of the likely impact of the agency not meeting its identified needs.	☐
3.3	**The systems used to keep records and the agency's recordkeeping policies and procedures have been assessed to determine whether they are adequate to ensure the identified recordkeeping needs and requirements are met.**	☐
3.4	**An agency-wide strategy or plan has been developed. This will facilitate the achievement of the agency's records management objectives, to address any gaps and risks identified in the records management framework and to outline and support new records management initiatives.**	☐

Critical elements		Element in place
3.5	**The records management strategy or plan includes:**	
	• the agency's records management objectives	☐
	• a broad outline of the agency's business context	☐
	• details of the agency's major records management needs, requirements and risks	☐
	• actions required to achieve its records management objectives, address deficiencies identified in the agency's records management framework and any poor records management outcomes identified	☐
	• timelines for the implementation of actions	☐
	• resource requirements, both physical and financial	☐
	• monitoring and reporting mechanisms	☐
	• assignment of responsibilities for: - establishing the agency recordkeeping framework - key recordkeeping functions (at a high-level), including the capture, classification, access, storage, security, maintenance, transfer, disposal and preservation of records - monitoring and reporting to senior management on records management activities, compliance with agency policies and procedures, and the performance of the records management function - establishing appropriate governance arrangements for major records management initiatives including a project steering committee, a project sponsor and a project manager.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
	• prioritisation of actions and initiatives on the basis of risk and materiality.	☐

Critical elements		Element in place
3.6	The strategy is consistent with national and international standards such as AS ISO 15489 and AS ISO 23081, where appropriate.	☐
3.7	The strategy is endorsed by the agency's chief executive officer or equivalent.	☐
3.8	The strategy is regularly reviewed and updated, where required.	☐
3.9	Relevant actions and initiatives are incorporated into the business plans of the agency's major functional and operational groups.	☐
3.10	For each major records management initiative (project):	
	• a business case is prepared prior to commencing the project. (The business case outlines the need the initiative will address, an assessment of the options available to meet the need and an outline of the preferred option including the costs, benefits, issues, constraints and risks associated with that option.)	☐
	• a project plan is prepared. (The plan includes project objectives, details of stakeholders and their needs, resource requirements, project timelines and responsibilities and how the achievement of the project objectives will be assessed.)	☐

Principle 4

Operational procedures, practices and systems

Once agencies have established their records management objectives and policy, they need to develop comprehensive procedures and practices covering their core business and administrative processes to assist staff in managing agency records.

An agency's operational recordkeeping procedures and practices should:

- be consistent with records management standards and advice issued by PROV
- cover the core recordkeeping processes including records held by external parties (i.e., outsourced activities)
- align with the agency's records management objectives and policy.

Compliance with the agency's records management policy is dependent on staff applying the procedures and practices established and on the capabilities of systems used to record business information.

The growing use of email, the internet and online services is resulting in an ever increasing use of electronic systems to conduct government business. In this environment, it is important to have established adequate and up-to-date procedures and practices dealing with the management of electronic records and electronic systems with recordkeeping functionality.

Critical elements		Element in place
4.1	**General**	
4.1.1	Operational recordkeeping procedures and practices are established that:	
	• refer to recordkeeping requirements outlined in legislation, regulations and standards issued by PROV and other professional bodies	☐
	• align with the agency's records management objectives and policy	☐
	• cover key recordkeeping functions such as the creation, capture, classification, access, storage, security, maintenance, transfer, disposal and preservation of records	☐
	• include all record formats (paper and electronic, including emails and websites)	☐
	• apply to all of the agency's operations	☐
	• identify which systems are to be used to capture and manage the agency's records	☐
	• outline and assign responsibility for compliance with the procedures and practices.	☐
4.2	**Capture of records**	
4.2.1	Operational procedures exist to assist staff to decide **what** information to capture into the agency's recordkeeping system/s, **when** the information is to be captured and **how** the information is captured. The procedures should cover:	
	• hardcopy records	☐
	• digital or electronic records (e.g., emails, standard documents—Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Project)	☐
	• website pages and transactions	☐
	• records of communications such as meeting notes and phone conversations	☐
	• documents generated by the agency's core business systems such as reports, letters and forms.	☐
4.2.2	Vocabulary controls such as thesaurus, standard document and file titling are being used to aid record capture and retrieval.	☐
4.2.3	Procedures have been established to ensure that records held by staff leaving the agency, such as emails and hardcopy records, are appropriately managed.	☐

Critical elements		Element in place
4.3	**Metadata**	
4.3.1	Formal rules are in place to assist staff create appropriate metadata when records are created. This includes rules built into system design.	☐
4.3.2	Metadata is assigned to the records when they are placed in any of the agency's systems which keep records.	☐
4.3.3	For digital records, the metadata is compliant with the VERS Standard, as determined by a formal assessment conducted by PROV.	☐
4.3.4	A person/s with appropriate skills is responsible for determining the agency's metadata requirements and for maintaining its metadata schema.	☐
4.4	**Classification**	
4.4.1	One or more comprehensive and current records classification schemes for grouping and retrieving records has been established.	☐
4.4.2	Each classification scheme is based on an up-to-date analysis of major activities undertaken by the agency.	☐
4.4.3	Procedures or business rules have been established that outline how records are to be classified.	☐
4.4.4	Each classification scheme is linked to the agency's:	
	• retention and disposal authorities	☐
	• security and access regimes for the records system/s.	☐
4.5	**Access to records and security**	
4.5.1	Where access to agency records needs to be restricted for security, privacy, commercial or other reasons, this need is identified and documented.	☐
4.5.2	Policies or business rules governing system security and user access permissions are in place.	☐
4.5.3	Appropriate levels of access to agency records for staff, the public and others dealing with the agency have been determined.	☐
4.5.4	Physical and system restrictions have been implemented to control access by staff and others to agency systems and records, based on the predetermined access levels.	☐
4.5.5	Processes exist to prevent the deliberate destruction and theft of records and accidental damage caused by fire, flood, and vermin.	☐
4.5.6	User access restrictions and other security controls are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate.	☐
4.5.7	Mechanisms are in place to report breaches of security and inappropriate access to agency information to senior management for action.	☐

Critical elements		Element in place
4.6	**Movement of and use of records**	
4.6.1	The location and movement of physical and electronic records are tracked and traceable.	☐
4.6.2	The use of records subject to security restrictions is tracked and traceable.	☐
4.6.3	Business rules and auditable processes are in place for the migration of records to near-line, offline and off-site storage.	☐
4.6.4	Procedures for copying, conversion and migration of records (and their associated metadata) are implemented and monitored.	☐
4.7	**Storage of records**	
4.7.1	The storage of records is regularly appraised. When records are no longer needed for administrative purposes they are transferred to off-site storage or to PROV.	☐
4.7.2	Sentenced temporary and unsentenced records are stored either onsite at the agency or at an approved commercial storage facility, in accordance with PROV's record management standards.	☐
4.7.3	Records appraised as permanent are stored onsite at the agency, in accordance with PROV's records management standards, or transferred to PROV.	☐
4.7.4	Comprehensive and up-to-date disaster preparedness and recovery strategies and procedures for all systems that store records have been established.	☐
4.7.5	Computer and other recordkeeping systems are regularly tested to determine whether they can recover appropriately from system malfunctions.	☐
4.7.6	Agency records are in a format that ensures their preservation and accessibility for as long as they are required, in accordance with the agency's retention and disposal authorities and the requirements of the *Public Records Act 1973*.	☐
4.8	**Disposal of records**	
4.8.1	A current records disposal authority (RDA), authorised by the Keeper of Public Records, is in place to cover the agency's business functions.	☐
4.8.2	Public records are destroyed or otherwise disposed of in accordance with the RDA and records management standards issued under the *Public Records Act 1973*. Ephemeral material created, acquired or collected by public officers during the course of their duties is destroyed in line with normal administrative practice.	☐
4.8.3	The disposal of records is planned and undertaken on a regular basis, e.g., annually.	☐
4.8.4	Responsibility for authorising the destruction of records has been assigned to an appropriate member of staff and the required approvals are obtained prior to the destruction of records.	☐

Critical elements		Element in place
4.8.5	Procedures are in place to ensure:	
	• records identified for destruction have no further business need	☐
	• there is no reasonable risk of the information being recovered after records are destroyed	☐
	• the destruction of records is supervised by an agency staff member or by an authorised agent if destruction has been contracted out	☐
	• the level of control over the destruction of records is commensurate with the sensitivity of the information being destroyed.	☐
4.8.6	Prior to the destruction of records, a *PRO29—Notification of Destruction form*, appropriately endorsed by the head of the public office is completed and forwarded to PROV. A copy of this form is retained by the agency with other relevant documentation, such as the records of internal approval.	☐
4.9	**Transfer of records to PROV**	
4.9.1	Procedures are in place to identify permanent records. Permanent records that are more than 25 years old and no longer required by the agency for administrative use should be transferred to PROV/state's archives.	☐
4.9.2	A program has been established to transfer permanent records to the PROV on a regular basis as required by the *Public Records Act 1973*.	☐
4.9.3	The transfer of permanent records is in accordance with *PROV standard 97/004*, which requires:	
	• documenting the records in accordance with *Specification 1: Documentation of Public Records*	☐
	• processing and listing records in accordance with *Specification 5: Processing and Listing Public Records*	☐
	• transferring records in accordance with *Specification 2: Transfer of Records to the Public Record Office.*	☐
4.10	**Email records**	
4.10.1	To manage email records procedures have been established and implemented that:	
	• outline the employee's responsibility for managing business-related emails	☐
	• explain in what circumstances emails are to be captured as a record (emails that have business value should be captured)	☐
	• list the agency locations and systems that may be used to capture emails	☐
	• list locations that are not approved for storing business emails such as personal or shared drives and email folders	☐
	• require relevant emails to be captured as a record, as soon as possible after staff create or receive them	☐
	• provide guidance to staff on titling emails, to assist them with the subsequent retrieval and ongoing management of emails.	☐

Critical elements		Element in place
4.11	**Web-based records**	
4.11.1	Procedures have been established and implemented to ensure web-based information recorded on public websites, private networks, extranets and intranets are created and captured as records and managed.	☐
4.11.2	The records management procedures for web-based records:	
	• include a requirement to create, capture and manage metadata	☐
	• stipulate that web-based records are to be kept as long as specified in the agency's approved retention and disposal authority	☐
	• require that documentation evidencing website management be captured as a record.	☐
4.12	**Records management systems and systems that keep records**	
4.12.1	Systems which keep records are VERS-compliant, or a strategy has been established for the establishment of a VERS-compliant system. Such a system would enable the agency to more effectively and efficiently manage its electronic records and transfer permanent electronic records to PROV.	☐
4.12.2	The agency has established processes and procedures to ensure all systems that keep records are adequately maintained.	☐
4.12.3	The agency has established standard operating procedures and mechanisms for its systems that keep records and they provide for:	
	• the reporting of all system failures such as database corruption	☐
	• specific actions to be taken when a system fails, including recovery and re-execution of all processes underway	☐
	• major changes to systems to be comprehensively documented.	☐
4.12.4	There are standard processes for the copying, conversion or migration of records in the event of structural change (such as the restructure of government agencies and creation of new business units), system change, upgrade or decommissioning.	☐
4.12.5	Where external parties manage agency information under contractual arrangements, the contract:	
	• recognises the agency's legal ownership of records held by the external party, and the information they contain	☐
	• enables the agency to have full and timely access to relevant records held	☐
	• requires the external party to comply with the agency's recordkeeping standards, policies, procedures and guidelines for as long as they hold the records.	☐

Principle 5

Staff with records management responsibilities

For the records management function to be effective it needs staff with appropriate qualifications, skills and experience. In order for agencies to be assured they have capable staff, they need to:

- identify their staff requirements (i.e., the number of staff and the skills, knowledge and capability)
- periodically assess staff performance and provide appropriate feedback through a formalised performance assessment process. This process should be used to identify staff training and development needs
- compare the overall capabilities of records management staff with the identified requirements to determine the need for new staff and to identify skill deficiencies in the function
- develop a human resource management plan for records management staff.

The records management function or unit should also:

- provide the records management training and development activities outlined in the human resources management plan
- regularly monitor these activities to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

Critical elements		Element in place
5.1	**The human resource requirements for the records management function, in terms of staff numbers and skills, knowledge and capability, are regularly assessed.**	☐
5.2	**The competency and capability of staff with records management responsibility is periodically assessed and the information used to provide staff with feedback on their performance and to identify training and development activities to address any performance issues.**	☐
5.3	**The human resource requirements for the records management function is compared to the resources available to identify the need for more staff or specific skills.**	☐
5.4	**A human resource management plan has been developed, that:**	
	• includes strategies to recruit additional staff with records management capability where required and to train and develop staff to address capability deficiencies	☐
	• identifies and plans for the provision of records management advice and specialist assistance to other areas within the agency as required. For example, records management advice when implementing a new business system.	☐
5.5	**A training program for recordkeeping and records management has been established for:**	
	• staff with records management responsibilities	☐
	• all staff	☐
	• new starters.	☐
5.6	**Training in recordkeeping and records management, as required is provided to:**	
	• staff with records management responsibilities	☐
	• all staff	☐
	• new starters.	☐
5.7	**Training programs are regularly monitored for effectiveness and relevance and changes are made to the programs where appropriate.**	☐
5.8	**Staff with records management responsibilities are encouraged to maintain their record management skills and knowledge through membership of professional bodies, regular contact with PROV and participation in relevant industry events and forums.**	☐
5.9	**Agency operations outside the metropolitan area are provided with training in organisational-wide recordkeeping requirements.**	☐

Principle 6

6

Communications

Sound records management requires all staff to comply with an agency's records management policy/ies and procedures. To do this, staff must be aware of the policy/ies and procedures and understand the importance of sound records management.

Communication, if used well, can be effective in promoting the importance of good recordkeeping within agencies and help agency staff (including contractors) to:

- understand their responsibility for recordkeeping
- obtain a working knowledge of the agency's recordkeeping policies and procedures.

Critical elements		Element in place
6.1	**The importance of recordkeeping is promoted and staff informed of their responsibilities in relation to recordkeeping:**	
	• in training programs	☐
	• on the agency's intranet	☐
	• in displays of information on good recordkeeping practice.	☐
6.2	**Recordkeeping policy/ies and procedures are:**	
	• communicated to all staff and contractors	☐
	• available on the intranet for access by staff.	☐
6.3	**The agency's recordkeeping training program is promoted to all staff, including contractors.**	☐
6.4	**Information on recordkeeping issues impacting on the agency is distributed to appropriate staff.**	☐
6.5	**Staff exit interviews are used to identify areas where agency records are not managed in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures.**	☐

Principle 7

7

Monitoring and reporting

Establishing records management policies and procedures to guide staff in managing agency records is essential to sound recordkeeping. However, without appropriate monitoring and reporting processes, agencies cannot be sure that their policies and procedures are being complied with and their objectives being met.

Regular monitoring and reporting to senior management on recordkeeping activities are an essential element of an agency's governance arrangements. These processes:

- provide assurance to management that the agency's records management objectives and policy/ies are being achieved
- provide feedback to management on how records management initiatives are tracking against budgets and timelines
- bring any events that may adversely impact on the agency to the attention of management so that corrective action can be taken where required.

Monitoring mechanisms normally include:

- a compliance program that monitors the agency's adherence to its recordkeeping policies and procedures and PROV's records management standards, and assesses the agency's performance in achieving its records management objectives
- information on the operation and performance of the records management function and the agency's recordkeeping systems
- information on the progress made by the manager responsible for records management in delivering the strategies outlined in the records management plan/strategy.

It is important for agencies outsourcing significant parts of their business to external parties, to establish mechanisms to ensure records held by these parties are adequately maintained and are accessible by the agency. This can be achieved by:

- clearly outlining in the service agreements entered into with contractors, the contractor's responsibility for the capture, maintenance and management of agency records
- monitoring the external parties' performance against requirements included in service agreements established by agencies.

Critical elements		Element in place
7.1	**Records management compliance reviews**	
7.1.1	The agency has a records management compliance program that regularly monitors and assesses:	
	• compliance with the agency's records management policies and procedures	☐
	• compliance with PROV's records management standards	☐
	• the delivery of its records management plans and initiatives.	☐
7.2	**Performance monitoring**	
7.2.1	Sufficient and appropriate information is gathered on recordkeeping activities to facilitate monitoring of performance against agreed and defined service levels and key performance indicators.	☐
7.2.2	The agency monitors the operation of its information systems that keep records and:	
	• records the level and appropriateness of their use	☐
	• documents any procedures undertaken to address exceptions such as security or access breaches and lost documents.	☐
7.2.3	Recordkeeping tools such as the classification scheme and retention and disposal authorities are regularly reviewed and updated as a consequence of changing business circumstances and requirements.	☐
7.2.4	Mechanisms have been established by the agency to regularly assess and evaluate staff access to records.	☐
7.2.5	Internal audits undertaken by the agency include periodic reviews of the agency's records management and recordkeeping systems, procedures and practices.	☐
7.2.6	Agency compliance with email and web-based records management policy and procedures is regularly monitored by the agency.	☐
7.3	**Reporting**	
7.3.1	Reports are provided to agency senior management on:	
	• records management activities	☐
	• internal recordkeeping compliance reviews	☐
	• changes to existing systems and implementation of new systems which are used to manage records	☐
	• the delivery of records management strategies.	☐
7.3.2	Appropriate and timely corrective action is taken on report findings generated from records management monitoring and reporting activities, and a record of that action is maintained.	☐
7.3.3	Mechanisms are in place to ensure that findings and recommendations from internal audit and other reviews relating to records management are addressed.	☐

Glossary

Access

Right, opportunity, means of finding, using, or retrieving information.

Agency

Group of people and facilities with an arrangement of responsibilities, authorities and relationships.

Appraise

The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations.

Capture

The placement and description of an object, e.g., a document into a system that keeps records.

Classification

Systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification system/scheme.

Conversion

Process of changing records from one medium to another or from one format to another.

Data

Any manifestation in the environment, including symbolic representations, that, in combination, may form the basis of information.

Destruction

Process of eliminating or deleting records, beyond any possible reconstruction.

Disposal

A range of processes associated with implementing records retention, destruction or transfer decisions that are documented in retention and disposal authorities.

Document

Recorded information or object that can be treated as a unit.

Information

Data in a context to which meaning has been attributed.

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. These measures are addressed at appropriate stages in the strategic planning lifecycle and applied at appropriate stages in the operational lifecycle of the information itself.

Information management framework

Comprises policies, procedures and systems to enable the strategic management of information. Information, including records, is a business asset. Records are important both for their content and as evidence of communications, decisions and actions.

Metadata

Data describing the context, content and structure of records and their management through time, e.g., creator, date of creation, record name, record format, accessed by, date deleted, etc.

Migration

Act of moving records from one system to another, while maintaining the records' authenticity, integrity, reliability and usability.

Nearline storage of electronic records

Records are contained on removable electronic storage media but remain relatively accessible through automated systems connected to the network. These records are technically considered to be offline. A system such as a CD jukebox or magnetic tape silo allows records to be accessible through agency networks in relatively short periods of time and without the need for human intervention (i.e., staff are not required to physically retrieve the storage media.)

Online records

Storage of electronic records in devices that make them available for immediate retrieval and access, such as on computer servers. Generally, records stored online will be active (i.e., regularly required for business purposes.)

Offline records

Storage of electronic records in a system or storage device that is not directly accessible through the agency network and which requires human intervention to be made accessible. Offline records are usually stored on removable media such as magnetic tape, CD or DVD. These are generally inactive electronic records not regularly required for business purposes.

Permanent records

Records identified as worth preserving permanently as part of the Victorian Government's archives.

Preservation

Processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of authentic records through time.

Records

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. This is usually the responsibility of a designated person or persons within an agency.

Recordkeeping

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. This is usually the responsibility of all staff within an agency.

Records management

The field of management responsible for the control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities in the form of records.

Sentencing

The process of identifying a record as either of temporary or permanent value.

Temporary records

Records with no archival value that can be sentenced for destruction.

Tracking

Creating, capturing and maintaining information about the movement and use of records.

Transfer

Change of custody, ownership and/or responsibility for records or movement of records from one location to another.

Unsentenced records

Records which have not been appraised as permanent or temporary records.

Web-based records

Includes records arising from the following on-line resources: public websites; virtual private networks (VPNs); extranets; intranets; and individual web-based resources (services and publications).

List of acronyms used

AS ISO	Australian Standard, International Standards Organisation
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PROS	Public Record Office Standard
PROV	Public Record Office Victoria
RDA	Retention and Disposal Authority
VERS	Victorian Electronic Records Strategy

Published by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office,
Level 24, 35 Collins Street, Melbourne.
First published July 2008. Also published on
<www.audit.vic.gov.au>

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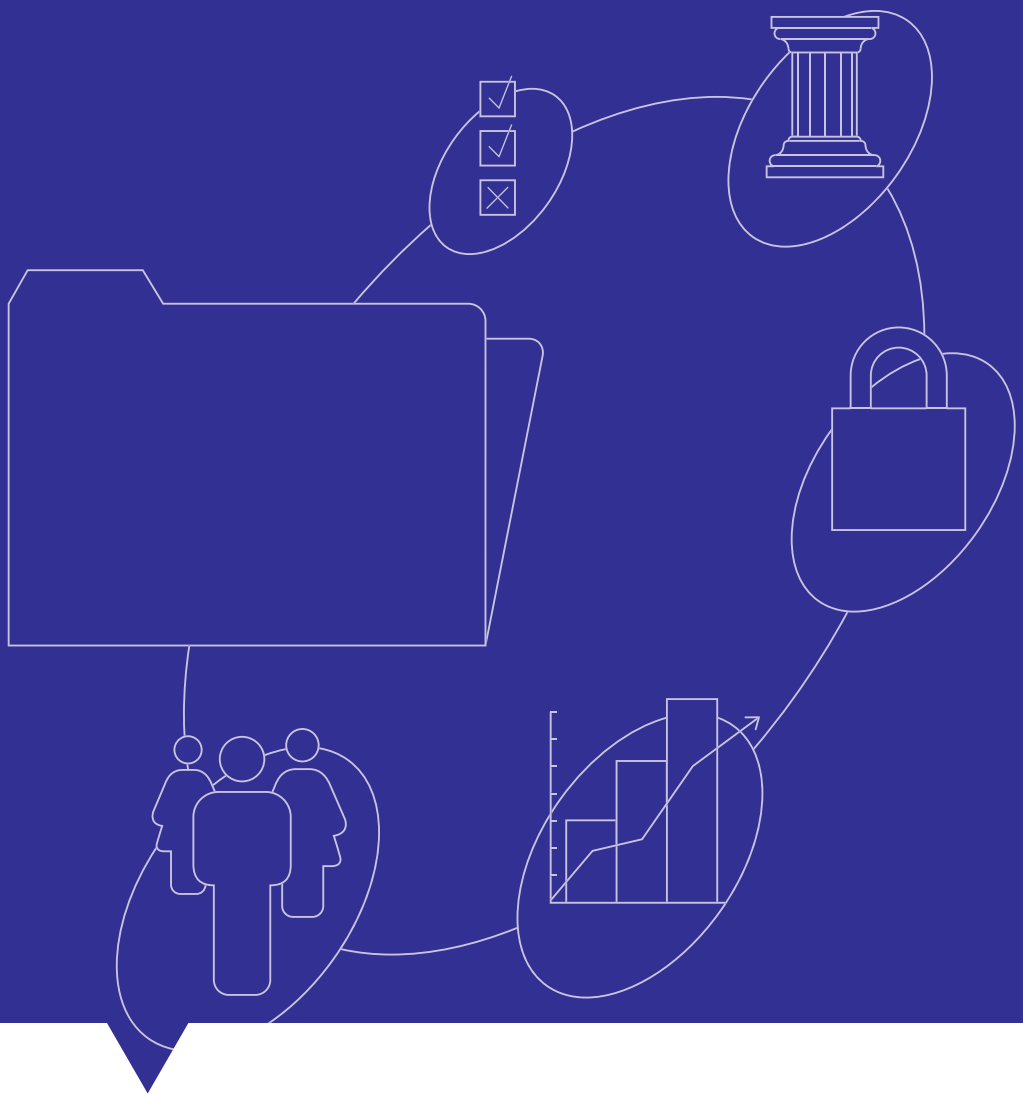
ISBN 1 921060 79 4

2008-09:2



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