



Records disposal schedule

Records Disposal Schedule Children's Services Monitoring Department of the Attorney-General and Justice

Disposal Schedule No. 2016/6

June 2016

For information and advice, please contact
NT Records Service
Department of Corporate and Information Services
GPO Box 2391
Darwin NT 0801

Email: NTG.RecordsPolicy@nt.gov.au
Telephone: (08) 8924 3847
Facsimile: (08) 8924 3880
Website: http://www.nt.gov.au/dcis/info_tech/records_policy_standards/index.shtml

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Preamble

Introduction

The *Information Act* states that public sector organisations must safeguard their records and must not delete or otherwise dispose of a record unless authorised to do so¹. Disposal of records is permitted through the use of records disposal schedules and enable regular, planned and authorised disposal of records controlled by an agency.

Records retention decisions are based on:

- the current and future business needs of the organisation
- compliance with legal and governance requirements of the organisation
- the current and future needs of internal and external stakeholders, including the wider community.

Records disposal schedules provide continuing authorisation for the legal disposal of records and are authorised by the records service, archives service and chief executive officer of the public sector organisation responsible for the schedule.

Records disposal schedules apply to records created and maintained in any format, including electronic records, records in business systems, and parts of records.

In the Northern Territory government there are two types of records disposal schedules:

- [General records disposal schedules](#) that apply to records common to most or all NT Government public sector organisations, and
- Functional records disposal schedules that apply to records specific to an NT Government public sector organisation or function.

Functional records disposal schedules should be used in conjunction with general records disposal schedules.

Structure of a Records Disposal Schedule

Records disposal schedules set out minimum requirements for the creation, maintenance, retention or destruction actions to be taken in relation to existing or future records described in each class. Records disposal schedules specify

- (a) whether a class of record has temporary or permanent status;
- (b) the retention period for a temporary class of record;
- (c) authorised disposal actions for a class of record.²

Each class of records created by an agency is described using classifications based on business analysis.

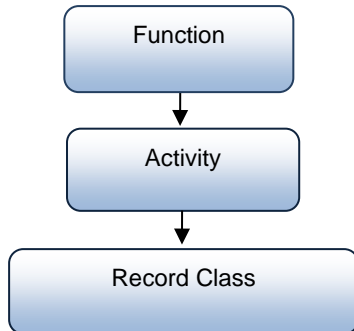
Disposal schedules are developed using the functional structure based on the business classification scheme of the *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms* produced by the State Records Authority of NSW and modified for use by NT Government public sector organisations.

¹ S.145 *Information Act*

² S.136A(3) *Information Act*

Within the schedule, functions are documented as the highest level terms and business activities under the functions, followed by record classes, as shown in diagram 1.

Diagram 1



Function

The function or keyword is the highest level in the classification scheme in this disposal schedule. The function is indicated at the start of each section and a description (scope note) provided.

Activity

Activities are the processes or operations that make up the business function. This is the second level in the classification scheme in this disposal schedule. The description (scope note) provides details of the transactions that take place in relation to the activity, for example, REPORTING or POLICY.

Record Class

A record class is a group of records that relate to the same activity, function or subject and require the same disposal action. The descriptions can relate to one record (such as a register) or a group of records documenting a particular set of business transactions.

Status and Disposal Action

The appraisal status of a record class is assigned as either permanent or temporary.

Permanent Records: Records appraised with permanent status have been identified as archives and must be transferred to the NT Archives Service for their preservation and eventual public access.

The retention period for permanent records is the maximum period before the records must be transferred to the NT Archives Service. Permanent records must be transferred no later than 30 years after creation in accordance with the Information Act, unless exemption has been granted (see *Archives Management Standards Transfer of Archives, and Exemption from Compulsory Transfer of Permanent Records to the NT Archives Service*). An Application to Transfer Records form must be submitted to the NT Archives Service before records will be accepted for transfer.

Temporary records: The retention period for temporary records is the minimum period before the records can legally be destroyed. The retention period is calculated after an event or a disposal trigger such as 'date of action completed', 'date of audit' or 'date of birth'.

Destruction should be done following consultation with relevant operational business employees responsible for the records

Retention periods for temporary records in a records disposal schedule are minimum periods only and agencies may keep records for a longer period if considered necessary for business requirements.

Reasons for longer retention could include,

- administrative need or agency directives,
- legal requirements such as current or pending legal action,
- relevance to an investigation or inquiry which is in progress,
- is subject to an Information Access application, or
- subject to a disposal freeze.

Records created prior to 1 July 1978 must not be disposed of without the authorisation of the NT Archives Service in accordance with Archives Management Standard Records Created Prior to 1978, unless specified in a schedule.

Sentence records with this records disposal schedule using the following five steps:

1. Determine the appropriate function and activity of the records. This can be done by examining an existing record or when creating a new record.
2. Identify the disposal class.
3. From the disposal action in the class, identify the trigger event and a date when the record can be disposed of, alternately, identify that the record is to be retained permanently as archives.
4. If the trigger event has already occurred (such as action is completed), confirm and implement the disposal action.
5. If the trigger event has not occurred (e.g. the record is still in active use), set a review date for the future.

About this Records Disposal Schedule

Purpose

The purpose of this Records Disposal Schedule is to enable regular, planned and authorised disposal of records of the Children's Services Monitoring function of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

Scope

Application of this Records Disposal Schedule is mandatory for Children's Services Monitoring records of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

This Records Disposal Schedule applies to Children's Services Monitoring records in all formats.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice is responsible for the content and implementation of this Records Disposal Schedule including the provision of advice and training, and for monitoring compliance.

Authority

This Records Disposal Schedule is authorised in accordance with S. 136B of the *Information Act*.

Disposal Schedule No. 2016/6 was approved by the Director of the NT Archives Service (The Archives Service), Senior Director of ICT Policy and Governance (The Records Service), and the Chief Executive of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice on 22 June 2016 and is effective immediately.

Regulatory Framework

The regulatory basis for this Records Disposal Schedule is defined in:

- *Children's Commissioner Act 2013*
- *Care and Protection of Children Act*
- *Disability Services Act*
- *Mental Health and Related Services*
- *Youth Justice Act*
- *Vulnerable Substance Abuse Prevention Act*
- *Information Act*
- NT Government Records Management Standards
- NT Government Archives Management Standards
- Australian Standards AS ISO 15489:2002-Records Management

Related Documents

This Records Disposal Schedule is to be read in conjunction with:

- NT Government Records Management Standard – Records Disposal
- policies and procedures of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice

- current authorised disposal schedules for Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

Normal Administrative Practice

Public sector organisations are permitted to dispose of some short term or ephemeral documents under the authority of the Disposal Schedule for Short Term Value Records. These include:

- duplicate (eg information or reference copy)
- obviously unimportant (e.g. telephone message slips)
- of short term facilitative value (e.g. compliment slips)
- a combination of these

The guiding principle is that organisations should be sure that destroying these records will not destroy evidence that might be needed.

Records that have been captured into a recordkeeping system should be destroyed using the Disposal Schedule for Short Term Value Records unless the class of records has been identified in a specific disposal schedule.

Notification of Destruction

Provide formal notification of destruction of all records to the NT Records Service.

Note: In the case of the Disposal Schedule for Records of Short Term Value (Disposal Schedule No. 2003/10), notification is only required for the destruction of records described in Disposal Class No. 1.10.1.

Acknowledgement

The NT Archives Service and the NT Records Service acknowledge that material produced by National Archives of Australia, State Records Authority of New South Wales, State Records of South Australia, Public Records Office of Victoria, Territory Records Office and Standards Australia was used in the development of this schedule.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission of the NT Archives Service. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the Director, NT Archives Service. The terms in the business classification scheme are based on the Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms (Government of New South Wales, 1998), and are produced under a licence agreement between the NT Archives Service and the State Records Authority of New South Wales.

| Compliance Checklist | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Implement a records disposal program to ensure regular appraisal, sentencing, destruction and transfer of all records | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop applying sentences from previous schedules that have been revoked or amended |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assign responsibility for the management and application of regular records disposal action using authorised records disposal schedules, to an appropriately skilled records manager who consults with the NT Archives Service and NT Records Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Retain all records in good order and condition to be available for retrieval during the retention period. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and update control records so that you can demonstrate what happened to each record, whether paper or electronic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Familiarise all employees of the organisation with the authorised records disposal schedules relevant to the organisation's records | <input type="checkbox"/> Implement an appropriate and approved strategy for retention of records of continuing value, eg. preservation in original form, migration to new systems, and conversion to long term medium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and sentence all records described in this schedule in all formats including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records | <input type="checkbox"/> Dispose of all records sentenced according to this schedule in all formats including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all copies of temporary records are destroyed in any format (including backups), unless otherwise stated in a disposal schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer records of permanent value to the NT Archives Service for retention as archives not later than 30 years after creation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apply this records disposal schedule to records in the organisation's records management systems, including systems for the management of paper records, electronic records, or records in any other format | <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive records can be transferred to offsite service providers providing they have been sentenced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apply this records disposal schedule to records in the organisation's business systems, either directly or by linking the business system to a records management system | <input type="checkbox"/> Destroy time expired temporary records in a secure manner that ensures complete deletion/destruction beyond any possible reconstruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Implement quality assurance mechanisms to periodically check that the disposal class originally assigned at the creation of the records is still applicable at the time of sentencing of the record | <input type="checkbox"/> Notify the NT Records Service of destruction of all records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Implement review or quality control procedures in recordkeeping systems to ensure disposal actions are implemented correctly | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not destroy records that are not described in an authorised records disposal schedule. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identify records that require re-sentencing where a previous disposal schedule has been superseded | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not destroy any records created prior to 1 July 1978 without specific authorisation from the NT Archives Service |

Disposal Schedule

1. Children's Services Monitoring

The function of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children by the Children's Commissioner as required under the *Children's Commissioner Act*. Includes the promotion of policies and services, annual reporting, managing inquiries and complaints in relation to vulnerable children.

1.1 Advice

The activities associated with offering opinions by or to the organisation as to an action or judgement. Includes the process of advising.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| 1.1.1 | Records documenting the provision of formal advice to and from the Minister, other Government Bodies and Industry stakeholders, such as advice on policy and reform, legislative amendments, and impacts of domestic violence on children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial • Briefing notes • Cabinet submissions | Permanent Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed |

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1.2 Agreements

The processes associated with the establishment, maintenance, review and negotiation of agreements. Includes formal agreements and /or exchange of letters between parties, as well as informal agreements.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1.2.1 | Records documenting the establishment, negotiation, maintenance and review of minor agreements with government bodies. Includes memoranda of understanding and service level agreements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Children and Families | Temporary Destroy 7 years after expiry or termination of agreement |

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1.3 Authorisation

The process of seeking and granting permission to undertake requested action.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|--|---|---|
| 1.3.1 | Records documenting the appointment of the Children's Commissioner under the Act by the Minister, including reappointments, resignations, suspensions, terminations, and acting Commissioners. Includes gazette notices, recommendations, ministerials, copies of qualifications, and terms and conditions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Commissioners | Permanent Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed |
| 1.3.2 | Records documenting delegation to a person of any of the Commissioner's powers or functions under the Act. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegations of powers and functions | Permanent Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed |

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1.4 Committees

The activities associated with the management of committees, sub-committees, councils, forums working groups, boards and task forces (internal and external, private, community, local, state, national, international, etc). Includes the committee's establishment, appointments of members, terms of reference, proceedings, minutes, reports, agenda etc.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|--|---|
| 1.4.1 | Records documenting high level committees where the Commissioner is a member representing the Northern Territory Government, such as the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians. Includes agendas, minutes, discussion papers and other supporting documents. | - Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) | Permanent Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed |

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1.5 Complaints Management

The activities associated with addressing complaints and resolving disputes.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1.5.1 | <p>Records documenting significant investigations into major complaints in relation to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children by the Commissioner under the Act, such as where the matter adversely affects the rights or wellbeing of a child, raises issues of public interest, or influences legislative changes.</p> <p>Includes personal details of child, progress reports, medical reports, visit checklists, corrective action plans, file notes, placement history, copies of child protection orders and other supporting documentation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant complaints that influence legislation | <p>Permanent</p> <p>Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed</p> |
| 1.5.2 | <p>Records documenting investigations into major complaints in relation to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children by the Commissioner under the Act which have not influenced legislation but are of public wide interest.</p> <p>Includes personal details of child, progress reports, medical reports, visit checklists, corrective action plans, file notes, placement history, copies of child protection orders and other supporting documentation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major complaints | <p>Temporary</p> <p>Destroy 30 years after action completed</p> |

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The activities associated with addressing complaints and resolving disputes.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| 1.5.3 | <p>Records documenting minor complaints and enquires that have been completed and dealt with by negotiation and conciliation by the Commissioner under the Act, including complaints that have been referred to the relevant agency or service provider, or have not been accepted, including approaches where advice has been given but no formal complaint has been lodged.</p> <p>Includes written complaints, assessment reports, related correspondence and notices of decisions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor complaints | <p>Temporary</p> <p>Destroy 5 years after action completed</p> |

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1.6 Compliance

The activities associated with complying with, or monitoring compliance with, mandatory or optional accountability, fiscal, legal, regulatory or quality standards or requirements. Includes compliance with legislation and with national and international standards.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1.6.1 | Records documenting where a person or persons are suspected of contravening the Act and a major investigation has taken place that may have set a precedent, led to legislative change, or has been of public wide interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major investigations • Written letters • File notes • Video footage • Investigation reports and final decisions | Permanent Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed |
| 1.6.2 | Records documenting where a person or persons have been suspected of contravening the Act and a minor investigation has taken place, such as when persons engage in conduct that results in disclosure of confidential information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor investigations • Written letters • File notes • Video footage • Investigation reports and final decisions | Temporary Destroy 7 years after action completed |

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1.7 Control

The activities associated with creating, maintaining and evaluating control mechanisms.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| 1.7.1 | <p>Register of complaints as required under the Act.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaint details - Child's details - Carer details - Dates of incidents - Copies of court orders - Requests for information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Complaints | <p>Permanent</p> <p>Retain in organisation</p> <p>(manage and migrate data to new platform during system upgrades)</p> |

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1.8 Inquiries

The activities associated with liaising with bodies carrying out inquiries, and participating in them. Inquiries are investigations carried out by persons or bodies who have been empowered to inquire and report on a subject, such as Royal Commissions, Parliamentary, Ombudsman's and Commissioner's inquiries. Includes the organisation's participation in the inquiry by providing evidence in the form of records, submissions or staff.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1.8.1 | <p>Records documenting inquiries by the Commissioner into matters in relation to the care and protection of children, including at the request of the Minister.</p> <p>Includes final reports, notifications of inquiries, documented procedures, file notes, witness statements, statistic reports, ministerials and other supporting documents.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiries | <p>Permanent</p> <p>Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed</p> |

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1.9 Investigations

The acts and processes involved in ascertaining facts by enquiry or examination.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|--|---|
| 1.9.1 | <p>Records documenting the investigation of matters in relation to the care and protection of vulnerable children, including at the request of the Minister, such as matters relating to youth justice and the rise in the number of children in out of home care.</p> <p>Includes file notes, witness statements, statistic reports, ministerial and other supporting documents.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations into the care and protection of vulnerable children matters | <p>Permanent</p> <p>Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed</p> |

1. Children's Services Monitoring

The function of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children by the Children's Commissioner as required under the *Children's Commissioner Act*. Includes the promotion of policies and services, annual reporting, managing inquiries and complaints in relation to vulnerable children.

1.10 Reporting

The processes associated with initiating or providing a formal response to a situation or request (either internal, external or as a requirement of corporate policies), and to provide formal statements or findings of the results of an examination or investigation.

Includes agenda, briefing, business, discussion papers, proposals, reports, reviews and returns.

| Class No. | Description of Records | Examples | Status and Disposal Action |
|-----------|---|--|---|
| 1.10.1 | Final versions of annual reports for the Office of the Children's Commissioner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports • Additional reports | Permanent Transfer to the NT Archives Service 10 years after action completed |
| 1.10.2 | Records documenting the development of reports in relation to the function of children's services monitoring. Includes file notes, statistic reports, consultation notes and draft versions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft versions of annual reports • Draft versions of additional reports | Temporary Destroy 5 years after action completed |