



## Introduction

Disposal of public records is governed by the [Public Records Act 2002](#) (the Act). The term “disposal” has specific meanings under the Act<sup>1</sup>:

- Destroy or damage a record in whole or part
- Abandoning, transferring, donating, giving away or selling a record in whole or part.

All disposal actions must be authorised by the State Archivist.<sup>2</sup> Decisions on disposition of public records follow careful appraisal of the record classes to determine their retention status. Records typically fall into one of two categories:

- Temporary – records may be disposed of on expiry of their retention period, usually expressed in years
- Permanent – records of lasting value to the State are transferred to Queensland State Archives (QSA).

The appraisal process is critical to producing a *Retention and Disposal Schedule* listing the record classes, their retention status and disposal action. In general, QSA accepts transfers of permanent records. We will only consider transfers of unappraised or temporary records under special circumstances.

Key terms are explained at the end of this document and you can also refer to our [Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms](#) available on our website.

### **Retention and disposal schedules**

Records are sentenced against a retention and disposal schedule authorised by the State Archivist, either:

- A generic schedule for records common to administrative functions carried out by public authorities, or
- A schedule specific to the core business records generated by an agency.

### **Generic retention and disposal schedules**

QSA has developed schedules that cover record classes common to certain administrative functions or to particular sectors and types of public authority. You may use a generic schedule to sentence records belonging to classes represented in the schedule.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2, *Public Records Act 2002*. Links to the Act and accompanying Plain English Guide are available from <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/legislation.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Section 13, *Public Records Act 2002*

If you meet all the conditions stated in the schedule, then:

- You don't need to [contact](#) QSA to dispose of temporary records when their retention period has expired, but
- You do need to get approval from QSA if you want to transfer permanent records to us.

### ***List of generic schedules***

Generic schedules are available from the QSA website, [www.archives.qld.gov.au](http://www.archives.qld.gov.au), and include:

- General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records (GRDS).
- Sector-wide schedules are also available including:
  - Energy Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule
  - Local Government Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule
  - General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Technical and Further Education Institutes.
  - Office of a Minister of the Crown & Parliamentary Secretaries Retention and Disposal Schedule
  - University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule.

### **Agency specific retention and disposal schedules**

Records not covered by a generic schedule must be included in a schedule specific to the core business functions carried out by a public authority. The schedule is not lawful until it has been authorised by the State Archivist. QSA assigns each authorised schedule a disposal authority number. QSA recommends that public authorities develop a schedule covering all record classes generated across the agency.

### **Restricted access periods (RAPs)**

Access to archival public records is set by the agency responsible for the material. A formal written notice specifies a restricted access period (RAP) in years ranging from 0 (no restriction) to 100 (maximum duration). Written notices are given under s16(1)-(3) of the Act; maximum durations for records with certain types of information content are specified in s16(4); see Figure 1 on page 3.

### ***Regulations***

Matters relating to law enforcement, legal proceedings and confidential communications may be restricted by regulation regardless of the age of the record; however, records containing personal affairs information may only be restricted by regulation if they are over 100 years old.

For advice on restrictions under a regulation [contact](#) QSA.

### ***How to set a RAP***

RAPs are set at series level with any exceptions noted at the file, folder or item level. There is no reason to restrict access to all records in a series if only certain files or documents need a longer closure period. See our guidelines on [how to set RAPs](#) for more information.

RAPs are administered depending on whether the records are additions (accruals) to previous consignments of the same record series. Accruals are assigned the same RAP

as that already authorised for the series. QSA will send you a RAP notice form asking you to confirm the existing RAP.

For records in series not yet represented as State archives, QSA will send you a RAP notice form asking you to establish the RAP for the series. Subsequent transfers will be treated as accruals.

<i>Notice given under</i>	<i>Record classes</i>	<i>RAP</i>	<i>Duration</i>	
16(1)	Cabinet records Executive Council records Ministerial records	30 years	16(1)	<i>RAP is set at 30 years.</i>
16(2)	Personal affairs matters	Minimum: 0 years Maximum: 100 years	16(4)(a)	RAP cannot exceed 100 years unless subject to a regulation under s18(4).
16(3)	<i>Other public records:</i>			
	<i>Law enforcement and public safety</i> <i>Matters affecting legal proceedings</i> <i>Matters communicated in confidence</i>	<i>Minimum: 0 years</i> <i>Maximum: 65 years</i>	16(4)(b)	RAP cannot exceed 65 years unless subject to a regulation under s18(5).
	<i>Any other record</i>	<i>Minimum: 0 years</i> <i>Maximum: 30 years</i>	16(4)(c)	<i>RAP cannot exceed 30 years.</i>

**Figure 1 Restricted access periods**

### ***When to send the RAP***

If you are the responsible public authority for the records you're transferring, you must provide QSA a written notice of the RAP or confirm the existing RAP 10 working days before the scheduled transfer date using the form provided.<sup>3</sup>

If you are not the responsible public authority, don't prepare a written notice. QSA will determine which agency is responsible for the records and will liaise with them.

### **Who sets or confirms the RAP**

The Chief Executive Officer or their authorised delegate determines the RAP for an agency's archival public records. Agency officers without a formal delegation from their CEO may not make decisions about access restrictions.

### **Your responsibilities**

You must identify:

- Any files, folders or items assigned a longer restriction than the series level RAP

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<sup>3</sup> See s16 of the *Public Records Act 2002*.

- Documents containing information relating to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).<sup>4</sup>

### ***Changing a RAP***

For advice on how to change an existing RAP notice, [contact](#) QSA.

## **Transfer procedures**

To request a transfer, you can:

- [Contact](#) QSA to discuss transfer procedures, or
- Complete a Transfer Proposal Form and send it to QSA by fax, email or post

You must use a separate *Transfer Proposal Form* for each [record series](#) you want to transfer.

### ***Steps in the transfer process***

After we've received the *Transfer Proposal Form*, we will:

- Check the information you've provided about the series you want to transfer
- Contact you if we need more information or clarification
- Queue your request for approval.

If your request is approved, we will:

- Arrange a mutually convenient transfer date and discuss how to list and prepare the records for transfer

If your agency is the public authority responsible for the records, the officer authorised to determine access conditions and restrictions will have to complete a *Restricted Access Notice*. Your agency will also have to list and box or pack the records for transfer.

If your request is not approved, we will:

- Schedule it for our annual reassessment of outstanding and pending transfers.

Throughout the process, QSA will keep in touch with you to discuss the proposed transfer and to keep you informed of its status.

Use the [transfers checklist](#) in Figure 2 on page 11 to help keep track of the main steps in the process.

### ***Approving a request for transfer***

Our decision to approve a transfer is based on criteria including:

- Age of the records – material over 25 years old is generally given a higher priority
- Historical, legal and administrative significance
- Whether the material complements or is an addition (accrual) to existing holdings
- When the records will be available to the public – material that will be available immediately or within a few years after transfer is given priority
- The extent of the material – very large transfers (i.e. over 100 linear metres) may have to wait until sufficient space becomes available

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<sup>4</sup> See [Management of ASIO Documents in Queensland Public Records](#) for advice.

- The sensitivity of the records – highly sensitive information content may be given priority.

## ***Listing and boxing records for transfer***

### **Listing**

You have to list the records using the [Item List Template](#), an Excel spreadsheet with two worksheets:

- One containing the information about the transfer
- The other giving instructions on how to complete the Template.

QSA will not accept transfers of unlisted records. The item list must be emailed to QSA 10 working days before the scheduled transfer date to allow us to check the list and prepare for receipting and cataloguing the records when they arrive.

For accountability purposes, it's important that your listing is accurate and comprehensive. Accurate listing will also help us retrieve and issue the records back to you temporarily.

The data elements you need to complete in the item list are:

- Description – a brief description of each item, e.g. Bugil Shire Council Minute Book
- Access category – the restricted access period of the item expressed in years from 0-100 and set at series level with any exceptions at file, folder or item level identified in the spreadsheet
- Item type – the [physical format](#) of the item, e.g. file, papers, volume, maps (see Figure 3 Item types explained)
- Retention status – retention classification of the item, e.g. permanent, long-term temporary, temporary
- Start and end dates – date(s) of the item [qualified](#) as to whether they are exact or attributed and expressed as dd/mm/yyyy (see Figure 4 Date qualifiers explained)
- Departmental control number – your agency's file or other control number for the item, e.g. QSA02/250; SL15326; 143; 1.123.
- Box number
- Container type – identifies the kind of box or container storing the item.

### **Boxing**

#### ***Choosing a box***

For files, folders, papers and smaller bound volumes or notebooks, use an archive type 1 box – you can buy these from [Sales and Distribution Services](#).

A wide range of non-standard boxes and containers is available for photographic material or records of an unusual size and format. [Contact](#) the Manager Preservation Services at QSA for help and advice.

### ***Packing the box***

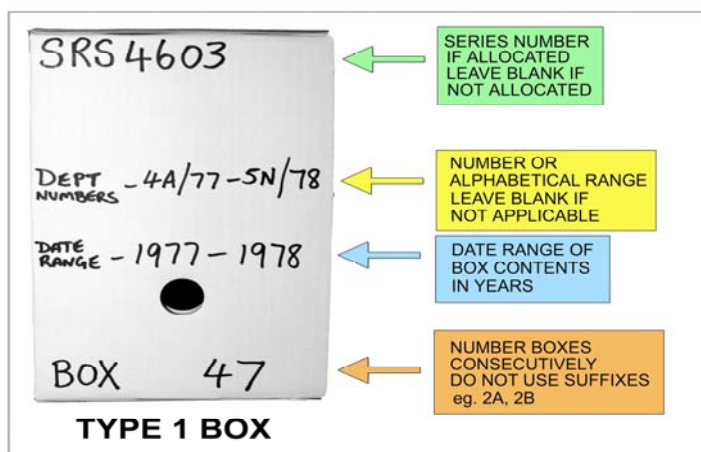
Not too loose, not too tight. You should be able to get your hand in behind the records easily.



### ***Labelling the box***

Label the box as shown in the photo below and include these data elements:

- Series number: if known; if not, leave room at the top of the box
- Departmental numbers
- Dates
- Box number



Do NOT use adhesive labels – use a permanent waterproof black marking pen.

Number boxes sequentially from 1 – avoid using alphabetical suffixes, e.g. box 2A, 2B. This is confusing as it's not clear to us if you had a box 2 or if there should be a box 2C. It also makes it difficult to determine the total count of boxes in a transfer.

## **Oversized material**

Oversized material that doesn't fit into an archival type 1 box are typically large bound volumes, maps, plans, motion picture films and other types of large format photographic material. [Contact](#) the Manager Preservation Services at QSA for help and advice on how best to pack and transport this material.

### ***What happens after transfer?***

#### **Cataloguing and inspecting records**

QSA staff arrange and describe (catalogue) the records in your transfer:

- If the records belong with a series already held at QSA, we add the accrual to the existing series and update our catalogue entries
- If it's a new series, we create new catalogue entries.

In either case, we use our own reference (catalogue) numbers to identify the material. From your point of view, this means we don't use the transfer number as the control number. If you want to request records on loan, it will be easier if you use our reference numbers.

When we have completed the cataloguing of the material, we'll send you a transfer record listing all items by their QSA reference number and including the RAP for each item.

For accruals, the transfer record does not include material received in previous consignments. If you want a complete list of items in the record series, please [contact](#) us. We prefer to email you the series list as an Excel spreadsheet, but you can request a hardcopy instead. As some series comprise well over 10,000 items and over 500 A4 pages, we may charge a fee for provision of a hardcopy list.

QSA also inspects the condition of the records, noting any requirements for conservation work.

## **Requesting records from QSA**

### ***On short-term loan***

You can request a short-term loan of your agency's records through QSA's File Issue service. To do this, you'll need the QSA reference number. You may use the transfer number, but it can take some time to identify and locate the items you requested.

If the records are still within a restricted access period, you will need to ensure the borrower has authorisation to access the material. The Chief Executive Officer of your agency has this authority and usually delegates it to other staff. [Contact](#) us if you're not sure who has this delegation in your agency.

You cannot request the records of other public authorities through File Issue. You may only request records for which your agency is the responsible public authority.

### ***Permanent return to agency***

Requests to return archival public records permanently to an agency must be forwarded in writing to the State Archivist and clearly explain the basis for your request.

### ***Accessing records at QSA***

You may access records at QSA simply by visiting the Public Search Room during opening hours. Tables have been set aside exclusively for agency use.

If the records are still within a restricted access period, you will need to ensure you or the agency officer has authorisation to access the material. You will also need to obtain a Reader's Ticket to allow you to request retrieval of material through the Public Search Room. The application form is available from our [website](#) or can be filled in at the Reception Desk on arrival.

If you want to access a large volume of material, you can book the Agency Room, located within the Public Search Room. The Agency Room has a lockable door, large tables, chairs, bench space and a photocopier. You will need to bring your own paper.

You can arrange to book the Agency Room for one or more days, depending on your needs. [Contact](#) us to make a booking.

Retrieval of records is "on demand" and typically takes 10-15 minutes. For large volumes of material, please [contact](#) us to arrange retrieval prior to your visit.

A Reader's Lounge with kitchenette, microwave and coffee/tea facilities is available for your use.

Parking is available on-site at no charge.

## Contacts

### **QSA – general contact details**

☎ Phone (07) 3131 7777 or government extension 31777

☎ Fax (07) 3131 7764

Email [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au)

Website <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au>

Post PO Box 1397, Sunnybank Hills, 4109

### **QSA – contact for transfers and agency delegations (access, restrictions)**

☎ Phone (07) 3131 7758 or government extension 31758

Email [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au) with “Transfer” or “Access delegation” in the subject line

### **QSA – contact for appraisal and disposal information**

☎ Phone (07) 3131 7705 or government extension 31705

Email [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au) with “Appraisal” or “Disposal” in the subject line

### **QSA – to book Agency Room**

☎ Phone (07) 3131 7757 or government extension 31757

Email [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au) with “Book agency room” in the subject line

### **QSA – File Issue Service**

☎ Phone (07) 3131 7725 or government extension 31725

☎ Fax (07) 3131 7765

Email [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au) with “File issue” in the subject line

### **QSA – about non-standard boxes & conservation advice generally**

☎ Phone (07) 3131 7704 or government extension 31704

☎ Fax (07) 3131 7764

Email [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au) with “Conservation” in the subject line

### **Suppliers of archival boxes & containers**

SDS [www.sdsonline.qld.gov.au](http://www.sdsonline.qld.gov.au) or 1 800 801 123 local call (07) 3883 8700

Albox <http://www.albox.com.au/> or 1300 555 717 or email [albox@albox.com.au](mailto:albox@albox.com.au)

## **Guidelines, generic disposal schedules, forms and templates**

### **Guidelines**

Guidelines on disposal and transfer of public records

[How to set restricted access periods for public records](#)

[Appraisal](#)

### **Generic disposal schedules**

- [General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records \(GDRS – Administrative\)](#)

### **Sector-wide schedules**

- [Energy Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule](#)
- [Local Government Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule](#)
- [General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Technical and Further Education Institutes.](#)
- [Office of a Minister of the Crown & Parliamentary Secretaries Retention and Disposal Schedule](#)
- [University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule](#)

### **Forms and templates**

#### **Disposal schedules**

[Retention and disposal schedule template](#)

#### **Transfers**

[Transfer proposal form](#)

[Item list template](#)

[Restricted Access notice – accruals](#)

[Restricted Access notice – series](#)

[Restricted Access notice – change request](#)

## Checklist – how to transfer records to QSA


 <b>Queensland Government</b> <b>Queensland State Archives</b>	
Done?	Task
<b>Transfer request</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Records have been sentenced as permanent against a current retention and disposal schedule authorised by the State Archivist.
	If not → <a href="#">Contact</a> Agency Services to discuss appraisal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fill in <i>Transfer Proposal Form</i> and send to QSA by email, fax or post.
<b>For approved transfers</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Download <i>Item List Template</i> from QSA website or ask QSA to email it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer date scheduled for: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	List records. Complete all mandatory fields.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box records or prepare oversized material for shipment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Label boxes. Use permanent black marker. Include: transfer number, file range, date range, box number <i>as shown</i> in the photo on page 6.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Add box numbers to item list.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check item list for accuracy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare RAP notice or confirm existing RAP.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify exceptions to series RAP in item list.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email item list to QSA <b>10 working days before</b> scheduled transfer date.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Return completed RAP form to QSA <b>10 working days before</b> scheduled transfer date.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm transfer date and arrangements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ship records.
<input type="checkbox"/>	File QSA transfer record (with item list) and ensure QSA reference numbers for the records are captured in recordkeeping system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional: request series list in Excel spreadsheet format.

Figure 2 Transfers checklist

## Item types

<i>Item type</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Use for</i>
Architectural plan/drawing	ARC	Architectural plans or drawings.
Artwork	ART	<i>Artworks of any type.</i>
A/V Records	A/V	Audio tapes, sound recordings on any carrier. Video tapes and moving image recordings on DVD, CD. Do NOT use for motion picture film.
Aerial images	AER	Aerial photographs, positive or negative.
Cards	CAR	Textual records on cardstock (usually pre-printed), e.g. company registration cards.
Computer files	COM	Digital records held in a storage device, e.g. tapes, disks, DVD, CD.
Files	FIL	Textual records bound together to form a file.
Film	FLM	Motion picture film.
Maps	MAP	Maps of any type.
Microfiche	FCH	Microfiche.
Microfilm – Duplicate	MIC	Copies of master microfilm.
Microfilm – Duplicate security copy	MSC	Security copy of master microfilm not intended for public access.
Microfilm - Master	MMF	Master microfilm.
Negatives	NEG	Photographic negatives of any type. Do NOT use for motion picture negatives.
Objects	OBJ	Three-dimensional artefacts.
Papers	PAS	Textual records not bound in a file or volume.
Photographs	PHO	Photographic positives of any type. Do NOT use for motion picture positives.
Technical plan/drawing	TEC	Technical plans or drawings, e.g. schematic of a locomotive. Do NOT use for architectural plans or drawings.
Volumes	VOL	Textual records in bound volumes of any type.

**Figure 3 Item types explained**

## Date Qualifiers

<i>Qualifier</i>		<i>Definition</i>
=	=	<i>Exact date is known: day, month and year</i>
<i>Circa month</i>	<i>CM</i>	<i>Year is known; month is attributed; day is not known → enter 01/MM/YYYY</i>
<i>Circa year</i>	<i>CY</i>	<i>Attributed year; day and month unknown → enter 01/01/YYYY</i>
<i>Circa decade</i>	<i>CD</i>	<i>Attributed decade; day and month unknown → enter 01/01/YYYY</i>
<i>By</i>	<i>By</i>	<i>Terminal date, i.e. records created before the specified date</i>
<i>ND</i>	<i>ND</i>	<i>No date or date unknown and cannot be attributed</i>

**Figure 4 Date qualifiers explained**

## Glossary

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accrual	An addition to a series already held by QSA.
Appraisal	The process of evaluating business activities and records to determine which records need to be captured and how long those records need to be kept to meet business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.
Disposal action	A description of the minimum retention period for the records and the event from which the retention period starts. For example, retain for 7 years after last action.
File issue	Term used by QSA to refer to our service of issuing records back to the responsible public authority on short-term loan for routine business needs, such as administering Right to Information.
Provenance	The source of the records, i.e. the agency that created the records; also the chain of custody and ownership of the records.
QSA reference number	The control number used by QSA to identify items. A composite number formed from the series ID number + consignment number + item number within each consignment.
Responsible public authority	Identifies the contemporary public authority responsible for archival public records. This can be difficult to determine, but is mainly tracked through a functional analysis of the record series. See s15 of the Public Records Act 2002.
Restricted access period	A restricted access period is also called a "closure period". It identifies the length of time records are closed to public access. See ss16 and 18(4)-(5) of the <i>Public Records Act 2002</i> .
Sentencing	The process of identifying the disposal class a record belongs to and applying the disposal action specified in the relevant disposal authority to the record.
Series	Records or archives from the same source (provenance) and that belong together because: they are part of a discernable filing system (alphabetical, numerical, chronological or a combination of these) they have been kept together because they result from the same activity they are of similar formats and relate to a particular function. A series may consist of only 1 item.
Transfer	The process of changing the physical custody of the records from the public authority to QSA.
Type 1 box	A box of standard dimensions used by Australian archival institutions: 175mmW x 400mmD x 255mmH.