

# **Microfilming Disposal Policy**

**Policy on the authorisation of the early  
disposal of original paper records after  
microfilming**

**November 2006**

## Contents

1: Policy Background.....	1
1.1 Authority .....	1
1.2 Scope .....	1
1.3 Definitions.....	1
2: Policy Principles .....	3
2.1 Authorisation is given to specific public authorities.....	3
2.2 Records eligible for authorisation .....	4
2.3 Ensuring appropriate standards.....	4
3: Contact Details .....	6
Appendix 1 .....	7

## 1: Policy Background

Quality microfilm is a stable and trusted medium for the long-term preservation of public records.<sup>1</sup> It is also space efficient, as more than 1000 pages may be captured on a single roll of film.

Given the reliability of microfilm, public authorities may apply for authorisation to dispose of the original records after microfilming to save on storage and management costs associated with maintaining the originals. This policy has been developed to ensure that such early disposal is carried out in an authorised and accountable manner.

Queensland State Archives' *Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records* supports this policy by providing information on acceptable microfilming practice.

### 1.1 Authority

The State Archivist has issued this policy in accordance with s.25 of the *Public Records Act 2002* (the Act). Queensland State Archives is responsible for the provision of advisory and support services relating to a wide range of strategic information management issues for public authorities. This policy forms part of a wider framework that aims to ensure best practice recordkeeping and information management occurs in Queensland public authorities.

The State Archivist, under s.26 of the Act, is responsible for authorising the disposal of public records. This policy sets out the requirements for obtaining disposal authorisation when original paper records have been microfilmed.

Under the Act, the Chief Executive Officer of a public authority is responsible for ensuring that the authority makes and keeps full and accurate records of its activities, and has regard to relevant policy, standards and guidelines issued by the State Archivist.

### 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all Queensland public authorities as defined in schedule 2 of the Act, that microfilm, or wish to microfilm, paper records. It applies to both traditional microfilming, where the image is taken directly from the paper original, and computer-output microfilm, where the microfilm is generated from a digitised image.

This policy applies to any public records that are held by an authority, or that are kept temporarily by private or Commonwealth agencies under contractual agreements with a Queensland public authority.

### 1.3 Definitions

Key terms used in this discussion paper are defined below. These and other records management terms are defined in Queensland State Archives' [Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms](#).

**Disposal:** the final decision concerning the fate of records. Disposal includes:

---

<sup>1</sup> Quality microfilm must be produced on polyester based film stock. Microfilm produced to lower standards can degrade rapidly, compromising the film's integrity.

- a) keeping all or part of a record;
- b) destroying or damaging, including deleting, a record, or part of it; and
- c) abandoning, transferring, donating, giving away or selling a record or part of a record.

**Early destruction** refers to the practice of destroying original paper records after microfilming and before the authorised retention period for that class of records has expired.

## 2: Policy Principles

The State Archivist will base any decision to authorise the early destruction of original paper records after microfilming on the following principles:

- Principle 1: Separate authorisation is required for each public authority (section 2.1 of this document);
- Principle 2: Authorisation can be sought for the early destruction of temporary public records (section 2.2 of this document); and
- Principle 3: Public authorities are responsible for certifying that microfilming is done in accordance with approved standards (section 2.3 of this document).

### 2.1 Authorisation is given to specific public authorities

**Principle 1: Authorisation will be granted to individual public authorities rather than through General Retention and Disposal Schedules.**

Any public authority wishing to destroy original paper records after microfilming will require approval from the State Archivist. No global or general authorisation will be given in order to ensure that public authorities are aware of their responsibilities and have developed appropriate processes before original paper records are destroyed.

- For records unique to the public authority, authorisation will be given through amendments to the organisation's core Retention and Disposal Schedule.
- For common administrative records covered by the *General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records* (GRDS), authorisation to destroy these records will be given through an appendix to the public authority's authorised Retention and Disposal Schedule, showing which record classes in the GRDS the public authority may destroy after microfilming.
- Where records of the public authority are covered by sector-specific schedules, such as the *General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Queensland Universities* or the *General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records*, the public authority requesting authorisation will be issued with a Retention and Disposal Schedule showing which classes of records (in the sector schedule) may be destroyed after microfilming.

Some large and complex public authorities may wish to restrict the authorisation to a particular office or sub-agency. These limitations can be included within the authorisation.

To obtain authorisation, Chief Executives of public authorities should write to the State Archivist stating the Retention and Disposal Schedule (QDAN) number, version and class numbers of the records proposed for early destruction, accompanied by a declaration that Principle 3 of this policy has been met. The application forms are contained in Appendix 1 to this policy.

## 2.2 Records eligible for authorisation

**Principle 2: Records identified as being of temporary value in an approved Retention and Disposal schedule are eligible for authorisation.**

Records of temporary retention value are eligible for authorisation for early destruction after microfilming. In general, approval will not be given for the destruction of original records that have permanent value, due to community attitudes regarding the intrinsic value of original formats. Permanent records may be transferred to Queensland State Archives.

Public authorities, when considering whether to microfilm records, and whether to seek authorisation for the destruction of originals, should also consider whether there is any legislative or business need for the original format. For example, the *Financial Management Standard 1997* requires financial information to be kept in its original form for one year after the date of the audit report for the financial year. As an example of a business need, users may find paper maps and plans easier to refer to than microfilm images. However, in these situations microfilm can still be valuable in providing a safe, secure preservation copy for disaster planning purposes.

## 2.3 Ensuring appropriate standards are met

**Principle 3: Public authorities are responsible for ensuring that microfilming is done in accordance with guidelines issued by Queensland State Archives.**

Queensland State Archives has issued the *Guideline for the Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records*. Public authorities must ensure that any microfilming is done in accordance with the requirements for microfilming temporary records outlined in these guidelines, including:

- Film base
- Reduction ratios
- Resolution
- Density levels
- Inclusion of appropriate technical and informational targets
- Inclusion of appropriate leaders and trailers
- Inclusion of statutory declarations
- Inclusion of bibliographic targets
- Inclusion of legibility information
- Inclusion of copyright information (if relevant)
- Correct exposure and processing.

In addition, the master roll of microfilm should not be spliced. If retakes are necessary, they should be done on a separate roll and spliced into the duplicate copy.

Public authorities are also responsible for ensuring that appropriate quality tests are conducted to ensure these requirements are met before originals are destroyed. In seeking authorisation for early disposal, Chief Executives of public authorities are asked to sign a declaration that these conditions are met. Forms for this purpose are provided in Appendix 1.

### **Computer-Output Microfilm**

In addition to these requirements, if the microfilm is being generated from a digital image, public authorities must also ensure that the intermediate digital image is an accurate reproduction of the paper original. The public authority must develop and implement:

- Digitisation procedures, covering what records are selected for digitisation, how the digitisation process will be managed, including staff responsibilities, and the capture and management of images between digitisation and the creation of the microfilm.
- Technical specifications for reproduction, including approved image formats, compression algorithms, resolution and bit depth (colour depth), and the use of any image processing procedures, such as deskewing or despeckling.<sup>2</sup>
- Quality assurance procedures. These should include the timing of equipment tests and equipment calibration, and also procedures for checking output, such as what proportion of records will be subject to visual inspection. It is also important to include procedures for re-imaging if quality standards are not met.<sup>3</sup>

For more information on these requirements, please see *Guideline for the Digitisation of Paper Records*, in particular section 2.3, which is available on Queensland State Archives' website at [www.archives.qld.gov.au](http://www.archives.qld.gov.au).

Chief Executives of public authorities seeking authorisation are asked to sign a declaration that conditions relating to the creation of the image, as well as the quality of the microfilm, are met (see Form 2 in Appendix 1).

---

<sup>2</sup> Deskewing and despeckling are techniques used to straighten and remove spots from scanned images but must be used with caution.

<sup>3</sup> These conditions are substantially similar to those identified in Queensland State Archives' *Digitisation Disposal Policy*. However, as microfilm is also being produced, the requirements relate mainly to ensuring accuracy of reproduction rather than managing the image as a record over time.

### 3: Contact Details

Comments and queries about this policy may be addressed to:

Manager  
Agency Services Unit  
Queensland State Archives

Phone: (07) 3131 7777  
Fax: (07) 3131 7764  
Email: [info@archives.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@archives.qld.gov.au)

Address: 435 Compton Road Runcorn Qld 4113  
Mailing Address: PO Box 1397 Sunnybank Hills Qld 4109

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

## Appendix 1: Application forms

This Appendix contains two forms. The appropriate form is to be completed and signed by the Chief Executive Officer of a public authority when seeking authorisation for the early destruction of public records after microfilming. These forms certify that the necessary technical requirements have been met.

The technical requirements listed in the forms are explained in Queensland State Archives' *Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records*, available at [www.archives.qld.gov.au](http://www.archives.qld.gov.au).

**Form 1: Declaration of compliance** is to be completed when using traditional microfilm technology.

**Form 2: Declaration of compliance – Computer-Output Microfilm** is to be completed when using computer-output microfilm.

# Form 1

## Declaration of compliance

*This form must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the public authority.*

### Record classes proposed for early destruction

I request authorisation to destroy the following classes of public records after microfilming:

QDAN	Version & date approved	Record class

### Compliance criteria

I certify that the microfilming systems and processes used to capture the public records proposed for early destruction are compliant with the following conditions:

1. The film is silver halide on a polyester base;
2. The reduction ratio is not higher than 26x or lower than 8x;
3. The resolution requirements for temporary records in *Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records* have been met;
4. Appropriate density levels have been used for the type of records being filmed, in accordance with the *Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records*; and
5. That the master film will not be spliced
6. That the contents of the film contains:
  - sufficient camera threading leader and trailer
  - residual thiosulfate ion test area;
  - resolution test targets;
  - information targets including start and end of roll target, roll number, microfilm camera manufacturer and model type, date of filming, filmed by, filmed for and reduction ratio (if not on resolution test target);
  - statutory declaration;
  - copyright information (if relevant);
  - legibility information, and
  - bibliographic target including name of agency that produces the records, descriptive title of records being filmed, inclusive dates of records being filmed, file or volume numbers filmed, documentation of irregularities, statement regarding blank or missing pages.

I further certify that the film will be processed in accordance with MP25:2002 and that quality checking procedures have been established and documented.

I understand that my agency may be required to supply Queensland State Archives with documentation to support these claims.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chief Executive Officer)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Position title \_\_\_\_\_ Public authority \_\_\_\_\_

Contact officer/Senior delegate name \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number/email \_\_\_\_\_

## Form 2

### Declaration of compliance– computer-output microfilm

*This form must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the public authority.*

#### Record classes proposed for early destruction

I request authorisation to destroy the following classes of public records after microfilming:

QDAN	Version & date approved	Record class

#### Compliance criteria

- I certify that the microfilming systems and processes used to capture the public records proposed for early destruction are compliant with the following conditions:
1. The film is silver halide on a polyester base;
  2. The reduction ratio is not higher than 26x or lower than 8x;
  3. The resolution requirements for temporary records in *Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records* have been met;
  4. Appropriate density levels have been used for the type of records being filmed, in accordance with the *Guideline for Best Practice Microfilming of Public Records*; and
  5. That the master film will not be spliced
  6. That the contents of the film contains:
    - sufficient camera threading leader and trailer
    - residual thiosulfate ion test area;
    - resolution test targets;
    - information targets including start and end of roll target, roll number, microfilm camera manufacturer and model type, date of filming, filmed by, filmed for and reduction ratio (if not on resolution test target);
    - statutory declaration;
    - copyright information (if relevant);
    - legibility information, and
    - bibliographic target including name of agency that produces the records, descriptive title of records being filmed, inclusive dates of records being filmed, file or volume numbers filmed, documentation of irregularities, statement regarding blank pages.
- I further certify that the film will be processed in accordance with MP25:2002 and that quality checking procedures have been established and documented.
- I further certify that the scanning/imaging systems and processes used to capture images of the public records described above, from which the microfilm is generated, are compliant with the following conditions:
- That policies and procedures have been developed and implemented covering:
    - roles and responsibilities for the selection, digitisation and management of digitised records and secure and documented destruction of originals
    - technical specifications for digitisation
    - quality assurance procedures

I understand that my agency may be required to supply Queensland State Archives with documentation to support these claims.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chief Executive Officer)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Position title \_\_\_\_\_ Public authority \_\_\_\_\_

Contact officer/Senior delegate name \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number/email \_\_\_\_\_