

Public Records Brief

A RECORDKEEPING UPDATE FOR QUEENSLAND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES – FIRST ISSUED MAY 2005
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Who is Responsible for Public Records?

All public authority employees have some responsibilities for making, keeping and managing the public records that they receive or create.

What is the definition of a public record?

A public record is any form of recorded information, both received and created, that provides evidence of the decisions and actions of a public authority while undertaking its business activities.

The *Public Records Act 2002* covers all public records irrespective of the technology or medium used to generate, capture, manage, preserve and access those records.

Responsibilities of public authority employees

- Create full and accurate records to document the transactions that occur in the course of their business
- ensure that all public records created or received are captured into the appropriate records management system
- secure records from unauthorised access
- not dispose of any public record except in accordance with an authorised retention and disposal authority, and
- comply with relevant legislation and information standards.

Public authority employees include casual and temporary staff, contractors and consultants engaged to carry out specific functions or tasks and any other person who creates public records in the course of a public authority's business.

Responsibilities of a CEO

- Account for recordkeeping and recordkeeping systems to Ministers, Parliament and others as required
- ensure that recordkeeping requirements are included in all business processes undertaken by the public authority
- provide appropriate resources to maintain recordkeeping systems and processes
- take all reasonable steps to implement recommendations made by the State Archivist, and
- actively promote and support a positive recordkeeping culture.

Responsibilities of a Manager

- All staff are aware of the organisation's policy and procedures regarding recordkeeping and managing information
- recordkeeping responsibilities are assigned
- recordkeeping systems underpin and support business processes
- recordkeeping is fully supported in the organisation, and
- there is no unauthorised disposal of records.

Responsibilities of Authority Recordkeeping Personnel

- Develop and implement recordkeeping systems
- identify recordkeeping requirements in consultation with business units
- provide training and education in relation to recordkeeping requirements to agency personnel
- develop strategies, policies and procedures to ensure that all records are managed effectively
- manage retention and disposal of public records in accordance with retention and disposal authorities approved or issued by Queensland State Archives
- identify and manage vital records, and
- establish disaster preparedness and recovery procedures for all records (including electronic records).

Public Authority responsibilities

Authorities are required to be accountable for the management of records and to be compliant with the *Public Records Act 2002* and *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* (IS40). The trend towards dependence on electronic communication means that additional recordkeeping strategies have to be developed to accommodate the new technologies and maintain compliance with requirements.

Queensland State Archives recommends that public authorities develop a Strategic Recordkeeping Implementation Plan (SRIP) to ensure their compliance with IS40. Once a SRIP has been developed and endorsed by the authority's Chief Executive Officer, an Operational Recordkeeping Implementation Plan should be developed to translate the strategies identified in the SRIP into practice. Queensland State Archives provides templates and tools to assist public authorities in the development of these plans, and to monitor compliance with IS40.

Queensland State Archives' responsibilities

- Issue standards regulating the creation, management, disposal, storage and preservation of government records
- conduct research and provide advice to public authorities about making, managing and preserving public records
- issue policies and guidelines to achieve compliance with the legislative and policy frameworks for best practice records management
- issue disposal authorities and schedules, and
- provide facilities and services for storing, preserving and accessing archival records.