

Records Management Policy

April 2015

Purpose

The purpose of the Records Management Policy is to ensure that comprehensive and accurate records of all activities and decisions of Department of Health & Human Services' staff are created, managed and kept in accordance with relevant legislation.

Policy

The Department of Health & Human Services develops and delivers policies, programs and services that support and enhance the wellbeing of all Victorians. This requires recordkeeping practices and systems which ensure the creation, maintenance and protection of accurate and reliable records.

Creating, retaining and referring to records improves operational efficiency and effectiveness, and reduces risks associated with an inability to produce evidence of departmental activities.

Records are an important information asset of the Department of Health & Human Services and will be managed from point of creation to their eventual destruction or transfer to the State Archives.

All information received or created in the course of work activity must be kept as a record:

- A. where there is a requirement for **ACCOUNTABILITY**
- B. when a **BUSINESS ACTIVITY** or transaction has occurred
- C. where there has been formal **COMMUNICATION** with the public or other agencies
- D. to provide evidence of **DECISIONS** made or action taken
- E. where there is a reasonable **EXPECTATION** that a record should be kept.

Records underpin departmental transparency and accountability by providing proof of business practices, communications, decisions and actions.

The Department of Health & Human Services owns all records created, and received, by employees, contractors and consultants working on behalf of the department. The department also has ownership of records created by organisations in the delivery of services funded by the department. A number of fact sheets have been developed for the community services sector that provide information on Records Management as it applies to those organisations.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All departmental staff including contractors and volunteers.
- All records of departmental business activities and functions performed across Victoria.
- Records in all media and formats (e.g. hardcopy and electronic documents, emails, databases, web-based records, maps, plans and photographs).
- Records in all business systems.

All of the department's policies, standards, practices, systems, and procedures affecting recordkeeping are to be consistent with this policy.

Responsibilities

Records Management responsibilities for Victorian Government agencies are detailed in the Records Management Standards and Specifications issued by the Public Record Office Victoria under the *Public Records Act 1973*.

Secretary Responsibility

The Secretary has ultimate responsibility for the management of the department's records and for ensuring the department complies with legislative requirements for recordkeeping, including the *Public Records Act 1973* and standards issued under the Act.

The Secretary is also accountable for the disposal of public records and must ensure that any disposal is conducted in accordance with the Act.

Deputy Secretaries' Responsibilities

The Department of Health & Human Services' executive is responsible for ensuring the 'responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities' for records management are 'assigned, documented, communicated and assessed on an annual basis'¹.

Deputy Secretaries must:

- Ensure that Records Management is a discrete business function strategically linked to other corporate services including Information Management, Risk Management, Freedom of Information, Legal and Information Technology.
- Assign Senior Officers with the responsibility for recordkeeping operations and ensuring department compliance.
- Ensure 'specialists, with the appropriate skills and competence, have been assigned responsibility for the provision of expert records management advice, tools, procedures, standards, guidelines, delivery of compliance assessments and services consistent with PROV standards'.
- Ensure the department assesses its 'internal business unit compliance with its records management policies, standards, procedures, training and systems at least every two years'.
- Ensure the department's 'records management programme is independently audited at least every five years' and take corrective action to 'address deficiencies where necessary'.

Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services

The Secretary has assigned department-wide and strategic responsibility for Records Management to the Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services who must ensure:

- Records management responsibilities are 'a specific part of conditions in the appointment' of all staff 'including contractors, consultants, and volunteers'.
- A 'programme for documenting all staff's understanding and acceptance of their assigned recordkeeping responsibilities' is developed and implemented.
- Specialist staff 'with the appropriate skills and competence' are assigned responsibilities for implementing and supporting the records management strategy.
- Records management requirements are identified in information, knowledge management and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies.

Executive Officers' Responsibilities

Executive Officers have responsibility for ensuring that all employees (ongoing, fixed term, casual and contractors) comply with legislative requirements for recordkeeping.

Executive Officers must also ensure:

¹ PROS 10/10 Strategic Management Specification 1, Public Record Office Victoria, 19 July 2010.

- Records management policy is integrated with other relevant departmental policies. These policies include but are not limited to: 'FOI, Privacy, Information & Communication Technology, Risk Management, Incident Reporting, Business Continuity, Human Resources, Contract Management and Procurement'.
- Records management requirements are identified in the department's 'management systems and strategies including security, risk, occupational health & safety and environmental management'.
- 'Records management requirements are identified and integrated into key interagency, intra-agency and cross jurisdictional strategic projects, programmes and systems which have been assessed as having recordkeeping implications'.
- The 'appropriate resources (funds, skilled staff, infrastructure, systems and any other resources)' are made available to 'implement, maintain and improve the records management strategy and action audit requirements'.

Managers' Responsibilities

People Managers at all levels are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their staff meet their recordkeeping responsibilities (including when staff leave or change roles).
- Ensuring that their staff have appropriate training in Records Management Policy and the business procedures and systems used to support it.
- Ensuring quality assurance processes are applied to recordkeeping practices in their business units.
- Monitoring staff compliance with the policy as part of regular performance assessment.
- Ensuring that appropriate resources exist within their business units for fulfilling records management responsibilities.
- Fostering and supporting a culture that promotes good records management practices.

Program managers have ownership and responsibility for the records of the business function they administer. They are responsible for authorising the destruction of records proposed for lawful disposal by Records Management staff including legacy records of the function.

Staff Responsibilities

All members of staff, including contractors and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Creating complete and accurate records of their work as soon as possible after the activity or decision (for example, making file notes of telephone calls and keeping official meeting minutes).
- Complying with the Records Management Policy, procedures and standards (for example, hardcopy records must be placed on official files registered in TRIM).

Records Management Responsibility

The Records Management function has department wide responsibility for the management of records in all formats (including electronic records and records within business systems) from creation to disposal.

The Manager, Records Management is responsible for:

- Strategic planning and continuous improvement of the Records Management function.
- Developing and maintaining recordkeeping policies, standards and procedures including the annual review of the Records Management Policy.
- Providing training, advice and guidance on recordkeeping requirements to all staff.
- Monitoring and reporting on compliance with Records Management Policy and PROV standards and taking action to ensure improvements in business practice.
- Creating and maintaining Retention & Disposal Authorities to ensure that record disposal is authorised and lawful.
- Business ownership of the corporate recordkeeping system TRIM.
- Archival management and storage of inactive records.

Recordkeeping

Creation & Capture

The Department of Health & Human Services currently manages records in a predominately hardcopy environment and records must be placed on official files which are registered in the corporate recordkeeping system TRIM.

Electronic records may only be kept in authorised business systems such as: TRIM, CRIS, eMinisterials, HiiP, Oracle Financials and SAMS.

Records must not be kept in personal or local drives, or on media such as CDs and portable storage devices. Lotus Notes is not an authorised recordkeeping system; email records must be printed and placed on official files.

Security

Records must only be retrieved and used for authorised purposes in accordance with relevant legislation and access policies. Records must be kept secure from unauthorised access, unauthorised release, alteration and unlawful destruction.

Access

Records must be available to authorised staff for business purposes. Access to records must be open, unless there is a justifiable reason to restrict or close the access.

Storage

Hardcopy records must be stored in designated records storage areas which are compliant with PROV standards. Records which are no longer in use must be transferred to local Records Management units for archiving with Approved Public Record Office Storage Suppliers (APROSS).

Electronic records must be kept in authorised systems that ensure the preservation and accessibility of the records for the duration of their retention periods.

Transfer

The location of every record must be updated when records are transferred between staff and locations. This enables the department to account for the records as business assets.

Retention & Disposal

Records must be retained for the periods prescribed in PROV endorsed Retention & Disposal Authorities. Records may only be disposed of by authorised Records Management staff in accordance with legislative requirements.

Legislation & Standards

The department recognises its legislative and regulatory requirements as a Victorian Government agency, and is committed to the principles and practices prescribed by the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) as well as those set out in the [Australian Standard for Records Management](#) (AS ISO 15489).

Statute, case law and regulations govern our business environment and are relevant particularly to the obligation to retain documents, store them appropriately and not to disclose their contents to third parties without authority.

These include, but are not limited to the: [Public Records Act 1973](#), [Public Administration Act 2004](#), [Evidence Act 2008](#), [Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014](#), [Crimes Act 1958](#), [Health Records Act 2001](#), and [Crimes \(Document Destruction\) Act 2006](#).

The obligations for public sector employees regarding the production of documentation arise from legislation such as the: [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#), [Parliamentary Committees Act 2003](#), [Constitution Act 1975](#) and [Audit Act 1994](#).

All records management standards, procedures and systems must be compliant with the legislation and standards which affect recordkeeping.

Authorisation

This policy has been approved by the Secretary, Department of Health & Human Services.

Compliance

The Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees requires that government policy is implemented in an open and transparent manner. This includes maintaining accurate and reliable records as required by relevant legislation, policies and procedures. It also includes keeping these records in such a way as to ensure their security and reliability and making them available to appropriate scrutiny as required.

Monitor & review

The Manager, Records Management is responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

Communication

The Records Management Policy is available for all staff, including contractors and volunteers, on the Human Services and Health hubs and is included in the department's induction program. The policy will be promulgated through activities defined in the Records Management Stakeholder Engagement & Communications Strategy.

Resources

Records Management resources including fact sheets, guidelines and training information are published on the [Human Services Hub](#) and the [Health Hub](#).

Contact the Records Service Centre on 9096 8999 for queries regarding this policy.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 9096 8999, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email Records Service Centre/DHS.