



It is your business!

Records management is good
business and your business

» You should know

- what records should be made to document your agency's business and meet appropriate legislative requirements
- where records are located and how to access them
- how long the records should be kept.

» Consequences

If records are not available when required to support your agency's business, will it mean:

- disadvantaging clients?
- public and media criticism?
- public embarrassment and loss of reputation for your agency and the government?
- extra costs because you can't find documentation?
- legal action that can't be properly prosecuted or defended?

» Likelihood

The probability of records not being available when required is increased if:

- staff or business systems fail to make records in the first place
- records are inadequate to meet accountability and efficiency requirements
- agencies fail to maintain records for as long as they are needed
- records cannot be found
- records have been inadvertently destroyed.



» Level of risk

The more important and higher the risk associated with an action or decision, the more controls are needed in creating and managing records.

» Records Management Roles

National Archives of Australia

The National Archives:

- authorises the retention and destruction of Commonwealth records
- develops records management policies and standards for the Commonwealth
- provides records management training, advice and guidance
- stores and protects the 'national archives'.

Australian Government Agencies

Every agency:

- creates and maintains records of their business, supported by appropriate policies and procedures
- establishes clear lines of responsibility for records management
- develops agency records management systems for the creation, capture and management of records
- ensures that agency staff are trained to carry out their records management responsibilities
- provides adequate resources for records management activities.



» The Audit Office

The Australian National Audit Office assesses agency records management practices when undertaking audit activities.

CHECK-UP

A graphic illustration featuring a white stethoscope with a red chest piece, positioned over a white traffic light icon with red and white checkered patterns. The stethoscope's tubing loops around the traffic light.

*A tool for assessing your agency's information
and records management*

Check-up is an interactive tool for agencies to use in assessing:

- if they meet the minimum requirements for basic records management
- if they meet the higher standards required for records of important and high-risk business functions
- how they can improve their business information and records management.

Check-up can be used to prepare a 'traffic-light' report highlighting an agency's risk areas. *Check-up* will help to identify and develop tailored records management solutions to mitigate business risks.



» To get *Check-up*

Download from the National Archives website at naa.gov.au
or email your request to recordkeeping@naa.gov.au.

» Other National Archives products that can help

The National Archives acknowledges that Australian Government agencies face challenges in managing their business information.

In addition to *Check-up*, the National Archives has developed a range of tools to help agencies.

A good place to start is:

- *Keep the Knowledge – Make a Record!* training package
- *Why Records Are Kept*
- *Making, Keeping and Using Digital Records*

Other policies, standards and implementation tools can be found on the website (naa.gov.au) and include:

- *Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA)*
- New archives advice on Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)
- *Functional Specifications for Electronic Records Management Systems Software* and guidelines for their implementation
- *Australian Government Email Metadata Standard*
- *Overview of Classification Tools for Records Management*
- *Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records.*

» Further information and help

To find out more about how good records management can help your agency:

- seek advice from your agency's records manager
- refer to records management publications on the National Archives website at naa.gov.au
- contact the National Archives Agency Service Centre for records management advice. Email recordkeeping@naa.gov.au or telephone (02) 6212 3610.

» Does this sound familiar?

- Couldn't find that crucial email, report or letter in time?
- Someone deleted that important email?
- Been unable to identify the most recent version of a document?
- Unsure about what happened in the past?



'A key element of sound public administration and accountability is the adequate recording of the business of government. As such, recordkeeping is a fundamental function of all Australian Government entities.'

Australian National Audit Office audit report no. 6, 2006–07.

» Good records management is good business

Records provide information of actions performed and decisions taken. Creating and managing records helps your agency to do business and to manage the risks associated with this business. Without adequate records your agency may have difficulty explaining its actions and decisions.

Every public servant is responsible for documenting their work. Systems used to save records must also manage and protect records and ensure they are accessible for as long as required by the government.

While records are easily recognisable in paper formats – letters, minutes, reports and spreadsheets – most records are now created electronically. Electronic documents, email, web pages, text messages and a variety of other electronic formats are all records and need to be accessible for as long as they are required.

Records need to be managed according to the level of importance and risk attached to the business that they document.



Australian Government



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