

OUTPUT 1.1

Enable and promote best practice in the management of government records from the point of creation for as long as required to support the needs of government and the people.

OVERVIEW

In order to enable best practice in the management of government records the Archives provides a range of standards, training and advice on the creation, management, preservation and disposal of records. Government agencies are partners in the implementation of good recordkeeping in order to support community and government needs.

When records are classified to be retained as national archives they are kept and preserved in the specialised storage facilities of the Archives. In 2002–03 the Archives again applied a proportion of the depreciation funds in its budget allocation to extending the useful life of the collection. This funding enabled the Archives to continue its significant program of preserving records considered to be in critical condition and to develop long term sustainable methods of preserving digital records.

OUTPUT 1.1.1 – Recordkeeping standards, policies and guidelines

Quality: Needs of stakeholders for standards, policies and guidelines met satisfactorily

Quantity: Number of new and revised standards

Recordkeeping survey

Government awareness of the Archives' recordkeeping standards was raised through a comprehensive survey of the state of recordkeeping in the Australian Government conducted by the Archives during the reporting period. The survey, which

was endorsed by the Auditor-General and the Public Service Commissioner, attracted responses from 100 agencies and 1 486 individual officers who create or use records in their daily work. The survey was completed in November 2002. The survey data indicated substantial awareness and use of the Archives' recordkeeping standards.

The survey showed that most agencies, approximately 70 per cent, rated the presentation and ease of use of the *DIRKS Manual* as 'very good' or 'good'. Approximately 35 per cent reported that they had explicitly implemented the *Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for Commonwealth Agencies*. Of these agencies, 75 per cent rated the overall usefulness of the standard as high. Approximately 70 per cent of agencies reported that they had implemented the *Commonwealth Implementation Manual: AGLS Metadata*, and 80 per cent of these rated the quality of the manual as 'good' or 'very good'. Fifty-four per cent of agencies reported that they managed their web-based records in accordance with Archives' guidelines, with around 80 per cent of these rating the guidelines as 'very good' or 'good'.

The survey provided the Archives with invaluable data on agency attitudes towards, and practices of, recordkeeping. In particular, survey data will be used to inform the Archives' planning and priorities for improvements and additions to the *e-permanence* suite of standards and guidelines. The agency survey revealed that records management staff in agencies are usually confined to managing records in paper formats, with little influence on the management of electronic records. The results suggest that the bulk of electronic information generated and received by government agencies is being created, managed and possibly disposed of without the benefit of the knowledge and expertise of trained records management staff.

State of the Service Report

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) tabled its annual State of the Service Report on the Australian Public Service on 31 October 2002. This year's report was significant, as 12 questions on recordkeeping were included in the questionnaire distributed to agencies. The questionnaire focused on the issues highlighted in the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report on recordkeeping.

The results of the survey indicate a growing level of awareness of the Archives' standards, policies and guidelines and the need to manage information and records strategically to meet business and accountability requirements. While many agencies are taking steps to improve performance, others, especially small agencies, are yet to initiate action on these matters.

ANAO recordkeeping audit

During the year the Archives again assisted the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) in conducting a recordkeeping audit of selected agencies. As with the 2001–02 audit, this year's audit used Archives' standards and guidelines as benchmarks. The 2002–03 recordkeeping audit had a broader scope than the previous audit, as it covered large and devolved organisations and examined issues such as outsourcing. The report of the 2002–03 recordkeeping audit is expected to be tabled in the spring session of Parliament.

The Archives responded to the findings of the ANAO's 2001–02 audit on recordkeeping and the APSC's 2002 State of the Service Report by publishing *Using e-permanence: Advice on Addressing ANAO and APS Commission Findings on Recordkeeping* on its website. This advice outlines the findings of the ANAO and APSC reports, and provides links between recommendations and specific Archives' *e-permanence* products and services, as well as relevant sections of the Australian Standard for Records Management, AS ISO 15489–2002 and other best practice guidelines.

Australian metadata standard

On 11 December 2002 the AGLS Metadata Standard was launched as Australian Standard AS 5044 by Ms Ann Steward of the National Office for the Information Economy and Mr Bala Balakrishnan of Standards Australia. The AGLS Metadata Standard is a set of 19 descriptive elements which government departments and agencies are encouraged to use to improve the visibility and accessibility of their services and information on the Internet. At the same time that AS 5044 was released by Standards Australia, the Archives released version 1.3 of the AGLS Metadata Element Set on its website. The adoption of AGLS as an Australian Standard will further promote its use throughout government, business and community sectors.

In support of the Australian Government's e-Government Strategy, the Archives issued the *Commonwealth Implementation Manual: AGLS Metadata* for use by the Australian Government in early 2000. In December 2002, the Archives issued a revised version of the manual (version 1.1), which reflects changes to the AGLS Standard and AS 5044.

Physical storage standard implementation guidelines

The Archives published *Storing to the Standard: Guidelines for Implementing the Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records* on its website in December 2002. These guidelines were

developed to assist Australian government agencies with the implementation of the Archives' *Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records*.

The standard and guidelines together provide agencies with a voluntary code of best practice for the storage of Commonwealth records. The guidelines can be used to assess existing storage facilities and services that are directly managed by agencies or outsourced to storage providers. They can also be used to guide the future design, upgrading, leasing or purchase of storage facilities and services by agencies and providers. They include a checklist to assess whether the facilities used by agencies satisfy the standard. Indicators (or criteria) are provided for each of the minimum standards.

Long-term maintenance of digital records

In conjunction with the development of its digital records preservation strategy and software tools, the Archives developed and published advice for Australian government agencies on the long-term maintenance of digital records. The purpose of this advice is to make agencies aware of their requirements and obligations for ensuring the long-term maintenance and accessibility of the digital records they create in the course of their business activities, and to furnish agencies with a framework for the long-term maintenance of their digital records.

Functions-based classification tools

In 2003 the Archives concluded a major revision and update of its publication *Developing a Functions Thesaurus: Guidelines for Commonwealth Agencies*. It also developed and published a companion publication, *Overview of Classification Tools for Records Management Purposes*, to increase agencies' awareness and understanding of how to implement functions-based classification regimes that comply with AS ISO 15489.

DIRKS Database

The Archives released version 1.1 of the *DIRKS Database: Documenting DIRKS Analysis* in February 2003 to 47 agencies to assist them in capturing and managing information generated through their DIRKS-based appraisal activities. This version includes fixes for problems identified in version 1.0 of the software, as well as several enhancements.

OUTPUT 1.1.2 – Training and advisory services to support implementation of recordkeeping standards

Quantity: Number of training courses and attendees

Training for records creators

The Archives' recordkeeping training package *Keep the Knowledge – Make a Record!* was released in June 2003 to all Australian government agencies. The package comprises a range of materials to assist records managers to educate all employees in their agencies about their recordkeeping responsibilities and how to acquit them. The package was released at the Recordkeeping Issues Forum in June 2003 and was provided to approximately 150 representatives from Australian government organisations and records management consultants. Information about, and PDF versions of, the training package have been published on the recordkeeping section of the Archives' website. The package will be distributed to all Australian government agencies in July 2003.



The Archives' new recordkeeping training package *Keep the Knowledge – Make a Record!*

Training for Commonwealth recordkeepers

The Training for Commonwealth Recordkeepers course covers records creation, sentencing, transfer, lending and destruction procedures. The course continued to be held regularly in 2002–03. Seventeen courses were held in Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Darwin, Perth and Melbourne and were attended by 222 participants from Australian government agencies and the recordkeeping industry.

DIRKS training expounded

DIRKS Training is provided to support the use of the DIRKS methodology, detailed in the Archives' publication *DIRKS: A Strategic Approach to Managing Business Information*, by Australian government agencies. The Introduction to DIRKS course was held eight times in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne with 126 participants. More detailed DIRKS workshops covering Steps A to C of the DIRKS methodology were made available, targeting Australian government agencies undertaking DIRKS projects.

Nine of these workshops were conducted in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne with 123 participants.

AGLS training

This training is provided to support the use of AGLS metadata on Australian government agency websites as part of the Government Online Strategy. Two seminars on the Australian government implementation of AGLS were held in Canberra during the year with 23 participants.

TABLE 1 – TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Training	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Courses	48	39	36
Participants	720	412	494

OUTPUT 1.1.3 – Promotion of recordkeeping

Quality: Per cent increase in awareness of standards and implementation strategies

Quantity: Per cent increase in implementation of standards

Quantity: Number of promotional activities and attendees

The Archives participated in four recordkeeping promotional events in 2002–03. Trade displays were held at the annual professional conferences of the Records Management Association of Australasia, attended by 500 delegates, and the Australian Society of Archivists, attended by 350 delegates. The Archives also collaborated with the National Library of Australia and the National Office of the Information Economy to hold a half-day seminar on ‘Keeping Government Publications Online’, which attracted 150 participants. The Archives collaborated with Standards Australia to launch the new Australian Standard for AGLS Metadata – AS 5044. The launch was held at the Archives in Canberra and was attended by 50 people.

This financial year has seen an unprecedented rise in government agency awareness of the Archives’ *e-permanence* suite of recordkeeping standards. The main reasons include the release of the ANAO report on recordkeeping in May 2002 and the APSC annual State of the Service Report in October. The Archives’ strategic alliances with the ANAO and the APSC on recordkeeping

issues were further supported by publishing information about the reports and their implications on the Archives' website and formal and informal communications with agencies.

The Archives' survey of recordkeeping has shown that the level of awareness of Archives' recordkeeping standards is high. For example, of the 46 per cent of agencies that had not implemented the DIRKS methodology, less than 10 per cent indicated that this was because they were unaware of the methodology. Similar levels of awareness were also reflected in the survey results for the other recordkeeping standards specified.

Recordkeeping Issues Forums

The Archives holds several Recordkeeping Issues Forums each year to inform Australian government agencies and consultants about developments in recordkeeping policy, to present agency case studies that can assist other agencies to address similar issues, and to provide a forum for the exchange of views. Recordkeeping Issues Forums were held in November 2002 and June 2003, and were attended by approximately 320 participants from agencies and recordkeeping consultancies.

Recordkeeping website

The Archives' website is the main published source of all the Archives' recordkeeping policies and standards. Substantial work was undertaken to add to and update content and to improve user access. Statistics show that, in 2002–03, visits to the recordkeeping section of the site averaged approximately 70 000 per month, an increase of 10 000 visits per month from 2001–02.

Responsible agency officer register

The Archives has established a register of senior officers who have been nominated by their agency heads to be responsible for recordkeeping policies and practices. At 30 June 2003, this register included contacts for 124 agencies from a possible 165. The register is used to identify the appropriate person to whom the Archives can direct information about its standards and with whom the Archives can liaise about agency-specific recordkeeping issues. Where no contact has been nominated, the Archives writes directly to the head of the agency.

OUTPUT 1.1.4 – Authorisation, approval or certification of disposal and custody of Commonwealth records, recordkeeping arrangements and services

Quality: Authorisations rated useable and comprehensible by government stakeholders

Quantity: Number and proportion of government functions covered by functions based disposal authorities

The Archives' recordkeeping survey included questions relating to agency use of the *Administrative Functions Disposal Authority*, which provides disposal coverage for 17 common administrative functions performed by Australian government agencies. Over half the agencies surveyed had used this product. Eighty per cent rated its usefulness as 'high', and 91 per cent rated its ease of understanding as 'very good' or 'good'. Informal feedback, including feedback provided at the Federal Agencies Knowledge Forum held in Sydney on 11 June 2003, indicates disposal authorisations issued during the year were considered easy to use and effective for sentencing records.

The Archives has begun to seek the views of key stakeholders on draft guidelines to help agencies and consultants determine the quality of supporting documentation required for disposal authorisation.

Forty-eight functions were covered by new disposal authorities issued to 11 agencies in 2002–03. During the year a project to establish the total number of government functions identified 313 high level functions of the Australian Government. The total number of agency functions with disposal coverage authorised by the Archives to 30 June 2003 can be mapped to approximately 19 per cent of these high-level government functions.

Disposal authorities

In February 2003 the Archives issued a new General Disposal Authority for whole of government use, covering records that have been copied, converted or migrated. The previous authority authorised destruction of short-term temporary records once they were copied to another form or medium. The new authority permits destruction of a much wider range of original or source records provided adequate reproductions are made and kept to appropriate recordkeeping standards, and are retained for as long as required.

The aim of the authority is to facilitate the timely destruction of source records that have become redundant because agencies have found it convenient or necessary to use authentic reproductions as their principal records in the normal course of business. The reproductions need to be functionally equivalent for legal and business purposes.

This General Disposal Authority is subject to a number of conditions and exclusions. Agencies that are able to meet the stipulated requirements do not have to seek permission from the Archives to destroy the source records concerned. The decision to use this authority rests with each agency.

Functions-based disposal authorities issued to Australian government agencies during the year included those for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and for the Department of Defence's military personnel function. Five of the 13 portfolio departments currently undertaking functions-based disposal authority projects made significant progress during the year and two additional portfolio departments will commence projects in the coming year.

The Archives continued to monitor application of the Administrative Functions Disposal Authority, maintaining information on issues raised and undertaking a scoping study in preparation for a review of the authority.

TABLE 2 – DISPOSAL AUTHORITIES ISSUED

Authority type	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
General disposal authorities ^a	0	0	1
Functions-based records disposal authorities ^b	5	6	11
Other agency-specific disposal authorities	0	2	0
Authorities for the transfer of custody or ownership of records	3	7	9
Authorities to add to or alter records over 25 years old	0	1	1
Amendments to existing authorities	5	0	0
Revocations of existing authorities	n/a	2	6
Total	13	18	28

a Disposal authorities covering functions undertaken by whole of government.

b Disposal authorities covering agency-specific functions.

Appraisal practices

At the Recordkeeping Issues Forum for agencies in June 2003, the Archives announced that its current approach to implementing DIRKS, the methodology based on Australian and International Standards for records management, would be reviewed. This decision resulted from experience gained over the three years since the methodology was introduced for use by Australian government agencies. The decision was also informed by the Archives' own recordkeeping survey, and the ANAO audits and the APSC's surveys of the public sector and accountability.

At present DIRKS is largely used to gain disposal coverage rather than to address systemic records issues. The Archives intends to streamline the use of DIRKS for appraisal and to encourage wider use of DIRKS for developing and improving records systems.

In the coming year the Archives plans to fill some of the product gaps which have been identified, such as generic functional specifications for electronic records management systems and diagnostic tools for agencies to assess their own recordkeeping capacity. These new products will complement the existing *e-permanence* suite of recordkeeping standards, manuals and advice. The Archives plans to refocus its resources to better assist agencies across the spectrum of recordkeeping issues, in particular the management of digital records.

OUTPUT 1.1.5 – The national archival collection is maintained and managed in appropriate conditions

Quality: Ninety per cent of the collection appropriately stored

The Archives continues to use the former Australian Standard on Records Management AS 4390 Part 6 Appendix D to assess storage requirements. This standard has not been reviewed in the reporting period, but plans have been made to begin a review in 2003–04 for all formats of records.

Over 82 per cent of the records in the national archival collection were stored in appropriate conditions at 30 June 2003. The apparent decline in the proportion of materials stored appropriately in 2002–03 compared with the previous reporting

year results from changes in the definition of the national archival collection for statistical purposes and the relocation of materials between repositories following property management changes. In all repositories, significant quantities of records have been re-packaged as part of preservation projects, leading to an improvement in the proportion of the collection that is stored in archival containers, as defined in AS 4390.6 (Appendix D), compared with the previous period. This annual improvement varied from 3 per cent to 5 per cent in Adelaide, Hobart and Canberra, and up to as much as 9 per cent in Brisbane.

OUTPUT 1.1.6 – Other records stored efficiently to support the rights and entitlements of citizens and the Commonwealth

Quality: Ninety per cent of the collection appropriately stored

The Archives applies its own Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records in the storage of non-archival records.

The Archives' standards require that long-term temporary records be stored in airconditioned storage. Short-term temporary records need not be stored in airconditioned storage.

Review of storage options

The Archives is currently examining a number of long-term records storage options. Several of the Archives' existing facilities are nearly full and, in addition, have reached their half-life and will require costly refurbishment in the near future. A number of options to address these issues are being considered, including the construction of a new purpose built repository in south-east Australia and the relinquishment of older buildings.

OUTPUT 1.1.7 – Archival items in critical condition treated to extend their useful life and service potential

Quantity: 1.4 million items receive preservation treatment in the year

A total of 101 preservation projects were progressed during the financial year, and 21 of these projects were completed. All projects use the PRINCE2 project management method (customised for the Archives) that requires quality criteria for each project to be set as part of advanced planning. All projects completed to date have been subject to a completion review that confirms that specified quality assurance was performed to verify that quality requirements have been met.

In 2002–03, there were 1 753 024 individual record items treated for preservation. These included large format records, such as 19th century architectural and survey drawings; the briefcase (and contents) in use by Harold Holt at the time of his disappearance; Aboriginal welfare records; and various historic photograph collections, including those relating to the British Phosphate Commission, and postal and telecommunications operations in Queensland, NSW and WA.

New conservation laboratory

The conservation laboratory at the Mitchell repository in Canberra was re-opened in August 2002 following major refurbishment works, which included upgrades of technical facilities and equipment.

Digital preservation activities

Schemas to allow conversion of digital records to preservation standards have been completed for plaintext, string, dataset, database, package, binary-object, multi-page, jpg and png archival document formats. The Archives was invited to join an OASIS Technical Committee to turn the XML DTD (Extensible Mark-up Language Document Type Definition) used by the Open Office suite into an open standard. Transfers of digital records from the Royal Commissions into the building and construction industry and into the collapse of HIH Insurance were processed. A number of papers, including the Digital Preservation Green Paper, were published on the Archives' website.



Audiovisual preservation program

The Archives undertook an extensive copying program of fragile and at-risk sound and moving image records, including the sound recordings of four former Prime Ministers – the Rt Hon. Harold Holt, CH, PC, the Hon. Gough Whitlam AC, QC, the Hon. Robert Hawke, AC, and the Hon. Paul Keating. The record copies also included some valuable ethnographic recordings, early film footage of ABC TV and tape recordings produced by the ABC Radio, documentaries produced by Film Australia such as *The Queen in Australia*, an early colour feature, and film documenting the progress in the construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. Obsolete formats such as 2" videotape and 17.5mm magnetic soundtracks have also been targeted for copying.



Migrant selection documents

A major project to preserve post-World War II non-British migrant selection documents which commenced in 2001 was completed in August 2002. A further project targeting British migrant selection documents was initiated and is expected to be completed by October 2003.

NAA: A2571,772,773,775

TOP Research project

Ms Irene Sullivan views her immigration records with reference officer Ms Jennie Cavanagh.

BOTTOM

Migration registration cards.

A collaborative research project with the University of Canberra, ScreenSound and the National Museum of Australia was established in November 2002 to investigate the deterioration properties of dyes in inks, other pigment materials and photographic materials.

Figure 2 – Total record holdings in each office

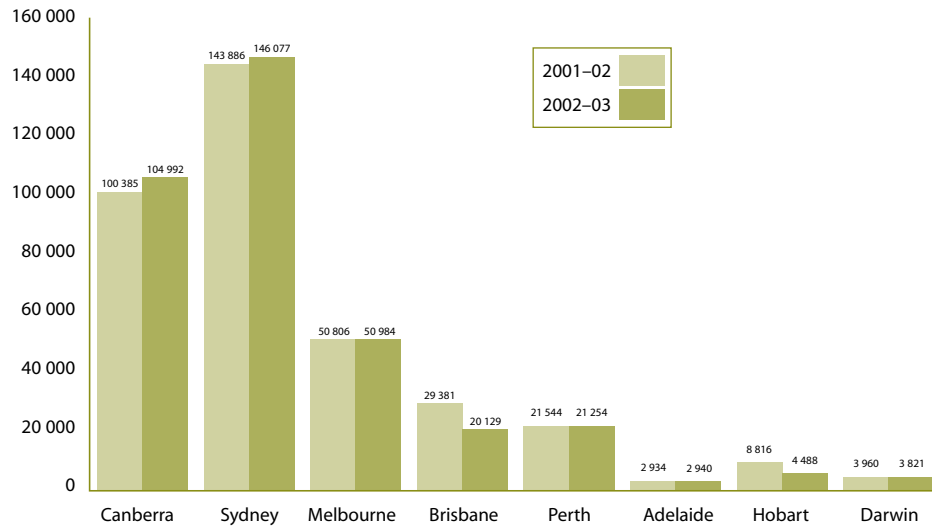


TABLE 3 – TOTAL RECORD HOLDINGS BY DISPOSAL STATUS, IN METRES

Disposal status	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Selected as national archives	249 776	262 947	264 576
Temporary value	81 936	74 036	70 564
No disposal authority ^a	4 266	3 699	3 342
Not sentenced ^b	10 425	10 465	9 108
Not applicable ^c	19 790	10 564	7 095
Total	366 193	361 712	354 685

a Records not covered by a disposal authority.

b Records covered by a current disposal authority but not sentenced.

c Records not subject to the *Archives Act 1983*, eg personal and corporate records stored on behalf of other organisations.

TABLE 4 – FORMAT OF RECORDS HELD BY THE ARCHIVES, IN METRES

Record format	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Paper files and documents	321 660	310 764	301 995
Bound volumes	18 253	18 918	18 349
Maps and plans	8 522	12 337	12 350
Audiovisual	13 098	13 119	13 075
Photographic	2 419	2 601	2 641
Audio	457	374	249
Microforms	740	3 262	5 751
Electronic records	154	106	110
Other formats, eg objects and models	892	231	165

TABLE 5 – QUANTITY OF UNEVALUATED RECORDS IN THE ARCHIVES' CUSTODY, IN METRES

Office	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Canberra	7 369	7 256	6 676
Sydney	5 183	5 083	5 017
Melbourne	29	31	31
Brisbane	446	12	12
Perth	409	402	393
Adelaide	0	0	0
Hobart	1 229	1 346	308
Darwin	26	34	14
Total	14 691	14 164	12 451
Percentage of unevaluated records reviewed since last year	34%	4%	12%

TABLE 6 – RECORDS TRANSFERRED TO THE ARCHIVES, IN METRES

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Selected as national archives			
Number of transfer jobs ^a	838	545	711
Shelf metres	3 903	4 973	6 296
Permanent value			
Number of transfer jobs	7	435	241
Shelf metres	11	2 780	1 149
Temporary value			
Number of transfer jobs	140	136	185
Shelf metres	550	416	387
Other			
Number of transfer jobs	39	42	7
Shelf metres	119	780	82
Total number of transfer jobs	1 024	1 158	1 144
Total shelf metres	4 583	8 949	7 914

a A transfer job is a quantity of records belonging to the same series having the same value and disposal sentence and usually transferred to the Archives at the same time.