

Information Management Advice 13 Writing Disposal Classes

Introduction

A records disposal schedule is a detailed inventory of records created and stored by an agency, listed by record classes identified within the contextual framework of the agency's functions and activities, and identifying the appropriate disposal action.

A disposal class is a group of records which document the same activity or transactional process and have the same disposal action.

State Records Guideline No. 6 Developing a Functional Disposal Schedule provides information about, and stipulates the process to be followed for developing a function based records disposal schedule for authorisation by the State Archivist.

Disposal class descriptions

The formal, legal description of a disposal class comprises three elements:

- function description
- activity description
- disposal class description

Each function, activity and disposal class in a disposal schedule has a description which gives its scope. The descriptions should be concise, clear and written in plain English, avoiding jargon. They should be able to be understood by people within the agency over time and by people external and unfamiliar with the agency.

To formulate disposal classes the recordkeeping requirements of an activity are identified. The records that document the same activity or transactional process, and have the same disposal action are then grouped together to form a disposal class. *Recordkeeping Advice No. 2 – All About Appraisal* provides information on identifying recordkeeping requirements and determining how long to retain records.

For example, an agency may administer and participate on committees related to a particular agency function. A business requirement may have identified that records of internal and external committees, where the agency has the administrative role are required for a longer period than records relating to external committees, where the agency does not have the administrative role. In addition, records documenting arrangements for the conduct of these committees may also have been identified with a different disposal action. Three disposal classes are therefore required for the activity 'committees'.

A simple description of these three classes could be as follows:

Records of internal committees and external committees where the agency has the administrative role.	TEMPORARY Destroy 7 years after action completed
Records of external committees where the agency does not have the administrative role	TEMPORARY Destroy 2 years after action completed
Records documenting the conduct and administration of meetings	TEMPORARY Destroy when reference ceases

It may also be useful to include subject references in the description, for example, ‘Records of committees relating to agriculture and food industries’.

Frequently disposal classes will be closely related to the same activity but will have different disposal actions. For example, one class may describe reports that document issues of State significance, and the second class may describe reports relating to the same activity, that do not document issues of State significance.

As the schedule may be managed and used in an electronic system, it is important to clearly describe each class independently of the other. In earlier versions of disposal schedules the description for the second class may have included the phrase ‘not described in xx.xx.xx’ which may be problematic when using the disposal schedule in an electronic recordkeeping system.

Examples of records may be included as dot points to assist agency staff when sentencing records. For example:

Records of internal committees and external committees where the agency has the administrative role. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents establishing the committee • Documents appointment members • Agenda papers • Reports presented to the committee • Submissions presented to the committee 	TEMPORARY Destroy 7 years after action completed
--	---

Where related records are described in other disposal classes, a cross reference to these classes should be included at the end of the class description. This will ensure that records are sentenced using the correct disposal class. For example:

Records of internal committees and external committees where the agency does not have the administrative role. <i>See xx.xx.xx for external committees where the agency has the administrative role.</i>	TEMPORARY Destroy 2 years after action completed
---	---

Further Advice

For more detailed advice please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
91 Murray Street
HOBART TASMANIA 7000
Telephone: 03 6165 5581
Email: gisu@education.tas.gov.au

Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

Document Development History

Build Status

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
2.0	February 2015	Christine Woods	Template	All
1.0	13/07/2005	AOT	Initial Release	All

Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
All	All	Document imported into new template

Issued: July 2005

State Archivist