

## Appraisal Statement for State records required as State Archives

### 1.0 Background

The Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office (TAHO) is the principal custodian of the documented heritage of the state of Tasmania, including the UNESCO Memory of the World Convict records. The collection contains both State records and records from private collections.

TAHO is responsible under the *Archives Act 1983* for identifying State records that have enduring value as State Archives and for authorising finite retention periods for all other State records, thereby ensuring this information is retained as long as it is required. This identification occurs through the appraisal of State records. Appraisal is the cornerstone of determining which records will become the State Archives of the future.

TAHO seeks to identify and preserve as State Archives the decision making processes of government and the implementation and outcome of those decisions including their influence and effect on communities and individual lives.

TAHO is committed to ensuring professional integrity is maintained in the appraisal of Tasmanian State records and aims to provide agencies with support and guidance in the appraisal process.

### 2.0 Statutory framework

The State Archivist has issued this statement in accordance with Part II Division 2 Section 8 of the *Archives Act 1983*. This statement applies to all Tasmanian agencies.

### 3.0 Appraisal Statement Context

#### 3.1 What is Appraisal?

Appraisal involves evaluating the business activities of an agency to determine which State records should be created and captured and how long they are required to be kept to meet business needs, the agency's accountability requirements, and community expectations (1) Appraisal can be applied prospectively for records that do not yet exist and retrospectively for State records which already exist.

Appraisal is a planned and documented process based on research and analysis to provide transparent, reasoned and consistent reasons for the retention or non-retention of records. It is a complex, judicious and subjective process that involves the application of values to functions and records. In the future as we deal with ever increasing volumes of information it will increasingly involve an element of risk assessment.

TAHO is responsible under the *Archives Act 1983* for identifying State records that have enduring value as State Archives and for authorising finite retention periods for all other State records, thereby ensuring this information is retained as long as it is required. This identification occurs through the appraisal of State records.

To be appraised as having permanent retention value, State records would, in the majority of circumstances, fall within one or more of the appraisal characteristics outlined in this statement. TAHO aims to retain and preserve State records which meet these characteristics for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

(1) I Based on *Australian Standard (AS) 4390 – Records Management*, Part 1: General, Clause 4.3.

### **3.2 Benefits of appraising State records**

State records provide evidence of the decisions and actions of Tasmanian agencies, and support transparent and accountable government. However, for most State records the evidentiary and accountability value associated with their retention diminishes over time. This means that the majority of State records can be disposed of once the minimum retention requirements, as approved by the State Archivist in a Retention and Disposal Schedule, have been met.

The benefits of appraising State records include:

- ensures that State records are created, kept and maintained for as long as they are required.
- efficient use of resources by not storing records for longer than necessary or migrating electronic records that could be disposed of prior to migration
- assessment of agency risks and identification of vital records (i.e. risk mitigation)
- identification of State records to be retained as permanent State records for the preservation of Tasmania's historical and cultural heritage
- transparent, accountable and consistent legal disposal of State records under the *Archives Act, 1983*

### **3.3 Purpose of the Appraisal Statement**

The purpose of this Appraisal Statement is to:

- Support consistent and transparent appraisal by Tasmanian government
- assist agencies to identify and appraise State records to be preserved as State Archives
- to communicate our collecting objectives to stakeholders, and
- to describe in summary the types of records we will preserve Archives into the future

While appraisal is relevant to all State records, this Appraisal Statement will focus on the values guiding the appraisal and identification of permanent State records.

## **4.00 Appraisal practices**

TAHO endorses appraisal practices which support best practice appraisal of all records created by agencies, regardless of whether they are assigned a permanent or temporary retention value. In particular TAHO affirms that appraisal should:

- comply with legislative and legal requirements
- support accountability and transparency
- be responsive to stakeholders
- be planned and consistent
- be comprehensive, with documented justifications
- considerate of resources.

### **4.1 Complies with legislative and legal requirements**

Care must be taken to ensure the appraisal process identifies and complies with any legislative or other legal obligations for the creation, maintenance and disposal of State records.

All relevant legislation under which the agency operates must be identified and checked for recordkeeping requirements. these obligations include (but are not limited to) any financial, company or governing laws applicable to the agency whose records are being appraised.

When national standards, specific industry codes or codes of practice exist, these should also be taken into consideration in the appraisal process.

## **4.2 Support accountability and transparency**

State records provide evidence of an agency's decision-making, performance, achievements and conduct when carrying out its functions on behalf of the government and the community. The specific accountability requirements for the agency should be ascertained and applied to appraisal decisions.

## **4.3 Responsive to stakeholders**

Appraisal should identify State records that may be required to protect the interests of relevant stakeholders and, as far as can be reasonably expected, ensure that these State records are maintained in an accessible and authentic state until the resolution of any process under which stakeholders may lawfully require or seek access to these records.

## **4.4 Planned and consistent**

Appraisal should be undertaken in a planned and systematic manner in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by TAHO. The characteristics used to determine which State records are selected for permanent retention should be based on TAHO *Advice 2 All about Appraisal*. This Advice provides consistency in the appraisal characteristics used to identify State records with permanent value.

## **4.5 Comprehensive and documented justifications**

The appraisal process should be adequately documented to allow for scrutiny and review. This includes the assessment of retention requirements for State records, the identification of characteristics for permanent retention and their application in Retention and Disposal Schedules. Justifications should be comprehensive, indicating an understanding of the business activities documented in the State records, and demonstrate that the interests of all stakeholders, both internal and external to the agency, have been given due consideration when determining the retention period.

## **4.6 Considerate of resources**

Tasmanian agencies have a responsibility to be prudent in the management of public funds. It is not affordable or sustainable to permanently keep all records created by agencies. Appraisal enables the value of State records to be determined and promotes the implementation of cost efficient records management plans.

Unnecessary storage and maintenance costs can be reduced through the identification of temporary State records and their appropriate disposal at the expiration of a minimum retention period, as approved by the State Archivist under a Retention and Disposal Schedule. A planned disposal program will reduce the volume, and therefore the information technology resources, required to backup and migrate electronic records.

Implementing a planned and systematic disposal program has the added benefit of improving public accessibility to government information. Through the disposal of temporary State records, information retrieval speeds may be improved and the cost of conducting searches for Right to Information and Discovery requests can be reduced.

## **5.0 Appraisal Criteria.**

TAHO has identified six criteria to guide the identification of State Archives. The criteria apply regardless of format. State records which demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics may be required as State Archives. The examples provided are for illustration only, and are not an exhaustive list.

### **1. Authority & Structure of Government**

State records that document the authority, establishment, structure and functions of Tasmanian Government (including all agencies and local governments) and that establish the nature and extent of their jurisdictions, obligations, responsibilities and powers.

The types of activities and associated records that may meet this criteria include;

- the development, passing, commencement and review of legislation
- formal instruments or authorities establishing the functions, jurisdictions, boundaries and operations of all levels of government within the State
- legal delegations to perform duties and functions of State
- judgements or rulings determining the extent of jurisdictions and powers
- agreements between governments, and
- major reforms of the State's political and administrative structures and institutions

### **2. Functions & Programs of Government**

State records that provide evidence of government functions, programs, deliberations, decisions and actions which influence the administration of government and the people of Tasmania. This will include records documenting the background to, basis for, and outcomes of those decisions and actions.

The significance of functions, programs, issues and associated decisions and actions will be assessed in relation to how critical they are, or were, in the administration of the Government and their influence or impact on the people of Tasmania.

The types of activities and associated records that may meet this criteria include;

- Local Government Minutes
- the planning and management of major infrastructure or development projects
- the formulation, determination, implementation and review of high level policy and
- strategic management decisions across government
- records that illustrate the government's role in the management of the Tasmanian economy
- records setting legal precedents
- Cabinet Papers and Minutes of Cabinet Committees
- Minutes of high level Committees and Boards

### **3. Accountability of Government**

State records that are fundamental to providing citizens with trust in government; providing evidence of the well-being of the community and the impact of government activities on them, in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

The types of activities and associated records that may meet this criteria include;

- the impact of the agency's actions on people's lives
- agreement between governments
- Inquiries into government /government agencies/ government actions
- some records of 'watchdog' agencies
- petitions documenting significant community opposition to government actions or policies

#### **4. Rights and Entitlements of Individuals**

State records that establish the existence of individuals or groups, their right to participate in the affairs of the State and make claim to entitlements and protection provided by the State.

The types of activities and associated records likely to meet this objective include those relating to:

- the registration of births, deaths and marriages
- the administration of land title and real property, and
- the administration of probate
- individual case management where the government functions and programs had far reaching impact or influence on the lives of individuals

#### **5. Tasmanian Society and Culture**

State records which will substantially contribute to the existing body of knowledge or understanding of aspects of the history, society, culture or people of Tasmania. This will include records relating to events, persons, places and social, environmental or cultural phenomena of significance to the broader community and the State of Tasmania.

The types of activities and associated records likely to meet this objective include those relating to:

- the planning, management and staging of significant cultural events and celebrations
- the identification, development and management of sites of conservation, cultural or heritage significance, and
- the works and activities of individuals or organisations who have significantly contributed to society
- records which significantly add to an understanding of a particular time for different types of people

#### **6. Environmental management and change**

State records providing evidence of the Tasmania government's significant actions in relation to environmental management and change, including the occupation, management and use of the state's natural resources. This also includes records that contain a history of land use which has, or may, impact on the health and well-being of the Tasmania community and the natural environment, and records that may contribute to an understanding of climatic change, weather patterns and natural disasters.

The types of activities and associated records likely to meet this objective include those relating to:

- Development applications
- analysis and reporting of pest eradication programs
- records documenting sea level rise
- history of land use and occupation
- Hydrographic charts and flood maps

## Acknowledgements

State Records New South Wales – Building the Archives: Policy on records Appraisal and the Identification of State Archives. Issued June 2001

Queensland State Archives – Appraisal Statement – A statement on the values guiding the appraisal and identification of permanent public records. February 2013.

Archives New Zealand – Appraisal Statement March 2014

Public Record Office of Victoria – Appraisal Statement for Public Records required as State Archives: Draft Version Number: v1.0 25/6/14

## 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
1.0	February 2015	Deborah Drinkell	Initial Release	All

### Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
		This is the first release of this document.

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