



## What is a.k.a & why do we use it?

### **Background**

The *Australian Standard for Records Management, AS ISO 15489*, which has been endorsed as the model for best practice recordkeeping by the ACT Government, establishes a regime that describes records using terms that reflect the functions and activities of the agency. This creates a functional approach to records classification.

Functional classification has been designed to ensure that all business records and information relating to a particular function and activity are held together over time, regardless of changes to organisational structures, programs or project names.

Further, classification schemes based on agency functions and business activities provide a basis for developing three critical records management tools:

- a thesaurus of terms to control the language for classifying, titling and indexing records in a specific business context;
- a Functional Classification Guide that lists functions and activities in context; and
- a Records Disposal Schedule that defines retention periods and consequent disposal actions for various classes of records mapped to the Classification Guide.

The *Territory Records Standard for Records Management No.3 Records Description and Control* and the explanatory *Guideline No.3 Records Description and Control* fully describes this regime.

### **What is a.k.a?**

The Territory Records Office uses software called a.k.a to manage the whole-of-government functional thesaurus and ultimately uses it to produce functional classification guides and records disposal schedules based on the thesaurus that are electronic systems neutral – in other words they can be used in any system that needs recordkeeping metadata to be applied.

### **Why we use a.k.a?**

Business classification schemes, taxonomies and thesauri are designed, created and published with the a.k.a classification module. It allows the Territory Records Office to develop the hierarchy for the thesaurus terms to three levels allowing for users to

navigate the scheme from any level. It also allows for the inclusion of sources of terms, stakeholders, developer notes and recordkeeping requirements.

The Disposition Management Software manages the compilation and publication of records retention and disposal schedules. The same three levels, Function/Activity/Subject, of the classification scheme are used as the basis for investigating and developing records retention and disposal schedules in accordance with the AS ISO 15489 standard (DIRKS methodology).

The software can generate various reports including a hierarchical thesaurus and a records disposal schedule. The thesaurus can be published in html and placed on an Intranet. Because of the licensing arrangements of TVKAAA the thesaurus cannot be put on the Internet.

The whole-of-government thesaurus on the Territory Records Office intranet is published using a.k.a, and a.k.a databases are the sources of the terms for the electronic file request form.

### ***Who uses a.k.a?***

The Territory Records Office uses a.k.a and some agency Records Managers also work in conjunction with the Territory Records Office to produce their agency specific thesaurus and subsequent Records Disposal Schedules using a.k.a. These schemes meet *Records Management Standard AS ISO 15489* and *Territory Records Standard No. 3 Record Description and Control*.

### ***Who has the licences?***

The Territory Records Office, on behalf of the ACT Government has entered into and manages licensing arrangements with the State Records Authority of New South Wales for the use of *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms*. A similar arrangement has been entered into with the National Archives of Australia to use the DIRKS database.

A commercial agreement is managed with Synercon Management Consulting PL for the whole-of-government licence for a.k.a. This gives the ACT Government 6 concurrent licences for the two existing software modules of a.k.a, Classification and Disposition Management.

### ***How to get access to a.k.a***

To use a.k.a., contact the Territory Records Office who will then authorise use through InTACT, the ACT Government's IT service provider.