



Records Advice

No 43

Selection of records as Territory Archives

The following categories of records have been identified as those which will be preserved and retained as Territory Archives

- Records that provide concise evidence of the deliberations, decisions and actions of the Territory and Territory institutions, relating to key functions and programs and significant issues faced in governing the Territory.

Examples of records meeting this criterion are those that document:

- the development, implementation and review of Territory legislation;
- the development, implementation and review of major government structures, policies and programs; and
- government responses to the most significant issues of the day.

- Records that contain information that is considered essential for the protection and future well-being of Australians and their environment, including the protection of their significant rights and entitlements.

Examples of records meeting this criterion are:

- birth, death and marriage registrations;
- records detailing long-term environmental hazards or significant environmental change;
- records detailing elements of Territory heritage such as heritage places registers; and
- records documenting rights to land.

- Records that have a special capacity to illustrate the impact of Territory government activities on individuals, groups and the environment, the interaction of people with the government and especially the influence of the Territory community on government decision-making.

Examples of records meeting this criterion are:

- case files detailing significant government intervention in the lives of individuals or classes of people, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were separated from their families;
- records documenting the high-level planning and execution of major public works such as main roads and residential developments;
- land-use and zoning plans; and
- records which document significant community opposition to government actions or policies.

- Records that have substantial capacity to enhance knowledge and understanding of aspects of the Territory's history, society, economy, culture and people, especially as these are influenced by government activity.

Examples of records meeting this criterion are:

- concise Treasury and economic data;
- statistical data on the Territory's population and its circumstances;
- records documenting the planning and production of major cultural events and historical celebrations; and
- records documenting major social, economic, cultural or scientific discoveries or developments of significance to, or having a special relationship with, the Territory.

- Records that provide evidence of the source of authority, foundation and machinery of the Territory and Territory institutions sufficient to document the administrative and legal context of other Territory Archives.

Examples of records meeting this criterion are:

- formal instruments or authorities, including legislation, Administrative Arrangements Orders and delegations under legislation, which establish, maintain, alter or review the functions, powers, responsibilities and jurisdictions of Territory agencies;
 - judgements which have bearing on the jurisdiction or powers of the Territory government; and
 - agreements with other governments.
- Records containing information that may allow people to establish links with their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

The order of these criteria is not significant and does not reflect collecting priorities or quantities or records to be retained. All criteria are equally significant to the archival heritage of the Territory. Records assessed as meeting any of these criteria will be retained as Territory Archives.

Appraisal of pre-self-government records is only mandatory if an agency wishes to dispose of these records. It is open to agencies to elect to retain pre-self-government records, and in this case appraisal of these records is unnecessary. In many instances there are records that could have been disposed of earlier if appropriate Records Disposal Schedules had been available, however now that they have survived the records take on almost a social history role and could now be considered for retention as Territory Archives meeting many of the criteria above. Agencies should note, however, that all existing records that are more than 20 years old are available for public access under section 26 of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, which commenced on 1 July 2008 (unless closed under section 28).