

Records management

On this page

State records

Your obligations

Good recordkeeping

Records management program

State Records Act 1998

Understanding records management procedures is an essential part of your role as a senior executive. You have obligations under the **State Records Act 1998** to ensure that your agency complies with requirements to make, keep and dispose of records appropriately.

As a senior executive you are required to:

- routinely create records documenting any decisions made or actions undertaken, including explanation or evidence, any recommendation, advice, or instructions given or received
- protect those records by storing them in accordance with your agency's records management systems
- dispose of those records legally and appropriately.

State records

State records are any information you make or receive in the course of your official duties. They can be in any format, on any media and from any source including personal devices or personal email addresses.

Examples include:

- digital and physical documents
- briefing notes, reports, presentations and working papers or drafts
- emails and correspondences
- messages sent via SMS, mobile apps or collaboration platforms
- data in business systems.

Your obligations

As a senior executive your role is to ensure:

- staff members are aware of their responsibilities to make and keep records
- appropriate governance frameworks, staff member capability, and systems for managing records over time are implemented and adhered to
- that records are kept secure against unauthorised access, alteration, loss or destruction. Failing to do so could be considered an offence under the State Records Act 1998
- efforts to monitor and oversee the records management program and rectify any issues are supported including the completion and submission of the annual Recordkeeping Monitoring Exercise
- any monitoring or reporting requests from the **State Records NSW** are complied with
- compliance with notices issued by State Records NSW including reporting the findings of assessments to State Records NSW.

The NSW Ombudsman have produced a **guide which highlights the importance of good recordkeeping and administrative practice**.

Good recordkeeping

Good recordkeeping is an essential component of an agency's business processes. Records underpin good service delivery and support the effective administration, accountability, and transparency of the NSW public sector.

There are significant personal and organisational risks and consequences that can result from poor recordkeeping. Reports by integrity agencies such as ICAC, Ombudsman and the Audit Office frequently comment on poor recordkeeping. Keeping good records is your best defence should there be any inquiries into your work.

Records management program

Each agency must establish a records management program that encompasses a governance framework (policy and business rules), appropriately skilled staff members and systems for capturing and managing records over time. The program should also provide the framework and strategies for helping your agency manage the risks and challenges of the digital technologies being deployed in the sector.

Your records management program should be subject to monitoring and reviews.

State Records Act 1998

The Act applies to and establishes responsibilities for all NSW public sector agencies. The head of any agency is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the organisation complies with the Act.

The Act requires NSW public sector agencies to:

- make and keep full and accurate records of its business
- establish a records management program
- manage and store its records appropriately
- ensure that records remain accessible for as long as they are required
- dispose of records according to authorised retention and disposal authorities, including transferring State archives to the State Archives Collection managed by Museums of History NSW
- register and maintain access directions with Museums of History NSW to ensure sensitive information in all State records is appropriately protected
- report to State Records NSW on the implementation of your records management program.

As a senior executive, your responsibilities for records and records management are outlined in your agency's records management policy. You must ensure that records are kept secure against unauthorised access, alteration, loss or destruction. Failing to do so could be considered an offence under the *State Records Act 1998*.