

State Records Guideline No 5

Recordkeeping Metadata





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I Introduction

This Guideline recognises the need for management of metadata as a key component of information management in the digital environment. Better metadata management will:

- Support information discovery
- Reduce duplication in data collection
- Facilitate information sharing for better service delivery
- Assist in identifying critical information assets that require more intensive management.

This Guideline describes key requirements for recordkeeping metadata to support the creation, capture, management, storage, retention and eventual disposal of State records in digital format.

I.I Purpose

The purpose of this Guideline is to set down minimum metadata requirements that are approved by the State Archivist for management of State records. This Guideline also supports Guideline 1 - Records Management Principles, which requires agencies to apply metadata to records. Advice 14 – The Value of Recordkeeping Metadata has also been updated to assist agencies to implement these processes.

I.2 Authority

This guideline is issued under the provisions of Section 10A of the Archives Act 1983. Guidelines issued by the State Archivist under this Section set standards, policy, and procedures relating to the making and keeping of State records. This section also requires all relevant authorities to take all reasonable steps to comply with these guidelines, and put them into effect.

Keyword	Interpretation
MUST	The item is mandatory.
MUST NOT	Non-use of the item is mandatory.
SHOULD	Valid reasons to deviate from the item may exist in particular circumstances, but the full implications need to be considered before choosing this course.
SHOULD NOT	Valid reasons to implement the item may exist in particular circumstances, but the full implications need to be considered before choosing this course.
RECOMMENDS RECOMMENDED	The item is encouraged or suggested.

'MUST' and 'MUST NOT' statements are highlighted in capitals throughout the Guideline. Agencies deviating from these MUST advise TAHO of the decision to waive particular requirements.

Agencies deviating from a 'SHOULD' or 'SHOULD NOT' statement MUST record:

- the reasons for the deviation,
- an assessment of the residual risk resulting from the deviation,



- the date at which the decision will be reviewed, and
- whether the deviation has management approval.

Agencies deviating from a 'RECOMMENDS' or 'RECOMMENDED' requirement are encouraged to document the reasons for doing so.

2 Recordkeeping Metadata

2.1 Overview

The term 'metadata' is used and understood by different communities in different ways. Software programmers, librarians, spatial data managers, statisticians and other professionals have all defined their own sets of metadata to serve their own business purposes. As a consequence, there are many different 'types' of metadata; for example, information resource discovery metadata, statistical metadata and geospatial metadata.

The recordkeeping profession has also defined what metadata they need to manage and preserve records now and into the future. This Guideline does not attempt to replace any existing standards, which are extremely comprehensive, but rather define a simplified metadata set that can be immediately applied in agencies. See the Further reading section for more about recordkeeping metadata standards.

Recordkeeping metadata can be used to identify, authenticate and contextualise records and the people, processes and systems that create, manage and use them. Recordkeeping metadata such as classification schemes or taxonomies also assist users to find, understand, access, share and use information. Metadata is also necessary to develop system upgrade, migration and other preservation strategies that will sustain digital records in the long term. Recordkeeping metadata may not always need to be created, but simply identified in existing systems and software applications and then managed over time.

A key feature that differentiates recordkeeping metadata from other types of metadata is that it is not a static profile of a document or other information asset. Recordkeeping metadata initially defines a record at the point of creation or capture, but is also dynamic and accrues through time, to describe how a record has been used or managed. In the digital environment, it is the management of metadata over time that will allow your records to be accepted as meaningful and accountable evidence. For example, an Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS) will capture an audit trail of all users who view, edit, print or modify a document.

This Guideline outlines minimum requirements for capturing and managing recordkeeping metadata for Tasmanian government agencies. It has been developed to ensure that Permanent digital records are protected and accessible for future generations as State archives.



2.2 Minimum recordkeeping metadata

Agencies MUST apply recordkeeping metadata to Permanent State records in all formats.

Typically, digital records will have a lifespan beyond the system in which they are created and managed. Identifying, capturing and managing recordkeeping metadata is necessary for digital preservation strategies such as system migration that will sustain Permanent records for the long term so that they may be transferred to TAHO as State archives.

Recordkeeping metadata is also critical to sustaining the authenticity and integrity of State records as meaningful and accountable evidence. Therefore, minimum recordkeeping metadata **SHOULD** be applied to all high-risk business information. See *Guideline 25 - Managing Information Risk* and the associated Advice 60 for more about conducting information risk assessments.

The following recordkeeping metadata **MUST** be linked to the records at point of capture, and these linkages maintained over time. Where possible, metadata **SHOULD** be automatically captured:

Element	Mandatory point of capture metadata	Explanation
I	Record identifier (ID)	Ideally, this is unique and system assigned, but in practice (i.e. shared network drives - may be manually assigned and not unique.)
2	Title/name	Meaningful title which should be manually entered or assigned by the system. This will align with the agency approved naming procedures (e.g. Corporate file plan or Business Classification Scheme).
3	Date of creation	Date the record was created, not the date captured or registered in system. Can be manually recorded or system-assigned.
4	Author/creator	Original creator of the record content. This may refer to a person or a system that created the original record. The creator may be external to the agency.
5	Business purpose/process/activity	Why this information is captured (i.e. the business context). This is normally assigned by classifying according to a function-based Business Classification Scheme (BCS).
7	Creating software application	For digital records, the system/software name.



Element	Mandatory point of capture metadata	Explanation
8	File format	Standard structure and type of data files. May be proprietary or open format. For example, Microsoft Word documents saved as .doc are proprietary, whereas .docx format is supported by multiple applications.

The following recordkeeping metadata **MUST** be linked to the records and accrue through time, to describe how a record has been used or managed. Where possible, metadata **SHOULD** be automatically captured:

Element	Mandatory process metadata	Explanation
9	Action that was taken, such as: Registration into the recordkeeping system Apply or change access rules Modify or edit Transfer of control/custody Migration	Any action that is carried out on the records should be captured as metadata. When a record is registered in the system, security classification is added, access is changed or retention and disposal is applied, these actions should be recorded in audit logs.
10	Date of action	Can be manually recorded or system-assigned.
11	Responsible officer/ID	Person responsible for taking/applying the action.

There are also additional properties that **MUST** also be applied to records at the file, folder or aggregated level (e.g. applied to each folder, to an identified information asset or whole-of-system):

Element	Mandatory process metadata	Explanation
12	Disposal actions taken	The retention and disposal schedule number, disposal class number, disposal action and disposal trigger (e.g. DA 2157 10.01.01 Permanent)
13	Information security	Security classification and caveats (if not 'unclassified')
14	Rights statement	Statement that sets out copyright ownership (if security classification is 'public') or any other policies governing use, intellectual property rights and access to the records.

Recordkeeping metadata **SHOULD** be actively used as a planning tool to manage digital records and implement automated workflow actions. For example, retention and disposal metadata is commonly used to trigger disposal operations in an EDRMS, however, if 'last action' dates are not applied to each record, the



trigger cannot be activated. Agencies can make use of recordkeeping metadata to identify vital, closed, security classified and legal-hold records. Recordkeeping metadata also supports data sharing, data integration and linking activities.

It is important that agencies recognise that this is a minimum metadata set. Agencies **SHOULD** add to the value of records by supplementing recordkeeping metadata with geospatial, statistical, medical, legal, financial, multimedia and other types of metadata.

Specific metadata requirements may also be set-out in other TAHO Guidelines. For example, the minimum metadata requirements for digitisation of Permanent source records are set out in *Guideline 8 - Digitisation and Disposal of Source Records*.

For more advice about identifying, capturing and using metadata in specific situations, see Advice 14 – The Value of Recordkeeping Metadata.

2.3 Implementation

TAHO recognises that it may not be practical or cost effective for agencies to comply with this Guideline retrospectively. The most appropriate time to implement minimum recordkeeping metadata standards is when new or enhanced systems are being implemented. When deciding what metadata to capture, consider that any data that is currently captured in systems may be used differently in the future. To make the most of future developments in business intelligence, open government and data analytics, consider any metadata as potentially useful.

Several approaches are available for the capture, management and storage of recordkeeping metadata:

- **Embedding or encapsulating metadata** within the record itself. Digital image files have embedded metadata that can be automatically captured when a photograph is taken, such as unique id, date taken, creator's name, geo-location, etc. An archival preservation file format has recordkeeping metadata encapsulated with the record, and managed as an integral part of it. ¹
- Maintaining metadata separately and linking it to the record. For example, business systems
 metadata can be mapped to the minimum recordkeeping metadata, and the metadata managed
 separately to the business system. This requires the development and maintenance of reliable and
 robust business processes to maintain links between the record and its associated metadata.
- Automatically capturing metadata in the system. This metadata is managed within the recordkeeping or business information system in which the record is created or stored. For example, in an EDRMS, metadata is both embedded in the record and linked to a record. Some metadata is maintained as a placeholder, even after the content of the record has been destroyed.

¹ For example, the VEO file developed as part of Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) by Public Record Office Victoria. VEO stands for VERS Encapsulated Object. See http://prov.vic.gov.au/government/vers for more information.



Embedded metadata

This may be a way to manage metadata when documents are stored on shared network drives, (e.g. word-processing documents, where metadata can be manually captured in the properties when a record is created and then viewed via the File/Properties menu). Successful compliance would be very difficult without strong governance in place. See Advice 41 - Managing Records on Shared Network Drives and Advice 42 - Structuring Shared Network Drives for Recordkeeping for more advice on managing records on shared drives. The advice on implementing minimum recordkeeping metadata that accompanies this Guideline provides some examples.

Maintaining metadata separately

Most business systems process uniform transactions, (e.g. applications for leave in a HR system, payment of invoices in a finance system). Contextual metadata created by the system can often be derived from system documentation, and is therefore one way of identifying and mapping business system metadata to the recordkeeping metadata set. See section 2.4 of this Guideline for requirements around metadata mapping. Advice 18 - Managing records in business systems discusses metadata mapping, and includes a worksheet that could be used as a basis for identifying recordkeeping metadata in business systems.

Documenting business system metadata in a spread-sheet or database as part of the agency's Information Asset Register (IAR) is another approach. However, the complexity of maintaining recordkeeping metadata over time and through system changes and understanding linkages to disparate systems may prove to be an unsustainable administrative burden. Agencies would need to allocate sufficient resources to support this task.²

Automatic capture

Where possible, recordkeeping metadata should be automatically captured by the system, and be persistently linked to the record. Some business systems have this capability. Systems that are designed to manage digital records, such as Electronic Document & Records Management Systems (EDRMS), do have this functionality. Currently, this is the best possible means of 'future-proofing' digital records.

2.4 Managing metadata

Agencies MUST manage recordkeeping metadata as part of the Records Management Program.

The effective application of recordkeeping metadata ensures digital records remain retrievable, accessible, usable and shareable. Therefore, agencies **MUST** establish effective planning and management practices to ensure that capture and management of recordkeeping metadata remains consistent across all systems that hold Permanent records, irrespective of the technology format or medium.

² Refer to the Information Security section on our website for more about Information Asset Registers.



At a minimum, agencies **SHOULD**:

- Have documented metadata standards and established procedures to ensure that accurate,
 standardised and relevant recordkeeping metadata is captured in systems that keep records.
- Implement monitor and review processes to ensure the quality, integrity and consistency of recordkeeping metadata over time, across systems and digital formats.
- Undertake metadata mapping to support data integration, system migration and sharing of information.

2.4.1 Procedures

Standardised metadata supports interoperability between systems and ensures successful system migrations. Procedures for the application of standardised metadata schemas and controlled vocabularies to all information assets in the agency will support the capture of meaningful, accurate and consistent recordkeeping metadata.

2.4.2 Monitor and review

Establish processes to monitor and review the capture and use of recordkeeping metadata. Assess how metadata is being captured, to ensure that it is efficient. Analyse what metadata needs to be migrated through system change. Conducting regular spot checks of metadata quality and accuracy is another way to ensure that useable metadata is being captured in systems.

2.4.3 Metadata Mapping

Mapping helps develop a common understanding of metadata usage throughout the agency and ensures data elements are consistently defined, understood and applied, even if different metadata standards are used.

Some agencies may already have identified metadata schemas and controlled vocabularies in enterprise-wide information architectures or as part of information and data governance frameworks. If that is the case, they will need to be mapped against the recordkeeping metadata. If not, each information asset may need to be mapped against the recordkeeping metadata set-out in this Guideline. This mapping should be maintained and kept up-to-date to reflect changing business requirements and agency language usage. This will support the efficient use and re-use of metadata.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that agencies manage mappings to this recordkeeping metadata set through a formal register or log. The metadata register identifies all of the metadata schemas in use in the agency, across all critical business systems, for all digital record types. The agency Information Asset Register (IAR) may be adapted for this purpose.

Regardless of the management tool, this register needs to be maintained, with each schema version and validity period clearly identified. In some cases, agency metadata may be public information, even if the actual dataset or information asset is subject to information security restrictions.

It is expected that all systems that are designed to capture and manage digital records, such as Electronic Document Records Management Systems (EDRMS), will comply with this standard, however agencies **SHOULD** conduct analysis of their EDRMS implementation to ensure this is the case, as metadata capture does vary with each system implementation.



NOTE: Vendors of EDRMS software sometimes promote compliance with VERS³ metadata standards. The VERS metadata requirements are much more stringent than those set-out in this Guideline.

2.4.4 Metadata mapping in business systems

Agencies MUST map their critical business systems to the minimum recordkeeping metadata set.

Many line-of-business systems exist within agencies, some of which are critical to undertaking everyday business activities. Each agency will determine what constitutes a critical system as part of information risk assessments. Identified high-risk systems are to be mapped to the recordkeeping metadata schema.

For an example of metadata mapping, consult Managing records in business systems - Part 2: Assessing recordkeeping functionality in business systems (Advice 18), which includes a mapping exercise undertaken for HR/Payroll software. The template issued with this Guideline may be used to create mappings between the business system and the recordkeeping metadata schema.

Undertaking this work will:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of, and therefore compliance with, the recordkeeping metadata set,
- Support extraction of records from business systems for migration to new systems, transfer to another agency, or to an EDRMS for longer-term retention, and
- Enable agencies to develop strategies for managing records within the business system.

See Advice 18 Managing records in business systems - Part 5 for strategies for improving recordkeeping functionality in business systems.

2.4.5 Metadata is a record

Agencies MUST manage their recordkeeping metadata and mapping as a record.

It is important to remember that the metadata and any mapping is a 'control' record, and **MUST** be retained in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983* and all relevant disposal classes in approved retention and disposal schedules (R&DS). Recordkeeping metadata often acts as a control record because it allows for identification, registration, indexing and tracking of records. Examples may include; system audit logs, file and folder indexes, data dictionaries, metadata schema mapping, document vocabularies, security and access rules, etc.

Guideline 1 - Records Management Principles sets-out agency requirements for keeping records.

³ http://prov.vic.gov.au/government/vers



3 Definitions

Business Classification Scheme (BCS) - a conceptual hierarchical model that defines what an organisation does and how it does it. It involves the identification and documentation of each business function, activity and transaction and the documentation of the flow of business processes, and the separate transactions which comprise them. See also **controlled vocabulary**.

Business system - Automated systems that create or manage data about an organisation's activities and facilitate transactions between an organisational unit and its customers – for example, an e-commerce system, client-relationship management system, finance or human resources systems. Business systems are typified by containing dynamic data that is commonly subject to constant updates (timely), able to be transformed (manipulable) and holds current data (non-redundant).

Control - Control systems and processes associated with records management include:

- Registration provides evidence of the existence of records in a recordkeeping system;
- Classification allows for appropriate grouping, naming, security protection, user permissions and retrieval:
- Indexing allocates attributes or codes to particular records to assist in their retrieval; and
- Tracking provides evidence of where a record is located, what action is outstanding on a record, who has seen a record, when such access took place and the recordkeeping transactions that have been undertaken on the record.

Controlled vocabulary - A controlled vocabulary or language defines what can be entered against a data value, specifies how that information is arranged, and defines which symbols (dashes, commas, colons) are used to separate the individual chunks of information in each value. Different disciplines have developed standard vocabularies that may be automated in systems and software applications as encoding schemes or 'picklists'.

Record titling and business classification schemes use controlled vocabularies. When well devised and rigorously applied, such tools can facilitate sharing of information. See **business classification scheme**.

Dataset - separate data elements that are defined and treated as a collection of information for data manipulation and analysis.

Data dictionary - describes the way data is arranged in tables in a database. This is different to a metadata schema, which is a standardised structure for metadata developed to serve a specific purpose or viewpoint, devised by a particular community. See **metadata schema** for a definition.

Digital record - a record created and/or maintained by means of digital computer technology. Includes records 'born digital' or those that have undergone conversion or digitisation from a non-digital format.

Disposal - refers to a range of processes; including the retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from recordkeeping systems. May also include the migration or transmission of records between recordkeeping systems, and the transfer of custody or ownership of records.

Electronic Document/Records Management Systems (EDRMS) - a type of content management system that refers to the combined technologies of document management and records management systems as an integrated system.



Information asset - an information asset is a body of information, defined and managed as a single unit so it can be understood, shared, protected and exploited effectively. Information assets have recognisable and manageable value, risk, content and lifecycles.

Information asset register (IAR) - a mechanism for understanding and managing an organisation's information assets and the risks to them. This register documents the links between the information assets, their business requirements and technical dependencies.

Metadata - generically defined as "structured data about data".

Metadata schema - is a model for describing data elements or attributes to ensure that the metadata is consistent and communicates the same names for things and concepts. A schema defines how many metadata values can be assigned, whether they are mandatory or optional, how they fit together, and, what each individual metadata value ('date of creation', 'name') means concretely.⁴ This Guideline is effectively a recordkeeping metadata schema.

The term 'schema' may be used interchangeably with 'standards'. The Dublin Core Schema for example, is a metadata schema developed to describe web resources. The Australian Government Locator Service (AGLS) is a metadata standard built on the Dublin Core intended for government resources published on the web. Both of these schemas include elements that can be directly mapped to this recordkeeping metadata set, such as creator, title, date, access rights, etc. Note: a metadata schema is sometimes confused with a 'data dictionary' (see data dictionary).

Metadata mapping - also known as metadata crosswalks, this is the process of defining and associating data elements, semantics or syntax from one system/schema to another system/schema and documenting their equivalence.

Record - Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

Recordkeeping metadata - in records management, recordkeeping metadata is data that describes the context, content and structure of records and their management through time. Metadata is attached to records when they are created, and added to as a result of different processes, such as sentencing and disposal.

Recordkeeping metadata schema - a structured set of metadata defined by recordkeeping professionals and used to identify and describe digital records. This schema should be managed separately to your recordkeeping system, and can be mapped to other metadata schemas and standards.

Recordkeeping system - A framework to capture, maintain and provide access to evidence of transactions over time, as required by the jurisdiction in which it is implemented, and in accordance with common business practices. Recordkeeping systems include:

- Records practitioners, records users and the records themselves
- Authorised policies, assigned responsibilities, delegations of authority, procedures and practices
- Policy statements, procedure manuals, user guidelines, and other documents that are used to authorise and promulgate the policies, procedures and practices

⁴ http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/crkm/glossary.html



- Specialised information and records software used to control the records
- Software, hardware, other equipment and stationery

Retention and disposal schedule (R&DS) - Documents authorised by the State Archivist that set out appropriate retention periods for classes of records.

Taxonomy - the classification of entities in an ordered system that indicates natural relationships.

VERS - Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) is the Victorian Government solution to the problem of capturing, managing and preserving electronic records. VERS is developed by the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) as a framework of standards, guidance, training, consultancy and implementation projects, centred around the goal of reliably and authentically archiving electronic records.

Refer to our Records Glossary A-Z list for more definitions.⁵

⁵http://www.linc.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/412533/Records-Glossary-A-Z-list-of-Records-terms.pdf



4 Recommended Reading and further advice

For Information Management Guidelines and Advice, visit our website-

- Advice 14 The value of recordkeeping metadata
- Advice 18 Managing records in business systems
- National Information Standards Organization (NISO), Understanding Metadata (2004) 6 and Where to start advice on creating a metadata schema or application profile (2011)⁷
- Australian Government Recordkeeping Metadata Standard Version 2.0 (AGRkMS), and Implementation Guidelines⁸
- AS ISO 15489.1-2002 (R2013): Records management General⁹
- AS/NZS ISO 16175.1:2012: Information and documentation Principles and functional requirements for records in electronic office environments - Overview and statement of principles
- AS ISO 23081.1-2006: Information and documentation Records management processes Metadata for records - Principles
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, METeOR, About metadata¹⁰

For more detailed advice, please contact:

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Acknowledgements

- Queensland State Archives, Queensland Recordkeeping Metadata Standard and Guideline, Version 1.1, 2012
- Archives New Zealand, Electronic Recordkeeping Metadata Standard and Records Management Standard for the New Zealand Public Sector¹²
- State Records of South Australia, Recordkeeping Metadata Standard V4.3 and Advice¹³
- NSW Department of Finance, NSW Government Standard Approach to Metadata, July 2014¹⁴

⁶ http://www.niso.org/publications/press/UnderstandingMetadata.pdf

⁷http://www.niso.org/apps/group_public/document.php?document_id=7272

⁸ http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/agency/create-capture-describe/describe/recordkeeping-metadata.aspx

⁹ Standards are available from eGovernment Standards Select Online for Tasmanian Government employees:

http://www.egovernment.tas.gov.au/services/standards_select_online

¹⁰ http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemld/268284

¹¹ http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/Recordkeeping/GRKDownloads/Documents/QRKMS.pdf.

¹² http://archives.govt.nz/advice/guidance-and-standards

¹³ http://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/digital-records-management

¹⁴ http://www.finance.nsw.gov.au/ict/sites/default/files/NSW%20Govt%20Standard%20Approach%20to%20Metadata.pdf



• State Records NSW, Designing, implementing and managing systems, Metadata for managing records and information, 2015¹⁵



 $^{^{15}\} http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/advice/designing-implementing-and-managing-systems/metadata-for-managing-records-and-information$



5 Checklist of minimum requirements

Requirements		Evidence / documentation examples	
I	Agencies MUST apply recordkeeping metadata to Permanent State records in all formats. This recordkeeping metadata MUST be linked to the records, and these linkages maintained over time.	 Procedures for capturing metadata when creating and registering records, EDRMS documentation or screen capture showing minimum metadata fields 	
2	Additional properties MUST also be applied to records at the file, folder or aggregated level (i.e. applied to an identified information asset or whole-of-system)	Information Asset Register (IAR), data dictionaries or catalogues that assign disposal, information security and copyright to information assets and/or systems	
3	Agencies MUST manage recordkeeping metadata as part of the Records Management Program.	 Metadata is addressed in Records Management strategic plans, digital continuity or other information-related strategic plans for the agency Metadata is defined in Record Management operational plans for the agency 	
4	Agencies MUST establish effective planning and management practices to ensure that capture and management of recordkeeping metadata remains consistent across all systems that hold Permanent records, irrespective of the technology format or medium.	 Plans and procedures for capture of recordkeeping metadata (e.g. naming conventions, controlled vocabularies, business classification schemes, agency standards for datasets) Plans, procedures and quality processes for metadata management (e.g. inclusion of metadata requirements in purchasing processes for new systems, documentation about metadata audits and quality checks) 	
5	Agencies MUST map their critical business systems to the minimum recordkeeping metadata.	 Completed checklists (See Guideline 5 - Metadata mapping template or Minimum recordkeeping requirements in business systems worksheet checklist) Information Asset Register (IAR) that maps recordkeeping metadata for each critical information asset or system 	
6	Agencies MUST manage recordkeeping metadata mapping as a record.	Retention and disposal of metadata documentation is covered in records disposal procedures	