Office of the State Archivist

How do I get a Disposal Schedule?

SUMMARY

How do I get a Disposal Schedule? is the fourth part of an FAQ series on disposal. It explains:

- the steps to develop a schedule.

HOW DO I DEVELOP A DISPOSAL SCHEDULE?

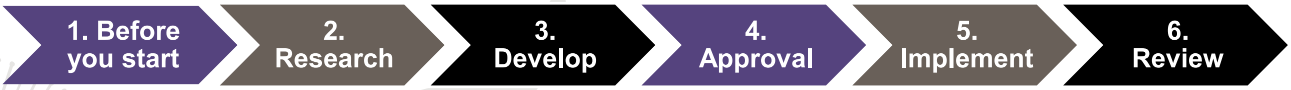
We recommend you use a consultant to develop your Disposal Schedule. We've found consultants produce higher quality, more timely products than those developed in-house.

A consultant can:

- develop a project plan
- complete background research such as legislative mapping and jurisdictional checks
- survey your records holdings
- create an Information Asset Register
- consult with stakeholders to identify records and retention requirements
- draft the disposal schedule in ORDA, our online retention and disposal application
- write supporting documents like appraisal notes and justifications
- produce several drafts, seeking and incorporating stakeholder feedback
- liaise with your project manager and records staff throughout the project
- liaise with our Office throughout the project, including after they have delivered the draft schedule to you.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO DEVELOP A DISPOSAL SCHEDULE?

This is a summary of the steps. We have presented and described them in a linear way for simplicity, but they do overlap. Consultation occurs throughout.



THE STEPS IN MORE DETAIL

You will complete some of these steps and your consultant others.

You may not need to complete all steps. For example, you may already have an Information Asset Register. Or you may decide not to create one if the results of your records survey give you enough data.

We've described all the steps so you can understand what your consultant is doing.

Tasmanian Government

1. Before you start

Identify the need

Functions carried out by more than one organisation are covered in common Disposal Schedules. You may need to develop your own Disposal Schedule if your functions:

- are unique
- are not completely covered by common schedules.

The questions in **Appendix 1** will help you decide if you need a schedule.

Contact us to discuss your plans

We will meet to discuss your plans and our approval timeframes.

We will set up access to Online Retention and Disposal Application (ORDA) for you and your consultant. ORDA is the web-based system used to draft schedules. We will also create a ‘shell’ in ORDA to develop your schedule in.

Define the scope

Consider the project scope and the Disposal Schedule you want:

- is this a new schedule or an update to an existing schedule?
- will it cover all or part of your functions?
- will it cover legacy records?

Talk to other organisations who have developed a schedule about their experiences. It may help you choose a consultant and the type of schedule you want.

Consider the advantages and disadvantages of traditional or rolled-up schedules when:

- setting up your business classification scheme
- managing and disposing digital records in your records and other business systems, M365 etc
- disposing of paper records.

Decide if your consultant will do all the work or if you will do some in-house.

Develop your business case and project plan

A good business case should discuss the business drivers, options, costs, and risks. Your case should provide a recommendation and sound argument for why this is the best choice. Outline benefits to your organisation. For example, 'With a new disposal schedule, we can dispose of a backlog of temporary records. This will save money on storage costs and minimise the impact of data breaches. Less time searching for records will create business efficiencies...'

Your project plan should consider:

- timeframes
- roles and responsibilities
- stakeholder consultation
- resources (including financial and human resources)
- vendor selection
- risk assessments
- monitoring, evaluation, and reporting requirements.

Identify stakeholders

Identify your stakeholders. You will need to consult throughout the process.

- Internal stakeholders include business managers, legal, risk and information technology staff. They can provide insight on records made, their value, use and where they are held.
- External stakeholders include other government bodies, private organisations, clients and the wider community.

Find a consultant

You will find a list of consultants on our website. We can tell you which ones are currently active in Tasmania.

2. Research

Appraisal

Appraisal is the process of deciding which records you need to create and how long to keep them to meet:

- business needs
- legal and regulatory requirements
- community and societal expectations.

You can use the results of appraisal for many purposes including developing Disposal Schedules.

Appraisal includes:

- consulting with stakeholders
- research
- understanding the organisation and its business activities
- analysing requirements to make and keep records
- documenting your decisions
- and more.

These steps are described more below.

Consult widely and often

Consult at various stages of development, not just at the start of the project. Consulting often means you are more likely to get a schedule that accurately reflects your functions.

Research similar schedules

A schedule describing all or part of your functions may already exist.

We have arrangements with other Australian archives and records authorities to share publications. Adapting an existing schedule may save a lot of time and work. Our website has links to others Australian archives and records authorities.

Analyse your functions

Analysing functions helps you understand how records are created and how they support your business. It also helps describe those functions when you draft your schedule.

You only need to identify and analyse your **unique** functions and activities:

- the goals and strategies of your organisation
- the broad functions of your organisation which support these goals and strategies
- the activities which make up the functions.

Functions completed by more than one organisation are covered in common disposal schedules. For example, *Disposal Schedule for common administrative functions (DA2157).*

Resources that can help with analysis of your functions and activities include:

- legislation, regulations and standards
- business documents like annual reports and policies
- interviews with staff.

Appendix 2 has a long list of resources to help you analyse your functions.

Map your legislation

Identifying recordkeeping requirements in legislation is called legislative mapping. Requirements may be in legislation specific to your organisation, and in whole-of-government legislation.

Legislation may contain words or phrases that tell you to make or keep a record. For example:

- minutes
- report
- signature
- ‘there shall be a register of licenses’
- ‘applications must be lodged using an official form’.

See *Identifying recordkeeping requirements in legislation* for more information.

Survey your records holdings

An information review typically involves a survey to identify your records holdings. This includes:

- current and legacy records
- records in all formats
- records in all business systems.

You can document findings in an Information Asset Register.

Focus on records unique to your organisation that are not covered by common schedules.

The survey aims to collect as much information as possible including:

- quantity
- date range (this is particularly relevant for legacy records)
- format/media
- the relationship between different recordkeeping systems, digital, hybrid and paper.

Develop an Information Asset Register

An Information Asset Register is a list of all the information assets your organisation holds. They identify:

- high-value high-risk information assets
- location of information assets
- responsibility for information assets.

Information assets are grouped, for example, ‘building asset data’, ‘legal advice’ etc. Assets are not described individually.

Information Asset Registers support:

- business continuity
- digital preservation
- governance
- information security
- risk analysis.

3. Develop

Consult widely and often

Consult at various stages of development, not just at the start of the project. Consulting often means you are more likely to get a schedule that accurately reflects your functions.

Draft the schedule

This step is where you write up the results of your completed research in your schedule.

You will draft your schedule in ORDA, completing:

- introductory ‘summary of records covered’
- functions, activities, classes
- retentions and disposal triggers
- appraisal notes and justifications.

Appraisal notes and justifications:

- explain why records are permanent or temporary
- propose retention periods
- assess the risk of keeping or not keeping records.

You identify temporary records and their retention periods through:

- business needs
- legal and regulatory requirements
- community and societal expectations.

Some of your records may be very important for your organisation for many years. But business value is not the same as permanent value. We explain what makes a record permanent in *Appraisal statement for State records required as State archives*.

We can supply an example of what we expect in your appraisal notes and justifications.

Developing a Disposal Schedule outlines the conventions to follow when drafting a schedule.

4. Approval

Submit your draft schedule to us

When you are ready to submit your schedule for review, you can do this through ORDA.

Review by the Office of the State Archivist

We aim to review your schedule within three months. It may take longer depending on:

- the size of your schedule
- the complexity of your schedule
- the quality of your appraisal notes and justifications
- how many changes we need to make
- how many other draft schedules we are reviewing.

During our review, we may contact you and your consultant with questions. We may make edits and suggest further changes.

Authorisation by State Archivist

Once you and our Office have agreed on the final draft, we send the schedule to the State Archivist for approval. There may be further discussions, clarification and changes.

Once the State Archivist formally approves the schedule, you may start to use it.

Schedule published

We publish the schedule on our website in PDF format. We will let you know when we have done this and will also publicise it in our newsletter.

5. Implement

Set up the schedule for use

Once your new schedule is authorised, use it for all new sentencing.

We can supply your schedule in CSV, PDF and Word and XML format. To load your schedule into your EDRMS, you will need CSV.

When setting up your new schedule, consider:

- can you load it into your records and other business systems?
- are records retentions automatically applied to records created or saved into systems? If not, can you configure systems or create manual processes to make this happen?
- can systems automatically calculate and apply disposal due dates from triggers? If not, can you configure systems or create manual processes to make this happen?
- the need for new or updated policies, procedures, training and communications.

6. Review

Review your schedule regularly

You may need to review and update your schedule because of changed:

- functions or activities
- legislation or regulatory requirements
- business needs
- community expectations
- perceptions of risk.

The process to update or develop a schedule is the same.

If you think you need to update an existing schedule or create a new one, please contact us to discuss.

APPENDIX 1

These questions will help you decide if you need a functional schedule.

In relation to each function:	Yes	No
Is there a close relationship between your organisation and another?		
Is your organisation dependent on another to complete work?		
Is your organisation dependent on another for approval to any processes?		
Does your organisation consult regularly with other organisations?		
Are there joint committees with other organisations?		
Are staff members seconded, either to or from the organisation?		
Is there any joint funding with another organisation?		
Does another organisation or outside body hold records?		
Does your organisation have agreements with other organisations?		
Do other organisations have responsibilities relating to your organisation's legislation?		
Does your organisation report to a government body?		
Do any other organisations perform these functions?		

If you answered 'yes' to any questions, it likely another organisation performs this function in parallel. Or it is likely another organisation contributes to performing the function. In this case, consult the organisation during your schedule development.

APPENDIX 2

The following resources will help you analyse your functions and map your legislation.

Administrative arrangements orders:

- set out the main responsibilities of ministers and the acts they administer.

Annual reports:

- identify business activities of the organisation
- may identify various business systems that contain records
  - for example, by reporting on implementation of new systems
- identify relevant legislation
- past annual reports are useful for historical analysis and support appraising legacy records.

Authorised or draft Disposal Schedules:

- identify previous retention periods and classes of records
- record class description may contain valuable research information
- may still have valid disposal actions and can be included in your new schedule with updated information
- identify record holdings, including legacy records.

Case histories:

- organisational litigation or legal disputes.

Information audits:

- may identify all formats used by your organisation to create and keep information.

Interviews and consultation:

- interviews, workshops and focus groups with relevant staff can gather and confirm information.

Investigation reports:

- by bodies like the Auditor-General or Ombudsman on your operations of your organisation.

Legislation:

- administered by your organisation, and whole-of-government legislation
- may set our organisational roles and powers
- may contain requirements to create records implicitly or explicitly
  - for example, an application
- may set out processes that must be followed, with implicit requirements to create records
  - for example, 'applications must be assessed' implies you will create assessment documents
- occasionally contain explicit information on how long to keep records
- may contain implicit information to help identify retention periods
  - for example, length of appeal period.

Legacy records:

- older records, sometimes inherited from predecessor organisations, may document functions and activities no longer performed.

Ministerial media releases:

- on the establishment of the organisation may include relevant information.

Ministerial Portfolio statements:

- useful for inner budget agencies
- include information on outputs, key strategies and achievements for agencies within a portfolio
- may include information on legislation and relationships with other agencies.

Organisational charts:

- identify key parts of the organisation and provide an outline of work performed
- can identify business teams or sections for research and consultation.

Organisational internet and intranet sites:

- identify activities and processes
- may identify business systems containing records.

Policy and procedure documents for business teams or sections:

- identify activities and processes
- identify requirements to create records, explicitly or implicitly
- may identify business systems that contain records.

Standards and General orders:

- identify activities and processes for compliance requirements.

Strategic planning documents:

- like corporate strategies and business plans may identify functions of the organisation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Office of the State Archivist (2020) *Identifying recordkeeping requirements in legislation*, OSA website, accessed 24 June 2025.

MORE INFORMATION

Documents in this series are:

- *What is disposal?*
- *What is a Disposal Schedule?*
- *How do I use a Disposal Schedule?*
- *How do I get a Disposal Schedule?*
- *Disposal Schedule conventions.*

CONTACT US

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How do I get a Disposal Schedule? is part of the *Tasmanian Government Information Management Framework.* It supports the *Information and records management standard.* This is a living document and we will make minor changes as needed. If you notice anything that needs updating, please let us know.

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Document Development History

Version	Date	Comments
1	12/08/2025	Initial release