Office of the State Archivist

DRAFT METADATA STANDARD

Draft

Our principles:

Value: We maximise the value of our state's information assets

Manage: We apply a risk-based approach to managing information assets

Share: We enable safe and secure sharing of information

10 February 2026

Tasmanian
Government

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This is a living document and we will make minor changes as needed. If you notice anything that needs updating, please let us know.

The *Metadata Standard* is part of the *Tasmanian Government Information Management Framework.*

Every five years we will review, update and reissue all of our Standards to ensure they reflect current best practice. The scheduled review date is [month year].

Document Development History

Version	Date	Comments
1	[Select date]	Authorised release
A	10/02/2026	Consultation draft

Table of contents

Purpose

WHAT IS METADATA?

Metadata is the data that describes other data or information.

The term 'metadata' is used and understood by professional communities differently. The simple definition of metadata is 'data about data'.

Recordkeeping and information systems metadata refers to data about:

- the context, content and structure of records and information and
- their management over time.

For example, the business context of a record may be supplied by the title, the creator, and the business transactions the record relates to. The subject line of an email may describe the content of a record. How a record has been managed over time may be shown by an audit log.

Records management and information systems rely on metadata to manage information.

Metadata itself is a record. This means you need to:

- manage and keep it for as long as specified in Disposal Schedules
- transfer permanent records and their metadata to the Tasmanian Archives.

Why metadata is important

If records have metadata, we can:

- find them
- know what they are about
- understand their context and purpose
- see who has created, accessed or changed them
- manage and control access to them.

Metadata schemas

A metadata schema is a set of rules about how to use metadata. It will generally specify:

- which elements to use (for example, 'date of creation', 'name')
- what elements mean (for example, 'date' may mean the date of creation, or modification, or all dates of action on a record)
- the relationship between elements
- use of elements (whether they are mandatory, conditional or optional).

 A metadata schema can also be called a 'metadata standard', or 'metadata element set'.

This *Metadata Standard* is a metadata schema. It is a set of minimum mandatory metadata elements and includes:

- metadata elements for all records
- additional metadata elements for permanent records.

You can also use other metadata schemas or elements to suit your business. For example, you might use a spatial or statistical metadata schema, as well as our *Metadata Standard*. Capture as much metadata as you find useful, for both the system and its users.

Scope

The *Metadata Standard* applies to the records and information created and managed by all organisations defined in the *Archives Act 1983* (Tas).

Authority

This standard is issued under Section 10A of the *Archives Act 1983* (Tas).

Implementation

It may not be possible or practical to meet our *Metadata Standard* retrospectively. The best time to implement it is when new or enhanced systems are being implemented.

When implementing this Standard, consider **value** and **risk**. In practice, this means that resource and effort should be directed to high-value, high-risk records.

The State Archivist sets the risk tolerance for Permanent records.

> Permanent records are to be transferred as State archives for addition to the Tasmanian Archives when no longer required for official purposes. Less than 5% of all records created by government are of permanent retention value. These high-value records are kept as the documentary heritage of the State of Tasmania.
>
> ***The State Archivist's tolerance of risk to these records is low***. This means prioritising management of these records above others and consulting the Office of the State Archivist for guidance on appropriate methods for their storage, preservation and accessibility.

Your organisation sets the risk tolerance for Temporary records.

> Your organisation's **high-value** records are records that your business could not function without.
>
> Your organisation's **high-risk** records may include, but are not limited to:

- those likely to be required in legal proceedings
- highly confidential or highly classified material
- those of potential value for sharing across government in response to high priority business
- commercially sensitive information
- personal or sensitive information.

> Identifying your high-value, high-risk records means that you can prioritise effort and resource to these records, over, for example, low-value, low-risk records.

We have adopted a risk-based approach based on feedback and current best practice. We recognise that this new approach is different from our previous focus on compliance, and we will support all organisations implementing this Standard. Further information and advice is provided in our Implementation tools.

We recommend that you apply a risk-based approach to records management. You should follow your organisational risk management processes.

Contact us to discuss any issues so we can address them together.

Note

This Standard replaces *State Records Guideline no 5: Recordkeeping Metadata.*

Minimum requirements

Name:	Description:	Mandatory for:
Agent	The creator or modifier of the record. Agents may include individuals, roles, business units or systems, organisational names.	All records
Date/s	All relevant date/s of action on the record. May include creation, modification, transfer etc.	All records
Identifier	A unique value that identifies the record. Examples include system generated numbers or human assigned titles.	All records
Information security	A label that denotes a record's information security classification status or sensitivity. It can also indicate special handling or restricted access requirements. *Tasmania's Protective Security Policy Framework (TAS-PSPF)* specifies classification, protective marking etc.	All records *
Description	Description of the record and/or its content or context. May include a title if the Identifier is numeric, or an extended description of the record.	Permanent records #
Disposal	Information about the Disposal Schedule and disposal actions that relate to a record. Includes whether the record is permanent.	Permanent records #
Format	A description of the record's format. For example, file format such as PDF or JPEG, map, microform, photograph etc.	Permanent records #

Table 1: Office of the State Archivist mandatory minimum metadata elements and descriptions.

* Only mandatory for organisations subject to the TAS PSPF.

You may also choose to apply these elements to your long-term, high-value, high-risk records.

Acknowledgements

This Standard replaces the now withdrawn Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office publication:

- *State Records Guideline no 5: Recordkeeping Metadata*.

We thank the archives and records authorities that have influenced this Standard:

- Public Record Office Victoria (2019) *Specification PROS 19/05 S2: Minimum Metadata Requirements*, PROV website, accessed 29 October 2025.
- State Records Office of Western Australia (2021) *Metadata: Guidance: Records Management Advice*, WA Government website, accessed 29 October 2025.

More information

- Office of the State Archivist (2024) *Information and Records Management Standard*, Version 1.1, OSA website, accessed 29 October 2025.
- Office of the State Archivist (2026) *Metadata*, OSA website, accessed 10 February 2026.
- Standards Australia (2006) *Information and Documentation – Records Management Processes – Metadata for Records – Part 1: Principles*, AS/ISO 23081.1-2006, Reconfirmed 2016, Standards Australia.
- Standards Australia (2017) *Information and Documentation – Records Management – Part 1: Concepts and Principles,* AS/ISO15489-1:2017, Standards Australia.
- Tasmania Department of Premier and Cabinet (2024) *Information Security INFOSEC-2: Protecting Official Information*, Tasmania's Protective Security Policy Framework (TAS-PSPF), Version 2.0, Tasmanian Government Security website, accessed 29 October 2025.