

Fact Sheet

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Describing Series:

Common Series in Government

This fact sheet will assist you in answering Question 2 on the PRO 21B – New Series form and Question 6 on the PRO 21B – New Consignment form, in which agencies are required to list the title of the record series they will be transferring to PROV.

Government agencies deal with a large variety of record types, a number of which are specific to the agency that created the record. This applies equally to physical and digital records.

How to title a series

PROV has conventions regarding series titles in order to promote coherency and ease of access to records but tries to register series under their original title wherever possible. For example the record originally called 'Master of Lunacy' would continue to be referred to by this title.

The title given to a series must be what the record was known as at the time of its creation and what it was called when in use. If this title is not explanatory (e.g. Green Books) then agencies are encouraged to place an accurate and meaningful alternate title in square brackets next to the original title.

Series titling is important because it is the main way records are located in PROV's archival management system. In order to ensure that a record series is easy to locate the title must have meaning beyond the local agency. To help you with this please find below descriptions of series that are very common in government.

Correspondence Records

The title given to correspondence records should distinguish between general correspondence and correspondence relating to specific activities.

If an agency has more than one correspondence series then the title of the series should identify which agency or individual the correspondence relates to (e.g. Chief Executive Officer Correspondence).

Correspondence records may be digital or physical. Examples of digital correspondence series can be seen in the records created by an Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS), such as the TRIM system used by the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Committee (VPRS 15687) or in a database such as a Case Management System.

Common Correspondence Records

General Correspondence Systems: Files comprising of inwards correspondence and copies of outwards correspondence that have been registered with an alpha-numeric system. These files are identified by unique registration codes and are usually created in 19th and 20th century recordkeeping systems.

This includes formal correspondence records, such as:

Inward Correspondence Files

Comprise of inwards correspondence that has been registered within an alpha-numeric control system. For example VPRS 421 Secretary's Registered Inward Correspondence, which contains correspondence created during the day to day running of the Victorian Railways.

Outward Letter Books

Volumes that contain copies of outward correspondence. (These files are usually created in 19th and early 20th century recordkeeping systems). For example the Chairman's Outward Letter Books (VPRS 7767) from the Melbourne Metropolitan Tramways Board, which contain copies of letters of reply on a variety of topics including: agency administration, employment, industrial disputes, technical matters and replies to personal letters.

Registers

Registers govern the arrangement of correspondence. They are used to record the allocation of registration codes to correspondence items or files. A register will usually record the receipt of correspondence or the creation of files in chronological order and indicate their subsequent movement and location. For example the

volume titled 'Register of Applications for Exemption from Military Service 1916' (VPRS 1449).

If entries are made in the register in chronological order within alphabetical groupings then the register is known as a *Self Indexing Register*.

If a *Self Indexing Register* exists **and** the allocation of registration codes has been made into a separate volume then the record containing the allocation of registration codes is known as a *Numerical Register*. When dealing with a *Numerical Register* ensure that the format of the register (e.g. card index or volume) is noted.

Indexes

Indexes are created to allow information to be retrieved. They are an **alphabetically arranged list** of subjects/names etc. which facilitate the retrieval of correspondence files. For example item 1982/469 the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (S.E.C.V) Capital Cost Escalation Index (VPRS 8924).

It is important to identify the type of index, such as a name index and the form of the index, such as a card index.

Other correspondence systems include:

General Correspondence Subject Files: These files are controlled by subject terms only (no registration codes or numbers). For example the files created by the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Committee (VPRS 15687)

Inward Unregistered Correspondence

Correspondence items that have been received and controlled individually but have not been registered (registered in this case means arranged in subject or chronological order). For example, the Inward Unregistered Correspondence of the Superintendent of Port Phillip District (VPRS 21).

List of Authorised File Classifications

Records of the subject (or other) classifications used when creating files. For example, the List of Authorised File Classifications (VPRS 15689) used by the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation to classify and arrange the records maintained by their EDRMS.

This list should indicate the numeric or alpha-numeric codes allocated to each classification. It will usually be in numerical order, reflecting the structure of the classification system. (In some agencies this list may be referred to as an index while agencies who have classified control systems may refer to this as a register).

List of Authorised Index Headings

Records of the subject (or other) terms which were used when indexing files. For example Authorised List of Subject Headings (Personnel Registry) (VPRS 8919) for

the State Electricity Commission which contains an alphabetically arranged list of authorised subject index headings used to control the indexing of personnel registry files.

Records of Boards and Committees

Boards and Committees can generate a variety of different meeting records. These include:

Agenda Papers: Records describing the program and topics to be discussed at a meeting.

Committee Minutes: Records of decisions and discussions that occurred at Committee meetings. If there are minutes recorded for more than one committee a differentiation must be made between them. This is done by listing the committee name in the title.

Local Government Records

One of the most common record types created by Local Government are rates records. Rates can be recorded in a variety of different formats. (Where applicable distinguish between general, extra and special rates). Types of rate records are:

Rate Books: Rate records that are retained in volumes. They comprise of the description of persons and properties being rated as well as rate account details.

Rate Cards: Rate records maintained on cards. These records comprise of the description of persons and properties being rated as well as rate account details.

Rates Register: This record contains only the portion of the rate record that deals with the accounting details.

Register of rateable properties: This record contains the portion of the rate record that deals with the description of persons and properties being rated.

However, rate records are not the only records created by Local Government. They may also be involved in creating:

Council Minutes: Records of decisions and discussions that occurred at a Council meeting.

Court Records

These series titles relate to records found within the Magistrates' Courts and include records of the former courts of Petty Sessions, Mines, Children's Courts, Licensing Courts and Insolvency Courts.

Record titles include:

- Children's Court Register
- Court of Mines Register

- Court of Petty Sessions Adoption of Children Register
- Court of Petty Sessions Cause List Books
- Court of Petty Sessions Index of Convictions
- Court of Petty Sessions Register of Applications for Exemption from Military Service
- Court of Petty Sessions/Magistrates' Court Commonwealth Register
- Court of Petty Sessions/Magistrates' Court Maintenance and Family Law Register
- Court of Petty Sessions/Magistrates' Court Police/Arrest Register
- Court of Petty Sessions/Magistrates' Court Quasi Register
- Court of Petty Sessions/Magistrates' Court Register
- Court of Petty Sessions/Magistrates' Court Special Complaints Register
- Insolvency Court Register

Mental Health Records (Pre – 1995)

Series titles used for records created by public institutions for the detention and care of people with psychiatric illness:

- Casebooks
- Discharge Register
- Nominal Register
- Patient Clinical Notes and Patient Files
- Register of Patients

Mining Records (Pre – 1900)

These refer to records of the former Mining Wardens and Mining Registrars. They have usually been inherited by local Magistrates' Courts.

Types of records series include:

- Mining Registrar's Register of Claims
- Mining Warden's Register
- Mining Warden's Register of Agreements
- Mining Warden's Register of Applications for Mining Leases/Licences

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