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| Recordkeeping Policy  Data and Recordkeeping | Version number: 0.4:  Issue Date: DD MMM YYYY  Expiry Date: 00 MMMM YYYY |
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* 1. **Application**

The Keeper of Public Records has approved a recordkeeping policy for data and recordkeeping. Public offices should apply its terms in line with the *PROV Value and Risk Policy*[[1]](#footnote-1) and recordkeeping standards[[2]](#footnote-2) to relevant recordkeeping decisions and practices.

* 1. **Policy**

It is Public Record Office Victoria’s (PROV) policy that:

1. Data, information, and records are all public records that require management in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* (the Act) [[3]](#footnote-3).
   1. Data is included in the definition of ’record’ under the Act.
   2. This legislation and the recordkeeping standards issued under it are technologically neutral and apply regardless of the medium or format used (including paper, film, audio tape, and digital).
2. Management of data, as with management of records in general, must be in accordance with the Recordkeeping Standards issued by the Keeper of Public Records under the Act.[[4]](#footnote-4)
3. Retention of data must be in line with a relevant and current Retention and Disposal Authority, issued by the Keeper of Public Records.
4. Disposal of data, as with disposal of records, must be authorised by the Keeper of Public Records, lawful and in accordance with the relevant disposal instrument:
   1. Retention and Disposal Authorities cover functions of government.[[5]](#footnote-5)
   2. Single Instance Disposal Authorities cover legacy and other instances that are no longer current.[[6]](#footnote-6)
   3. Normal Administrative Practice includes copies, duplications, and ephemeral material.[[7]](#footnote-7)
   4. **Background**

Under the Act, the definition of ‘record’ is the same as the definition of document under the *Evidence Act 2008*[[8]](#footnote-8) and is as follows:

‘Document means any record of information, and includes—

* 1. anything on which there is writing; or
  2. anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols, or perforations having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them; or
  3. anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; or
  4. a map, plan, drawing or photograph’.

This definition is broad and includes data as well as information.

A public record, under the Act, is any record made **or received** by a public officer in the course of their duties / any record made or received by a court or person acting judicially in Victoria. Rather than ownership, the focus is on the purpose of the data and why the public office has the data. The public office is then able to determine appropriate management of their records (including data) in line with the recordkeeping Standards issued by PROV.

PROV documentation will refer to metadata, which is defined as being ‘Descriptive information about the content, context, structure, and management of records. It can be created, captured, and managed automatically by a piece of software or system, manually by a person, or by using a combined approach. Metadata about records may be held across a number of different systems within an agency, including recordkeeping and/or business systems.’[[9]](#footnote-9)

Data is broader than metadata and can be part of the record itself. For example, a database could be a record, containing data as well as being described through metadata. The raw data that enables charts and graphs to be made in support of a decision or recommendation documented in a report may be kept separately from the report.

For information on privacy and data (including personal data) or data protection, please refer to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.[[10]](#footnote-10) For information on open data and data sharing, please refer to DataVic.[[11]](#footnote-11)

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1. PROV Recordkeeping Policy: A value and risk-based approach to records management, available via PROV’s website <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/document-library/value-risk-policy> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/standards-framework> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/public-records-act-1973/041 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/standards-framework> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/how-long-should-records-be-kept/retention-and-disposal-authorities-rdas> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/how-long-should-records-be-kept> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/a-z-topics/normal-administrative-practice-nap> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/evidence-act-2008/026> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://prov.vic.gov.au/recordkeeping-government/a-z-topics/glossary> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://ovic.vic.gov.au/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.vic.gov.au/data-sharing-open-data> and https://www.data.vic.gov.au/ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)