

Master Glossary

Public Record Office Victoria

November 2016

This glossary provides definitions of key terms used in Standards documentation issued by the Public Record Office Victoria.

Action: 'The process or condition of acting or doing, the exertion of energy or influence'.ⁱ

Agency: See *Government Agency*.

Agency Custody: Agency 'responsibility for the physical preservation of documents'ⁱⁱ. This includes agencies that have outsourced the storage function, such as records stored within an APROSS on behalf of an agency.

Agreement: 'Meeting of minds (or an evidence of mutual accord or understanding) between two or more legally competent parties, about their relative duties and rights regarding current or future performance. Although a binding contract can (and often does) result from an agreement, an agreement typically documents the give-and-take of a negotiated settlement and a contract specifies the minimum acceptable standard of performance.'ⁱⁱⁱ

Aim: The main purpose or vision of the strategy.

Aligned: A parallel or coordinated arrangement or approach.

Appraisal: The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations.^{iv}

Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier (APROSS): A commercial storage facility which has been appointed by the Keeper of Public Records under s.12 of the *Public Records Act 1973* following an inspection regarding its suitability for the storage of public records. Records held in an APROSS are deemed to be under the custody of the controlling agency.

Archival Storage: Storage provided by an organisation whose purpose is to manage and preserve public records for future use by the public. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Public Record Office Victoria;
- Ballarat Archives Centre;
- Bendigo Regional Archives Centre; and
- POD Repositories.

Assessed: The document or service has been examined to determine if any changes are required. If no changes are required, the date of assessment is noted and a new assessment cycle begun. If changes are required, the document or service is updated accordingly.

Authorised People: People with the appropriate skills and competence that have been formally authorised to create and capture records, as documented in agency policy, position descriptions and procedures.

Authorised Systems: Systems formally authorised to create and capture records as documented in agency policy and procedure.

Authenticity: 'An authentic record is one that can be proven:

- To be what it purports to be;
- To have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it; and
- To have been created or sent at the time purported.'^v

Beneficial Ownership: Beneficial ownership is enjoyed by anyone who has the benefits of ownership of an asset, and yet does not nominally own the asset.

Business Record: A public record that relates to the business of the agency and must be managed as evidence of business decision and transactions. This excludes ephemeral records and records of business that are not beneficially owned by the agency.

Certification: Formal authorisation from the *Keeper of Public Records*.

Classification: 'Systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and / or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification system.'^{vi}

Clients: A person or organisation served by or utilising the services of the agency.

Closed Access: Public records (in PROV custody) that have been assessed, approved by the relevant ministers responsible for the agency and the PROV and deemed closed under s9, s10 or s10AA of the *Public Records Act 1973*.

Compliance Audit: 'The systematic and documented process for obtaining evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are complied to within the agency.'^{vii}

Consignment: see *Series Consignment*.

Container: See *Storage Container*.

Context: 'The knowledge necessary to sustain a record's meaning or evidential value. Context describes the who, what, where and why of record creation and use.'^{viii}

Continuous Improvement: 'The process of establishing objectives and finding opportunities for improvement is a continuous process through the use of audit findings, audit conclusions, analysis of data, management reviews, or other means and generally leads to corrective action or preventative action.'^{ix}

Contract: 'Voluntary, deliberate, and legally enforceable (binding) agreement between two or more competent parties. A contractual relationship is evidenced by (1) an offer, (2) acceptance of the offer, and a (3) valid (legal and valuable) consideration.'^x

Controlling Agency: 'Organisation or part of an organisation in which a group of records is created or received and accumulated in the conduct of business'^{xi}.

Corporate Culture: 'An attitude, policy, rule, course of conduct or practice existing within the body corporate generally or in the part of the body corporate in which the relevant conduct is carried out or the relevant intention formed.'^{xii}

Current Records: 'Records regularly used for the conduct of the current business of an agency, institution or organisation'^{xiii}.

Custodian: A person, business unit or agency that has custody.

Custody: Responsibility for the care of records and archives, usually based on their physical possession. Custody does not necessarily include legal ownership.

Destruction: The process of eliminating or deleting records, beyond any possible reconstruction.^{xiv}

Disaster: 'An incident or calamity caused by accident, natural causes, or deliberate intent and resulting in:

- Serious damage or destruction to records and facilities;
- A sudden threat to personal safety; or

- Major disruption of operations.^{xv}

Disposal: A range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions which are documented in disposal authorities or other instruments. These include the retention, destruction or deletion of records in or from recordkeeping systems. They may also include the migration or transmission of records between recordkeeping systems, the transfer of ownership or the transfer of custody of records, e.g. to Public Record Office Victoria.^{xvi}

Disposal Authority / Authorisation: See *Retention & Disposal Authority; Single Instance Disposal Authority*.

Document: See *Public Record*.

Endorsement: The document has been read, understood, and formally agreed to at the appropriate level. This includes formal support for the implementation of the policy, strategy, programme or other subject of the document.

Ephemeral Record: Working papers, drafts and copies of public records that do not need to be retained for business purposes and which may be disposed of under Normal Administrative Practice (NAP).

Executive / Senior Executive: 'A person [or people] employed under Part 3 [of the *Public Administration Act 2004*] as a public service body Head or other executive;^{xvii} or Senior Officer as described by the *Local Government Act 1989*.^{xviii}

Function: Functions represent the major responsibilities that are managed by an agency to fulfil its goals. Functions are high level aggregates of the agency's activities.

Government Agency: Any department, agency or office of the Government of Victoria.^{xix} It includes:

- any department branch or office of the Government of Victoria;
- any public statutory body corporate or unincorporate;
- a State owned enterprise within the meaning of the *State Owned Enterprises Act 1992*;
- any municipal council;
- any other local governing body corporate or unincorporated; and
- any Victorian court or person acting judicially.

Head of a Government Agency: The head of a department, administrative office, public sector body, public service body, small entity, or standard entity as described by the *Public Administration Act 2004*^{xx} or the Chief Executive Officer as described by the *Local Government Act 1989*.^{xxi}

Information and Documentation Organisation: See *Archival Storage*.

Integrity: 'The integrity of a record refers to its being complete and unaltered.'^{xxii}

Joint Venture: 'A joint venture is a legal entity that has been created for the purpose of undertaking business activity. Two or more parties may establish a business relationship to undertake a joint venture.'^{xxiii}

Keeper of Public Records: The Keeper is the Director of Public Record Office Victoria. The Keeper of Public Records ('the Keeper') is responsible for the establishment of Standards for the efficient management of public records and for assisting agencies to apply those Standards to records under their control.^{xxiv}

Location: 'A particular place.'^{xxv} This may be geographical, virtual, or relate to specific individuals.

Machinery of Government: The allocation or reallocation of government functions between government agencies.

Mapped: Diagrammatic or graphic representation that explicitly links two concepts and can therefore be used to illustrate relationships. Examples of mapping methods include ontological engineering, OBASHI method, crosswalks mapping, workflow diagrams and relationship diagrams.

Metadata: 'Data describing the context, content and structure of records and their management through time'.^{xxvi} Metadata is not format based and can be recorded on various media including on hardcopy documents, in related databases and in electronic systems.

Mission Statement: The statements of intent, set of functions, set of values, or set of objectives, that describes the vision or purpose of the agency at a high level^{xxvii}.

Movement: Change of location. This includes a change of location from one system to another, from one storage location to another, from one user to another, from one agency to another, or one business unit to another.

Non-current Records: ‘Records no longer needed by their office of origin to conduct current business’^{xxviii}.

Normal Administrative Practice (NAP): The destruction of some public records is permitted under normal administrative practice (NAP). NAP covers the destruction of ephemeral material of a facilitative or duplicate nature created, acquired or collected by public sector employees during the course of their duties.

Objectives: The specific goals, major products, or major services required to meet the purpose of the strategy.

Officer in Charge of a Public Office: See *Head of Government Agency*.

Office of Origin: See *Controlling Agency*.

Open Access: Unrestricted access to records that are open for inspection by the public.

Operational Management: The day to day running of the systems, practices, and processes related to the records management function across an agency.

Outsourcing: Engagement of external service providers by government agencies, under a contract or agreement, to perform functions and activities on behalf of government or provide services for government.

Ownership: The state of holding a legal right to property that is the most extensive and absolute property interest in law. Most commonly refers to legal title executed through a legally binding agreement. Beneficial ownership, as provided for under s. 19 2 of the *Public Records Act 1973*, refers to a situation where the law recognises that a person has an interest in the property and rights to enjoy the property, even if that person does not hold the legal title.

Permanent Records: A public record which has been appraised by the *Keeper of Public Records* as required to be kept as part of Victoria’s State Archives. Permanent records are specified in *Retention & Disposal Authorities* issued by the Keeper.

Personal Information: Information or an opinion that is recorded in any form and whether true or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.^{xxix}

Personal Record: A public record that is entirely of a personal nature and which has no relevance to the business of an agency.

Place of Deposit (POD): A facility or area appointed under s.14 of the *Public Records Act 1973*, to store specified classes of records. A POD may be appointed to hold temporary records which would otherwise be destroyed; or certified by the *Keeper of Public Records* as a *POD Repository* to hold *State Archives* on behalf of PROV. Records held in a POD are deemed to be under the custody and control of the Keeper of Public Records.

POD Repository: A facility or area appointed under s.14 of the *Public Records Act 1973* to store *State Archives* on behalf of PROV. Records held in a POD repository are deemed to be under the custody and control of the Keeper of Public Records.

Privatisation: ‘The transfer of entire functions and activities of an agency, or part thereof, to the private sector.’^{xxx}

Provenance: ‘The relationships between records and the agencies or individuals that created, accumulated and/or maintained those records in the conduct of personal or corporate activities.’^{xxxi}

Public Office: See *Government Agency*.

Public Officer: See *Public Sector Employee*.

Public Private Partnership: ‘A partnership formed between the public and private sectors for the purpose of delivering a service formerly provided by government. A public private partnership may involve government and one or more private sector entities.’^{xxxii}

Public Record:

- (a) any record made or received by a *public officer* in the course of his duties; and
- (b) any record made or received by a court or person acting judicially in Victoria—

but does not include—

(c) a record which is beneficially owned by a person or body other than the Crown or a public office or a person or body referred to in s. 2B [of the *Public Records Act 1973*]; or

(d) a prescribed record held for the purpose of preservation by a public office to which it was transferred before the commencement of the *Arts Institutions (Amendment) Act 1994* by a person or body other than the Crown or a public office; or

(e) a record, other than a prescribed record, held for the purpose of preservation by a public office to which it was transferred, whether before or after the commencement of the *Arts Institutions (Amendment) Act 1994*, by a person or body other than the Crown or a public office.^{xxxiii}

Public records may be divided into *business records*, *ephemeral records* and *personal records*.

Public Sector Employee: Any person employed in a *government agency* or who performs work over which an agency has, or should have, direct control and for which an agency has direct liability. It is derived from 'public officer' in s. 2 of the *Public Records Act 1973*.

Record Series: A record series is a group of records which are recorded or maintained by the same agency (or agencies) and which:

- are in the same numerical, alphabetical, chronological or other identifiable sequence; or
- result from the same accumulation or filing process.

A series is composed of items and can consist of a single item or several thousand items. It may be recorded by a single agency or by a succession of agencies. A Victorian Public Record Series is identified by the prefix VPRS followed by a space then a sequential number.

Recordkeeping: 'Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.'^{xxxiv}

Recordkeeping Framework: The policy, strategy, and stakeholder engagement model that addresses the needs of records management across an agency. The framework is derived from legislation, regulation (including PROV Standards), industry standards and government strategies, policies and directives.

Records Centre: See *Storage Facility*.

Records Management: 'Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.'^{xxxv}

Registry: 'Part of an organisation responsible for the creation and control of current records'^{xxxvi}.

Reliability: 'A reliable record is one whose contents can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts to which they attest and can be depended upon in the course of subsequent transactions or activities.'^{xxxvii}

Restricted Access: Access to public records within an agency's custody has been limited to a specific and defined group of people. Restricting access can be applied where the restriction is justified based on legislation, court rules, personal privacy, confidentiality, "in confidence" such as cabinet in confidence, commercial requirements and legal professional privilege.

Retention & Disposal Authorities (RDAs): Standards issued by the Keeper under section 12 of the *Act* that defines the minimum retention periods and consequent disposal action authorised for classes of records which are described in it. RDAs provide continuing authorisation for the disposal of these classes of records. RDAs may be specific to an agency or applicable to more than one agency.

Retention Period: 'Period of time that records should be retained in their offices of origin or in records centres before they are transferred to an information and documentation organisation or otherwise disposed of'^{xxxviii}.

Retrievable: 'Process of recovering specific documents from a store'^{xxxix} This requires accurate identification of the

record, including its location, access status, and that the information contained on the record is readable.

Semi-current Records: ‘Records required infrequently in the conduct of current business’^{xi}.

Senior Officer: A person or committee with managerial responsibility.

Sentencing: Sentencing is the process of identifying and classifying records according to a retention and disposal authority, recording/registering the appropriate disposal decision and action for the records, and applying the disposal actions specified in the retention and disposal authority.^{xlii}

Series: See *Record Series*.

Series Consignment: ‘A series consignment comprises of record items belonging to the one series which are deposited into the custody of PROV as part of the one physical transfer. A series consignment may consist of the whole or only part of a series.’^{xliii}

Single Instance Disposal Authority (SIDA): A formal instrument issued by the Keeper in accordance with this Standard that authorises the retention period and consequent disposal action for the records which are described in it. Unlike an RDA, a SIDA does not authorise continuing disposal of the classes of records that have been appraised within it.

Stakeholder: ‘Those people or entities who may affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by, a decision or activity.’^{xliiii} Stakeholders may be internal and / or external. Key stakeholders are those identified after analysis as being central to the decision or activity concerned.

State Archives: Records identified as being of permanent significance to the government and people of Victoria and maintained and controlled by Public Record Office Victoria.

Storage: The ‘process involving placement and retention of data and documents for subsequent use’^{xliiv}.

Storage Area: A vault, cupboard, room, shelves, or compactus whose primary purpose is to store current and semi-current public records. For electronic records, this may be the room that stores equipment containing electronic records. This may be within an agency or within an APROSS.

Storage Container: An object (physical or virtual) that holds records whilst they are in storage in a manner that assists with their preservation, handling and retrieval. For example a box, case, file or folder.

Storage Facility: A dedicated building ‘for the low-cost storage, maintenance and reference use of semi-current [and non-current] records, pending their ultimate disposal’^{xliiv}. This may be owned or operated by an agency or by an APROSS, and may store records in any format (including electronic) if the facility meets relevant requirements.

Storage Service: Actions undertaken by the storage service provider to add value to the provision of storage of public records on behalf of Victorian government agencies. This includes, but is not limited to, the provision of:

- Reading, copying or digitisation services to provide clients with access to records or copies of records they have stored;
- Documentation services to assist with boxing and listing of records to achieve more efficient retrieval;
- Processing areas;
- Retrieval and transport services;
- Destruction services for records that have reached the end of their retention period.

Store: To place a record in a *Storage Area* or *Storage Facility*.

Strategic Management: ‘The set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of an organisation.’^{xlivi}

Structure: The ‘format and relationships between the elements comprising the record.’^{xlvii}

SWOT Analysis: ‘An analysis of the agency’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.’^{xlviii}

System: ‘Information system which captures, manages and provides access to records through time.’^{xlix} A system may be manual or automated and includes the processes, procedures and business rules required to operate it.

Temporary Records: A public record which has been appraised by the *Keeper of Public Records* as being required to be kept for a specific period of time for legislative or other requirements, before it can be destroyed. Destruction must be in accordance with standards issued under section 12 of the *Public Records Act*. Temporary records are specified in *Retention & Disposal Authorities* issued by the Keeper.

Transfer (Custody): Change of custody, ownership and/or responsibility for records.ⁱ

Tracking: 'Creating, capturing and maintaining information about the movement and use of records.'ⁱⁱ

Transfer of Custodianship: The transfer of ownership and functional responsibility of records due to amalgamations, structural or functional changes, site closures or Machinery of Government Changes (MOGC). It does not refer to the transfer of permanent value records to the Public Record Office Victoria.

Useability: 'A useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted.'ⁱⁱⁱ

Version: A copy of a record that has been changed as part of a revision process, resulting in a new record being created. A minor version is created as part of the drafting process and a major version as part of the authorisation process.

Vital Records: Records that contain information essential for the continued operations of an agency.

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ⁱ CT Onions, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, Volume 1: A to Markworthy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford England, 1973 p. 20.

ⁱⁱ Standards Australia, *AS/NZS ISO 5127 Australian / New Zealand standard on information and documentation – Vocabulary*, Standards Australia, Sydney, 2004, ss. 6.1.02, p. 87.

ⁱⁱⁱ BusinessDictionary.com 2010, *Agreement definition*, BusinessDictionary.com, Fairfax Virginia USA, viewed 16 March 2010, <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/agreement.html>>.

^{iv} J Bettington et al. eds, *Keeping archives*, 3rd edn, Australian Society of Archivists, Canberra, 2008, pp. 11- 28.

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- ^v Standards Australia, *AS ISO 15489.1: Australian standard on records management: part 1*, Standards Australia, Sydney, 2002, s. 7.2.2, p. 7.
- ^{vi} *AS ISO 15489:1*, ss. 3.5, p. 2.
- ^{vii} Standards Australia, *AS/NZS ISO 9000:2006 Australian/New Zealand standard on quality management systems – Fundamentals and vocabulary*, Standards Australia, Sydney, 2006, p. 16.
- ^{viii} Standards Australia, *HB 5031:2011 Records Classification Handbook*, Standards Australia, Sydney, 2011, s.9, p. 39.
- ^{ix} *AS/NZS ISO 9000:2006*, p. 9.
- ^x BusinessDictionary.com 2010, *Contract definition*, BusinessDictionary.com, Fairfax Virginia USA, viewed 16 March 2010, <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/contract.html>>.
- ^{xi} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 3.3.10, p. 40.
- ^{xii} *Crimes Act 1958*, s. 253.
- ^{xiii} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 3.3.05, p. 40.
- ^{xiv} *AS ISO 15489:1*, ss. 3.8, p. 2.
- ^{xv} Libraries and Archives Canada, *Emergency Preparedness: Guide on Emergency and Disaster Control: Definitions*, Libraries and Archives Canada, 2006, viewed on 16 December 2010, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/about-us/emergency-preparedness/012015-102-e.html>>.
- ^{xvi} *AS ISO 15489:1*, s. 3.9, p. 3.
- ^{xvii} *Public Administration Act 2004*, s. 23.
- ^{xviii} *Local Government Act 1989*, s. 3.
- ^{xix} *Public Records Act 1973*, s. 2.
- ^{xx} *Public Administration Act 2004*, s. 4.
- ^{xxi} *Local Government Act 1989*, s. 3.
- ^{xxii} *AS ISO 15489.1*, ss. 7.2.4, p 7.
- ^{xxiii} CAARA 2007, *Recordkeeping issues associated with Outsourcing and Privatisation of Government Functions*, CAARA, Canberra, viewed 12 May 2009, <<http://www.caara.org.au/Policy/policy13.htm>>.
- ^{xxiv} *Public Records Act 1973*, ss. 6-7.
- ^{xxv} JB Sykes, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* sixth edition, Oxford University Press, London, UK, 1976, p. 638.
- ^{xxvi} *AS ISO 15489.1*, ss. 3.12, p. 3.
- ^{xxvii} Robbins et al, *Management 3rd Edition*, Prentice Hall, Frenchs Forrest New South Wales, 2003, p. 742
- ^{xxviii} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 3.3.07, p. 40.
- ^{xxix} Information Privacy Act 2000, s. 3.
- ^{xxx} CAARA, 2007.
- ^{xxxi} J Bettington et al (Eds), *Keeping Archives* 3rd Edition, Australian Society of Archivists Inc., 2008, p.636.
- ^{xxxii} CAARA 2007.
- ^{xxxiii} *Public Records Act 1973*, s. 2.
- ^{xxxiv} J Bettington et al, 2008, p. 636.
- ^{xxxv} *AS ISO 15489:1*, ss. 3.16, p. 3.
- ^{xxxvi} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 3.3.13, p. 40.
- ^{xxxvii} *AS ISO 15489.1*, ss. 7.2.3, p. 7.
- ^{xxxviii} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 4.1.1.23, p. 44.
- ^{xxxix} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 1.2.06, p. 11.
- ^{xl} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 3.3.06, p. 40.
- ^{xli} State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Guideline 12: Implementing a disposal authority*, State Government of NSW, Sydney, 2004.
- ^{xlii} PROV 1992, p. 3.
- ^{xliiii} Standards Australia, *AS 8000 Good governance principles*, Standards Australia, Sydney, 2003, p. 9.
- ^{xliiv} *S AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 4.3.1.1.01, p. 68.
- ^{xli v} *AS/NZS ISO 5127*, ss. 3.3.12, p. 40.
- ^{xli vi} Robbins et al, 2003, p. 745.
- ^{xli vii} *AS ISO 15489:1*, ss. 7.2.1, p. 7.
- ^{xli viii} Robbins et al, 2003, p. 746.
- ^{xli ix} *AS ISO 15489:1*, ss. 3.17, p. 3.
- ^l *AS ISO 15489:1*, s. 3.20, p. 3.
- ^{li} *AS ISO 15489:1*, ss. 3.19, p. 3.
- ^{lii} *AS ISO 15489.1*, ss. 7.2.5, p. 7.