

Glossary

Public Record Office Victoria

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This glossary provides definitions of key terms used in documentation issued by PROV.

TERM	DEFINITION
A	
Access, closed	<p>Public records in PROV custody may be closed to public access in accordance with sections 9, 10 or 10AA of the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> (“the Act”).</p> <p>Closed access records are not available to the public and may only be viewed by the agency currently responsible for the records.</p> <p>Records may be closed to public access for a number of reasons including the protection of personal privacy, to prevent the disclosure of matters such as commercial in confidence deliberations and cabinet decision making.</p> <p>It is customary for categories of exemption under the <i>Freedom of Information Act</i> to be used when determining whether records should be closed under s10(1) of the Act.</p> <p>Records may be closed for security reasons under s10AA of the Act.</p> <p>Section 11 of the Act allows the Keeper of Public Records to close records from access if the preservation of the record could be jeopardised.</p>
Access, open	<p>Public records in PROV custody that are available for public inspection in PROV reading rooms or online. All records transferred to the custody of PROV are open access unless they are specifically closed under a section of the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i>.</p>
Access, restricted	<p>(a) 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 when 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.</p> <p>(b) The term “Restricted Access” is also used by PROV to describe the access status of records transferred from the Parliament of Victoria to PROV custody. Prior approval from either Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Council (as applicable) must be sought before restricted access records can be viewed by the public at PROV.</p>
Accession	<p>The process of formally accepting a group of records or archives from the same source, with the same provenance, into an archive repository’s holdings at the same time.</p>
Administrative use, ceases	<p>In general, ‘after last action’ should refer to the last time the record was used as part of the business process it was created to support. It should not refer to subsequent reference use of the record, as the retention period should sufficiently allow for this. Given the potential confusion that can result from using this trigger, it should be carefully defined and implemented in a consistent way across the agency.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
Agency (or Public Office)	An administrative unit which has or had responsibility for the provision of at least one aspect of government administration. Under the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> it means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <i>State Owned Enterprise Act 1992</i>; • any municipal council; • any other local governing body corporate or unincorporate; • any Victorian court or person acting judiciously.¹
Agency custody	Agency responsibility for the physical preservation of documents . This includes agencies that have outsourced the storage function, such as records stored with an APROSS on behalf of an agency.
Agency, responsible	An agency is considered the “responsible agency” by PROV if it is the current government agency which is responsible for the function documented in the records . Typically it is the agency that transferred the records to PROV. Occasionally more than one agency might be responsible for a record series if responsibility for a function rests with more than one agency.
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. ²
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 <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> 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 .
Architecture, information	Conceptual model or map of the way information/data is represented or structured, setting out the components and interrelationships. Its purpose is to improve the quality and usefulness of the information/data and ensure it can be easily navigated and accessed.
Architecture, system	Conceptual model or map of the structure and components of a computer system. It shows how the system works together and the relationships and dependencies between components and subsystems. Its purpose is to optimise the efficiency and improve the behaviour of the system and ensure that any modifications do not adversely affect its operation.
Archival Control Model (ACM)	A data model, metadata scheme and intellectual framework for documenting archival records and the agencies that created and managed the records. It provides a structured and systematic approach for describing records and their context so their original purpose is self-evident and their value as evidence of government administration is preserved. The PROV ACM describes both entities and the relationships between entities. The three main entities in the PROV ACM are Record, Function and Agent. Archivists use ACMs as the basis for their archival systems and catalogues, helping users to locate, access and understand records both within and external to the physical collection .
Archival Management System (AMS)	The component in PROV’s business system that manages the intellectual control function.

TERM	DEFINITION
B	
Beneficially Owned	An asset is beneficially owned when a person has the benefits of owning an asset, yet does not nominally own the asset. For example, public records that were sold or given away into private hands prior to the proclamation of the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> .
Born-Digital	Records created and maintained in a digital format.
C	
Capture, of records	The processes involved in placing records into the appropriate systems, with the required metadata , so that they can be managed properly and used over time as reliable evidence of actions and decisions.
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. ³
Collection	The full set of holdings in the custody of a collecting institution.
Configuration, system	The specification of a given computer system, from its hardware components to the software and various processes that are run within that system. ⁴
Consignment	Series are transferred to PROV progressively. A consignment (short for transfer consignment) comprises the record items within a single series which were accessioned into PROV custody at the same time. Occasionally a consignment may consist of the whole series if the entire series was transferred at the same time. PROV also divides series into consignments to manage access and physical storage arrangements.
Container	See Storage container .
Context	The information to sustain a record's meaning or evidential value. Context describes the who, what, where and why of record creation and use.
Control, of records	The mechanisms imposed on records to ensure they are protected, provide reliable evidence of actions and decisions, are retained for the minimum required retention period and can be accessed and used for authorised purposes. Control mechanisms include metadata , access restrictions, format requirements, system workflows, automated classification and sentencing , business rules etc.
Current records	Records regularly used for the conduct of the current business of an agency , institution or organisation. ⁵
Custodian	A person, business unit or agency that has custody of records .
Custody	Responsibility for the care of records and archives, usually based on their physical possession. Custody does not necessarily include legal ownership.
D	
Destruction	The process of eliminating or deleting records , beyond any possible reconstruction. ⁶
Digital Archive	Ingest, storage and preservation system for digital records (VEOs).
Disaster recovery	The policies, procedures and activities to prepare for and recover from the effects of unforeseen catastrophic events that impact infrastructure, technology and/or assets.

TERM	DEFINITION
Disposal	The implementation of appraisal decisions authorised by retention and disposal authorities or other instruments. Disposal refers to the destruction or deletion of records from organisational systems; the migration of records between systems; and the transfer of records to PROV and/or to secondary storage (APROSS).
Disposal Authority / Authorisation	See Retention & Disposal Authority; Single Instance Disposal Authority .
Document	Any record of information, and includes: (a) anything on which there is writing; or (b) anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols or perforations having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them; or (c) anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; or (d) a map, plan, drawing or photograph. ⁷
E	
Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS)	A computer system (or set of computer programs) used to track and store electronic documents. Also known as an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS).
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
Estray	A public record which has been lost or which has strayed from the custody and control of a public office .
F	
Function	Functions represent the major responsibilities that are managed by an agency to fulfil its goals, high-level aggregates of an organisation's activities. ⁸
H	
Head of a Public Office	The head of a department, administrative office, public sector body, service body, small entity, or standard entity as described by the <i>Public Administration Act 2004</i> or the Chief Executive Officer as described by the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> . ⁹
I	
Item	See Record Item .
K	
Keeper of Public Records	The Keeper is the Director of PROV. 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.
M	
Machinery of Government (MoG)	The allocation or reallocation of functions and responsibilities between departments and ministers. ¹⁰

TERM	DEFINITION
Metadata	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.
N	
Non-current records	Records no longer needed by their office of origin to conduct current business. ¹¹
Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)	The destruction of some public records is permitted under NAP. It 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.
O	
Office of Origin	See Agency, responsible .
Original order	The sequence of grouping in which records were originally accumulated or kept by their creator(s). Maintaining the original order preserves the context and meaning of the records.
P	
Permanent record	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 disposal authorities issued by the Keeper.
Persistent Identifier (PI/PID)	A machine readable long-lasting reference to a document , file, webpage or other object.
Personal record	A 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 2.14 of the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> , 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.
Privatisation	The transfer of entire functions and activities of an agency , or part thereof, to the private sector.
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. ¹²

TERM	DEFINITION
Public Office (or Agency)	<p>An administrative unit which has or had responsibility for the provision of at least one aspect of government administration. Under the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> it means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <i>State Owned Enterprise Act 1992</i>; • any municipal council; • any other local governing body corporate or unincorporate; • any Victorian court or person acting judiciously.¹³
Public Officer	See Public Sector Employee .
Public Record	<p>Defined by the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i>.</p> <p>(a) any record made or received by a public officer in the course of his duties; and</p> <p>(b) any record made or received by a court or person acting judicially in Victoria – but does not include –</p> <p>(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 PR Act); or</p> <p>(d) a prescribed record held for the purpose of preservation by a public office to which it was transferred before the commencement of the <i>Arts Institutions (Amendment) Act 1994</i> by a person or body other than the Crown or a public office; or</p> <p>(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 <i>Arts Institutions (Amendment) Act 1994</i>, by a person or body other than the Crown or a public office.</p> <p>Public records may be divided into business records, ephemeral records and personal records.¹⁴</p>
Public Sector Employee	Any person employed in a public office or who performs work over which an agency has, or should have, direct control and for which a public office has direct liability. ¹⁵
R	
Record	A record is information in any format created, received and maintained as evidence by an organisation or person, in pursuant of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. A record may comprise a digital or paper-based document or group of aggregated documents. ¹⁶
Record Item	A discrete unit of records managed within a Record Series . A record of type item represents a discrete part of a recordkeeping system or a logical or convenient grouping of records. It may represent one record or multiple records and can be applied to any aggregation of records below type series.
Record Series	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.
Recordkeeping	Creating and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of activities and decisions in the form of recorded information. Recordkeeping involves the design and management of processes and systems to capture full and accurate evidence of an organisation's activities.

TERM	DEFINITION
Records Description List (RDL)	A template that captures record descriptive metadata and archival management data (for example, the access status of an item) of records within a transfer consignment for import into the PROV Archival Management System .
Records management	See Recordkeeping .
Reliability	A reliable record is one whose content 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 the subsequent transactions or activities. ¹⁷
Restricted access	See Access, restricted .
Retention & Disposal Authorities (RDAs)	Standards issued by the Keeper of Public Records that specify the records to be retained as State Archives and authorise the disposal of records not required as archives, once the defined minimum retention periods have been met. RDAs provide continuing authorisation without further approval from the Keeper. RDAs may apply to one or more public offices .
Retention period	The minimum period that records must be kept before they can be legally destroyed.
S	
Sentencing	The process of identifying and classifying records according to the Retention & Disposal Authority and applying the specified disposal action. ¹⁸
Series	See Record Series .
Single Instance Disposal Authority (SIDA)	A formal instrument issued by the Keeper of Public Records 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.
State Archives	Records of continuing value to the government and people of Victoria and preserved by PROV. State Archives are also referred to as permanent records . State Archives provide a concise record of the State and its interaction with citizens within the broader context of Australian society.
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, folder or VEQ .
T	
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 s.12 of the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> . Temporary records are specified in Retention & Disposal Authorities issued by the Keeper.
Transfer	The process of moving records from the custody of one organisation to another, for example moving records from the custody of a public office to PROV.
Transfer of custodianship	The transfer of ownership and functional responsibility of records due to amalgamations, structural or functional changes or Machinery of Government changes. It does not refer to the transfer of permanent records to PROV.

TERM	DEFINITION
U	
Unit	See Storage Container .
V	
Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS)	The Victorian Electronic Records Strategy seeks to enable the creation, capture and preservation of authentic, complete and meaningful digital records by the Victorian public sector. VERS prescribes a long term preservation package, the VERS Encapsulated Object (VEO) to preserve digital records.
VERS Encapsulated Object (VEO)	A VEO is a digital object that encapsulates records and descriptive metadata and is signed with a checksum to ensure its integrity over time. Digital records in PROV's custody are transferred in VEO format.
Vital records	Records that contain information essential for the continued operations of an agency .
Volume	An accumulation of written, typewritten or printed sheets bound together in book form

Sources

¹ *Public Records Act 1973*, s. 2.

² Australian Society of Archivists, *Keeping Archives* 3rd Edition

³ Standards Australia, AS/ISO 15489.1:2017 Information and documentation – Records management Part 1: concepts and principles

⁴ Techopedia <<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/12448/system-configuration-sc>>

⁵ Standards Australia, AS/ISO 5127:2017 Information and documentation – Foundation and Vocabulary

⁶ AS/ISO 15489.1:2017

⁷ *Evidence Act 2008*

⁸ AS/NZS 5478:2015

⁹ *Public Administration Act 2004; Local Government Act 1989*

¹⁰ Victorian Public Sector Commission < <https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/about-public-sector/machinery-of-government/>>

¹¹ AS/ISO 5127:2017

¹² *Keeping Archives* 3rd Edition

¹³ *Public Records Act 1973*, s. 2.

¹⁴ *Public Records Act 1973*, s. 2.

¹⁵ *Public Records Act 1973*, s. 2.

¹⁶ AS/NZS 5478:2015

¹⁷ AS/ISO 15489.1:2017

¹⁸ Tasmanian Government, Office of the State Archivist Glossary < <https://www.informationstrategy.tas.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Glossary.aspx>>