

Australian Capital Territory

Territory Records (Standard for Records Management Number 9: Records Digitisation and Conversion) Approval 2011 (No 1)

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made under the

Territory Records Act 2002, s 18 (Approved standards and codes for records management)

1. Name of Instrument

This instrument is the Territory Records (Standard for Records Management Number 9: Records Digitisation and Conversion) Approval 2011 (No 1)

2. Approval

I approve the Standard for Records Management Number 9: Records Digitisation and Conversion.

3. Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

David Wardle
Director of Territory Records
21 March 2011



Australian Capital Territory
Territory Records Office
STANDARD



Standard for Records Management

Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion

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PURPOSE

To set principles and minimum standards for the management of records across the ACT Government that have been converted from their original format to a different format and to ensure compliance with all legislative and best practice recordkeeping requirements applicable to the ACT Government so that:

- records that are worth preserving as Territory Archives in their original or undigitised or source format as part of the Territory’s archival heritage are preserved;
- records that need to be retained in their original or undigitised or source format for a specified period to satisfy legal, financial or other requirements of public administration, are retained in accordance to defined prerequisites;
- original or source records of converted records that do not fall into the above two categories may be legally disposed of.

AUTHORITY

This Standard is produced in accordance with section 18 of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, which allows the Director of Territory Records to approve Standards or Codes for agency records management.

Under section 17 of the Act, an agency’s Principal Officer may approve a Records Management Program only if it complies with the Standards and Codes set by the Director of Territory Records.

Section 17(2) allows a Principal Officer to approve a Records Management Program that does not comply with an approved Standard or Code only if the Director of Territory Records agrees in writing that non-compliance is necessary for the operational needs of the agency.

Section 14 of the Act requires agencies to “make and keep full and accurate records” of their activities. Section 15 requires agencies to take steps necessary to ensure that the information in their records continues to be accessible.

This Standard must be reviewed as soon as practicable five years after its commencement.

INTRODUCTION

The *Territory Records Act 2002* (the Act) requires all ACT agencies to make and keep full and accurate records of their business activities:

- for use in ongoing business activities;
- to allow public access to them consistent with the principles of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*; and
- for the benefit of future generations.

All Territory records, including digital and converted records and sentenced and unsentenced records, must be made, kept, captured, managed and disposed

of according to the Act and its Notifiable Instruments, including all current Territory Records Office Standards. Digital records must be managed in accordance with Territory Records Office *Standard for Records Management Number 6 – Digital Records*.

To ensure that accountability and community expectations are met, strategies are necessary to ensure that records continue to be accessible for as long as they are required. For many records, this will mean changing their format during the life of the record. Recordkeeping practices in the ACT Government commonly have not addressed issues that arise when records are converted from one format to another. Examples of such conversions are:

- digitisation of a paper original;
- microfilming of a paper original;
- digitisation of a microfilm;
- conversion of a digital record from one software format to another; and
- conversion of a database to a set of PDF files or a spreadsheet.

The *Standard for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion* sets principles and minimum standards for the management of records that have been converted to a different format. It enables the identification of records that should be retained in their original or unconverted format, either as Territory Archives or as a record that should be kept in its unconverted format for a limited time.

Upon conversion, the original or source record continues to exist after the migration process is complete. Often there is not a business need to maintain both versions/formats of the record after conversion so mechanisms are required to manage this situation.

Disposal of the source records is subject to a number of conditions on the conversion process. Some source records will **not** be eligible for disposal. In addition to establishing a records management regime for digitised records, Standard No.9 identifies the conditions under which the source record may be disposed of.

In compliant Agencies, recordkeeping of digital and digitised records will be a routine outcome of business in the digital environment, as it will be built into business processes and tools. Keeping of records in non-digital formats will also be routine; however in the future, non-digital recordkeeping will become a smaller proportion of a Record Manager's task.

BACKGROUND

Normal Administrative Practice

The destruction of some public records is permitted without authorisation under normal administrative practice (NAP). NAP covers the destruction of ephemeral material of a facilitative nature created, acquired or collected by public officers during the course of their duties.

The following material may be destroyed under NAP:

- working papers consisting of rough notes and calculations used solely to assist in the preparation of other records such as correspondence, reports and statistical tabulations;
- drafts not intended for retention as part of the office's records, the content of which has been reproduced and incorporated in the public office's record keeping system; and
- extra copies of documents and published material preserved solely for reference.

Relationship between Records Disposal Schedules

The Director of Territory Records has provided the *Territory Version of Keyword AAA* as a thesaurus of terms relating to the functions common to all agencies. Common functions usually consist of those corporate administrative obligations of an agency, (e.g. finance, personnel, information management). Some common functions can also cover an agency's specific responsibilities, (e.g. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT can be used by the Director of Territory Records and the Territory Records Office). The use of this thesaurus will ensure a consistent approach to the titling of records of common functions across the Territory. It is mandated for use by agencies for the titling of records of common functions. The *Territory Version of Keyword AAA* terminology provides the thesaurus structure for the functionally based Records Disposal Schedules to ensure a consistent approach to the disposal of Territory records.

The records of functions that are not common to all agencies, but are specific to a limited number of agencies, etc. are covered by Records Disposal Schedules (RDS) that apply to the specific function and activities undertaken by those agencies and assign retention periods and disposal actions to the records that support those functions and activities.

This Standard does not affect the operation of these RDSs and agencies must retain the records for the full retention period specified. However, agencies may not always need to retain the records in the same format for that period. This Standard governs the conversion of a record from one format to another; in particular, it governs the conditions under which the source record may be disposed of after such a conversion. The relevant RDS is the *Records Disposal Schedule for Source Records*.

In essence:

- Records may be converted from one format to another during their life.
- The *Records Disposal Schedule for Source Records* approved by the Director of Territory Records governs the disposal of the source record after conversion.
- The converted record is the official record of the agency after conversion.
- The applicable functional Records Disposal Schedule governs the disposal of the converted record.

Use of Records Disposal Schedules

Where there is a conflict between two Records Disposal Schedules or between a Records Disposal Schedule and this Standard, consult the Territory Records Office for advice. In particular, all records should be covered by a Records Disposal Schedule that indicates their retention period and disposal action.

Records must be sentenced against the appropriate functional Records Disposal Schedule, before using the contents of this Standard and the Records Disposal Schedule for Source Records to sentence the source records.

PRINCIPLES

The principles below define the high level requirements to be met by agencies when developing, establishing and maintaining a recordkeeping framework for both:

- Digitised and converted records; and
- Where appropriate, the source records from which the digitised and converted records were obtained.

Additional information may be found in *Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion*.

PRINCIPLE 1: RECORDKEEPING WILL COMPLY WITH ALL APPROPRIATE STANDARDS

All recordkeeping, regardless of format, will comply with ACT Government Legislation, Standards, Codes and Guidelines.

A compliant agency can demonstrate that:

- It has a comprehensive framework for digital recordkeeping, which is integrated into a Records Management Program that implements Territory Records Standards, Codes and Guidelines;
- Where digitised records are in format digital records, the agency complies with the requirements of the Standard for Records Management Number 6 – Digital Records;
- Where converted records take a non-digital format it complies with the requirements of all relevant Standards.

Converted records may include:

- Records converted from non-digital format to a digital format, such as converting a paper record to a digital record;
- Records converted from digital format to a non-digital format, such as a digital voice recording to a non-digital voice recording;
- Records converted from one non-digital format to another non-digital format, such as paper to microfilm (without digitisation); and
- Records converted from one digital format to another digital format, such as conversion of a Word file to a PDF file.

In all cases, all relevant Standards and Guidelines must be complied with. In practice, the most frequent conversions are expected to involve digitisation.

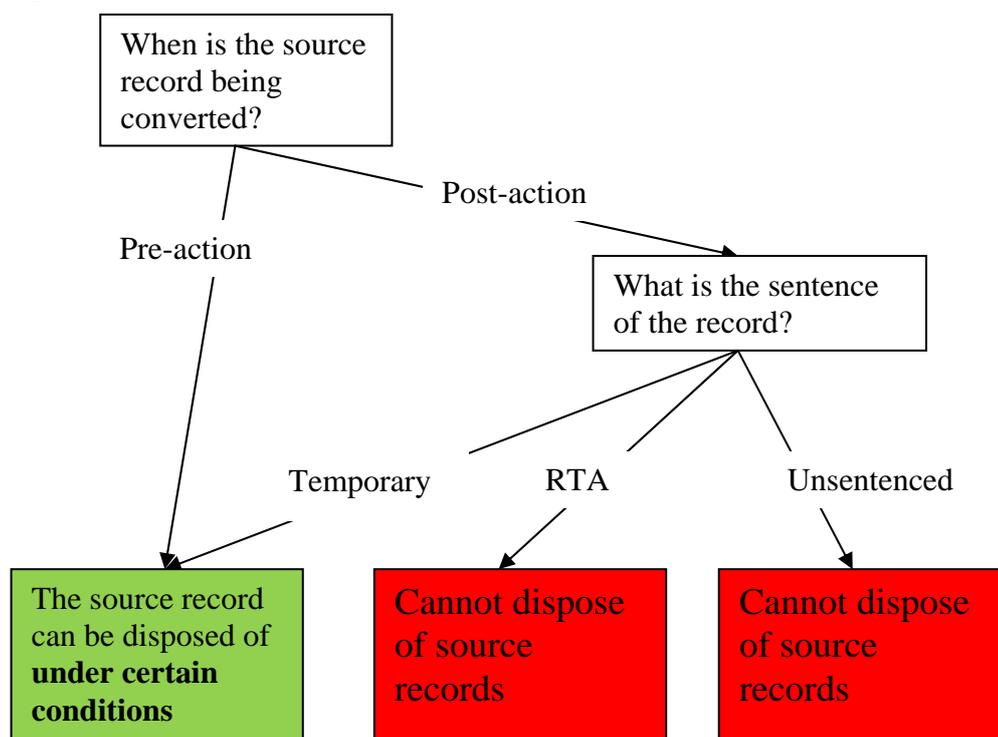
PRINCIPLE 2: CONVERTED RECORDS WILL BE MANAGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIED DISPOSAL ACTIONS

Structure of Disposal Classes

Principle 2 details the five possible disposal actions that can occur for the disposal of converted source records.

Action	Description
Pre-action conversion	Any source record that has been converted from one format to another before it has been actioned by an officer in the agency.
Post-action conversion	Any source record that has been converted from one format after it has been actioned by an officer in the agency.
Post-action conversion - archival source records	Source records converted post-action and that are identified as Retain as Territory Archives in a functional Records Disposal Schedule.
Post-action conversion - temporary source records	Source records converted post-action that are identified as temporary in a functional Records Disposal Schedule.
Post-action conversion - unsentenced source records	Source records are converted post-action which are not covered under, or have not been sentenced by, a functional Records Disposal Schedule.

The following chart summarises the decision points in applying the Records Disposal Schedule for Source Records.



Note that RTA means “Retained as Territory Archives”

The first decision point is whether the conversion occurs pre-action or post-action, i.e. before or after it has been actioned by an agency officer. If the conversion occurs pre-action, the source record can generally be disposed of (exceptions will be summarised below). It is however essential for the source record to be retained for a sufficient time to enable the action officer to have viewed the scanned image so that a request can be made for the source record to be retained if it has historic, intrinsic or other value or rescanned if all information has not been recorded.

If the conversion occurs post-action, the second decision point concerns the sentence of the record as a whole. If the record is temporary, the source record can generally be disposed of. If the record is to be retained as a Territory archive (RTA), the source record must be retained. If the record is unsentenced, the source record cannot be disposed of under Standard 9 and the Records Disposal Schedule for Source Records.

This Standard, together with the RDS for Source Records, provides permission to dispose of source records after conversion. However, in order to do so, several conditions apply to the source records, the conversion process, and to the subsequent management of the records. These conditions vary very slightly from class to class, but in general are that:

- A risk assessment has been carried out on the risks an agency incurs in converting the records. It is recommended that agencies gain experience on low risk conversions before attempting large scale high risk conversions;
- The converted record is a full and accurate copy of the source record;
- The converted record becomes the official record of the business of the agency; that is, the converted record is used for continuing business purposes;
- The converted record is managed in a system that is designed to ensure access for the full retention period of the record and the system satisfies the relevant storage standards;
- The source record does not have value as a physical artefact (e.g. historic or intrinsic value); and
- There is no requirement imposed upon the agency by legislation, regulation, government policy/directive, agency policy, standard, or written direction, such as from the Director of Territory Records, that the source record must be retained in a specific format.

The source record cannot be disposed of unless all these conditions apply. A discussion of the implications of each of these conditions can be found in the Guideline accompanying this Standard (*Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion*).

Compliance with Principle 2

An agency can comply with Principle 2: when the *Records Disposal Schedule for Source Records* has been incorporated into their agency Records Management Program and approved by the agency Principal Officer.

PRINCIPLE 3: TO DISPOSE OF A SOURCE RECORD AFTER DIGITISATION, THE AGENCY MUST MEET A MINIMUM SET OF REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

Principle 3 details the *minimum* set of requirements that an agency must satisfy when digitising physical originals in order to dispose of them after digitisation.

Each specification within Principle 3 has a number of related requirements. These are individually numbered and described under the appropriate specification. The requirements are designed to ensure that a digitisation effort results in the creation of a full and accurate copy of the physical original.

Some records may not be disposed of after digitisation regardless of whether or not the digitisation project satisfies these minimum requirements. Records that cannot be disposed of generally have particular requirements to keep the record in a specific format, or have a value as a physical artefact. Specifications of the types of source records that cannot be disposed of after digitisation are contained in Principle 2 of this Standard.

For records that an agency has identified as vital for the continued functioning of the agency, or whose loss would have significant legal or financial consequences, it is expected that the agency will adopt more stringent digitisation requirements than those contained in this Standard.

The *Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion* provides a self-assessment checklist for an agency against the requirements within Principle 3.

Scope

Principle 3 applies to all digitisation activities where the physical original is to be disposed of irrespective of:

- Whether the digitisation occurs pre-action or post-action. Pre-action digitisation (or pre-action conversion) is where the record is digitised before any action is taken upon it (e.g. in the mailroom upon receipt of the record). Post-action digitisation (or post-action conversion) is where the record is digitised after it has been used as the basis for action (e.g. back-file conversion);
- The age of the records; and
- Whether the record is temporary or is to be retained as a Territory Archive.

The specifications do not apply where:

- The physical original is to be retained as the official record in the agency after digitisation (i.e. the digitised copy is purely an access copy). However, in this case it will generally not be possible to subsequently decide to dispose of the physical original without reappraisal; and
- The records are ‘born digital’ records; that is records that were originally created in a digital format and are held in that format.

Requirements

Agencies must develop a Digitisation Plan and incorporate the Plan into their Records Management Program complete with the required Certification from the agency Principal Officer (Attachment A - *Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion.*).

Where agencies already have a functioning digitisation program in operation, the required documentation can be mapped across to existing specifications and a program developed to meet any shortfall in the requirements from the current procedures.

Agencies must provide (or make available) copies of the records of the digitisation activity (including any documents planning the activity) upon request from the Director of Territory Records.

Digitisation Plan

The Digitisation Plan is essentially a project plan for digitisation activity. It must contain the following six components:

- *Digitisation Activity Plan* –
This covers what records are to be digitised, why, and the effect of digitisation on the end users of the records;
- *Digitisation Image Specification* –
This sets the technical requirements for the digital images;
- *Digitisation Processing Plan* –
This describes the process of converting the physical source records into digital records. The process starts with retrieving the source records, the digitisation process, entry of metadata, and creation of digital records.
- *Management Plan for the Converted Records* –
This sets out how the converted records (i.e. digitised copies) are to be managed after the digitisation activity.
- *Management Plan for the Source Records* –
This sets out how the source records (i.e. physical records) are to be managed after the digitisation activity. In many cases the source records will be disposed of after conversion, and this document describes the process of disposal.
- *Quality Control and Assurance Plan* –
This sets out how the agency will ensure that the quality requirements of the digitisation process are to be met.

The detailed requirements for the Digitisation Plan are set out in the *Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion.*

PRINCIPLE 4: TO DISPOSE OF A SOURCE RECORD AFTER DIGITISATION, THE AGENCY'S IMAGE OF THE CONVERTED RECORD MUST MEET MINIMUM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS.

Introduction

Principle 4 details the minimum technical requirements that images must satisfy when digitising source records in order to destroy the physical originals after digitisation.

Each specification within Principle 4 has a number of related requirements. These are individually numbered and described under the appropriate specification.

The requirements are designed to ensure that a digitisation effort results in the creation of a full and accurate copy of the physical original.

It is expected that agencies will adopt more stringent requirements than those contained in this Specification for records whose loss would have significant consequences.

Agencies are allowed to set lower requirements than those given here for temporary records, but only after a thorough risk analysis has confirmed that the resulting images are suitable for all business purposes.

The *Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion* provides a self-assessment checklist for an agency against the requirements of Principle 4.

Scope

Principle 4 applies to digitisation projects that are either:

- Digitising source records as they are received by an agency, (pre-action conversion) where the digitised copy is placed in a document management system and then used as the record on which the action officers perform their work;

Or

- Digitising existing records (back-file conversion) (post-action conversion)

It applies to both Territory Archives and temporary digital records. It does not apply to 'born digital' records, i.e. records that were originally created in a digital format and are held in that format; or where the physical original is to be retained as the official record in the agency after digitisation (i.e. the digitised copy is purely an access copy).

Principle 4 only covers aspects of Principle 2 that are related to ensuring that a digitisation effort results in the creation of a full and accurate copy of the physical original.

Requirements

Each type of source document (e.g. documents, photographs and negatives) requires specifications for the following components:

- The resolution required (in dpi (dots per inch));
- The type of image (bi-tonal, greyscale, colour);
- The bit-depth (when greyscale or colour);
- Colour management;
- Compression algorithm mode.

Detailed specifications for digitisation are contained in *Guideline for Records Management Number 9 – Records Digitisation and Conversion*.

Lower specifications

Agencies may choose to relax the requirements in this specification for temporary records where this specification has been notified in the agency Records Management Program and agreed by the Principal Officer. The requirements cannot be relaxed for Territory Archives or unsentenced records.

The requirements may only be relaxed after a thorough usability analysis has confirmed that the resulting images are adequate for all reasonable business purposes. The usability analysis must:

- Identify all reasonable business uses of the records. Note that reasonable business uses of the records are broader than day-to-day business uses, and include, for example, use in legal action, investigations and Freedom of Information requests; and
- Confirm that it can be reasonably expected that all images at the lower specification are usable for all of the identified reasonable business uses. This confirmation must be based on usability tests and include stakeholders for all the reasonable uses.

The usability analysis, and the evidence on which the analysis is based (e.g. usability tests) must be retained for as long as the digitised records. Both the analysis and evidence must be made available to the Director of Territory Records.

It is not necessary to conduct this usability analysis where the requirements stated in Principle 4 are adopted.

Higher specifications

Agencies may use higher standards than are given in Principle 4 if desired.

Retrospectivity

If a record has been digitised to the requirements in Principle 4 and the technical requirements are subsequently changed, agencies will not be expected to re-digitise to the new requirements.

Output formats

These requirements do not specify an output file format (e.g. TIFF or PDF/A). An agency may choose any output file format that satisfies the image requirements and the agency's purposes.

However, Part 3 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* notes that for the purposes of public access, records become eligible to be accessible by members of the public 20 years after the date of creation. Consequently it is recommended that conversion of source records be performed using specific outputs to ensure record content is retrievable using future technological software.

The compliant formats are TIFF, PDF/A, JPEG, and JPEG2000. Agencies should only use JPEG where the digitisation device only produces JPEG images.

Lossy compression

Some digitisation devices (e.g. digital cameras) only produce images using lossy compression (e.g. JPEG). In this case, this lossy compression technique can be used in the final image. Extreme care must be taken when processing images using lossy compression to prevent degradation of the image.

Where the digitisation device can produce images using lossless compression, this compression mode must be retained in the final image.

Multi-page records

It is recommended that agencies do not use multi-page TIFF files to store multipage records. This is because multi-page TIFF images are not widely supported in viewing software. Agencies should store multi-page records in PDF/A files. If necessary, tools can be obtained to combine single image PDFs into a multi-page PDF/A.

Generation of images

These requirements specify the final output required. The intermediate images generated by the digitisation device, or stored during processing, are not specified. However, intermediate images must not be of lower quality than the final output. For example:

- The resolution of intermediate images must be at least that of the final output;
- Lossy compression must not be used for the intermediate images unless the digitisation device (e.g. digital camera) only produces images using lossy compression.

DEFINITIONS

Actioned

Any substantive work carried out in an agency in response to receiving the correspondence. This does not include purely process work (e.g. conversion).

Agency

The Executive, an ACT Court, the Legislative Assembly Secretariat, an administrative unit, a Board of Inquiry, a Judicial or Royal Commission, any other prescribed authority, or an entity declared under the regulations of the *Territory Records Act 2002* to be an agency.

Converted Records

The copy of the record resulting from the conversion (compare source record). For example, the digitised copy of a paper record.

Conversion

The act of converting a record from one format to another. (See also pre-action conversion, post-action conversion, and digitising).

Digital Record

A digital record is a record that is communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment. (National Archives of Australia, Glossary). (See also “Records”).

Digitisation or Digitising

The process of converting a physical record to a digital representation. (See also “Records”, “Digital record”, “Digitised record”).

Digitisation Project

The process of converting a set of related physical records to digital representation. (See also “Records”, “Digital record”, “Digitised record”).

Digitised Record

A digitised record is a record that has been converted from a physical record to a digital format. (See also “Records”, “Digital record”, “Digitisation”).

Permanent

These records are considered of archival value to the Territory and may not be destroyed. Permanent records are defined by a Records Disposal Schedule.

Pre-Action/Post-Action Conversion

The conditions under which the source record can be disposed of depend on when the conversion is carried out.

Pre-action conversion is where conversion is carried out immediately after the record is received by an agency, and before any action has been taken on it. An example of pre-action conversion is the digitisation of received correspondence in a mailroom.

Post-action conversion is where conversion is carried out after any action has been taken on the record. A typical example of post-action conversion is the digitisation of existing paper-based files. An action includes any decision on how to deal with the subject of the record.

Principal Officer

The Chief Executive of an administrative unit, or its equivalent in other types of agencies.

Records

Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. This recorded information must be maintained or managed by the agency to provide evidence of their business activities. Records can be in written, electronic or any other form.

Records Disposal Schedule (RDS)

A Notifiable Instrument created under S.19 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* granting permission to dispose of particular classes of records after a specified period of time. Some records may not be disposed of and must be retained as Territory Archives.

Records of an Agency

Records in written, electronic or any other form, under the control of an agency or to which it is entitled to control, kept as a record of its activities, whether it was created or received by the agency.

Recordkeeping Systems

Information systems that capture, maintain and provide access to records over time. While the term is often associated with computer software, Recordkeeping Systems also encompass policies, procedures, practices and resources which are applied within an agency to ensure that full and accurate records of business activity are made and kept.

Records Management

The managing of the records of an agency to meet its operational needs and, if appropriate, to allow public access to the records consistent with the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* and for the benefit of future generations. Records management covers but is not limited to the creation, keeping, protection, preservation, storage and disposal of, and access to records of the agency.

Records Management Program

A document which complies with section 16 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* by setting out the means by which an agency will manage its records, and is approved by the agency's Principal Officer.

Source Record

The copy of the record that is being converted into another format (compare converted record). For example, the paper record that is being digitised.

Temporary

Temporary records are not considered of permanent value to the Territory and may be destroyed after the minimum period of time as established in the relevant Records Disposal Schedule when no longer required for business purposes. Temporary records are defined in a Records Disposal Schedule and are those that are not to be retained as Territory Archives.

Unsentenced Records

Records that are not known to be covered by a Records Disposal Schedule.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Legislation

Electronic Transactions Act 2001
Freedom of Information Act 1989
Public Sector Management Act 1994
Territory Records Act 2002

Standards

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