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For the Record December 2015

For The **RECORD**

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Kingswood is turning 40!

The first stage of the Western Sydney Records Centre at Kingswood opened on 28 November 1965. Read all about it in the latest issue of [Now and Then](#).

Decommissioning December

This month the Future Proof team have been [blogging about decommissioning](#). The discussion touches on how migration involves more than just extracting documents, how metadata is critical and documentation is very useful, and how source records must be appropriately managed.If you want to take part in [Decommissioning December](#) check out the blog.

Podcasts from the Records Managers Forum available

Podcasts from the November Forum are now available on the [Future Proof Blog](#). This includes:

- Geoff Hinchcliffe, Director of State Records NSW, on key and future initiatives for State Records.
- Dr Ann Turner, Michael King, Doris Coleman, Chris Leeming and Jason Covell, on the OneTRIM Program at the Department of Family and Community Services, including a case study of the rollout of a specific application for ministerial workflow
- Joel Smith, HPRM Administrator at Ausgrid, about the strategy and implementation of digital recordkeeping for mobile work process.

2016 Training Calendar

The [Training Calendar](#) for 2016 is now available online.

Why good records storage is important

As we come into the 'wet season', it is more likely that parts of NSW will get heavy rain and storms. A key priority for organisations is to ensure that storage areas and facilities used to store hardcopy records are suitable and well maintained.

Skimping on storage can have catastrophic results. Damage or loss of records can result in significant disruption to an organisation's business, the inability to account for decisions and actions, the inability to protect the rights and entitlements of the organisation and its clients, and the loss of organisational reputation. It can also result in substantial financial costs to NSW Government. In the last eight years, it is estimated that well over \$15 million has been spent assisting NSW Government organisations salvage and recover hardcopy records that have been damaged due to inappropriate storage and disasters.

Why should my organisation select good storage areas and facilities?

Paper and other hardcopy records need to be stored in areas and facilities that are 'fit for purpose' to ensure that the records are preserved, secure and accessible for as long as they are required.

Selecting suitable and appropriate storage will help to mitigate risks or threats to the survival and useability of the records of your organisation. Good storage reduces the risk of damage, loss or inappropriate destruction of records, and costly conservation treatment that may be required if records are damaged.

What should I consider when choosing storage areas and facilities?

Before selecting storage areas or facilities, it's important to undertake a risk assessment to ensure that the location of the storage area or facility is appropriate and to identify any possible risks to records. This includes identifying whether there are:

- natural hazards such as the proximity to a flood plain, river or creek, or in a bush fire prone area, or
- man-made hazards such as proximity to water/sewage pipes or plumbing (potential water hazard), machinery or air conditioning systems (potential chemical, heat, or fire hazard), or to flammable materials (potential chemical, heat or fire hazard).

The risk assessment needs to identify the likelihood and consequences of the risks and what types of mitigation strategies that can be used to lower the severity of the risk and provide appropriate protection for the records.

For example, a risk assessment identifies that a storage area is located near some water pipes. To mitigate the risk of a water leak from the pipes, the records shelving should be organised so that it is located well away from the pipes and the bottom shelf is more than 85-150mm off the ground. Raising the bottom shelf and not placing records on or near to the floor of the storage area means that if there is a water leak, the bottom shelf of boxes won't get wet.

Remember, records **should never** be stored in attics or basements. These parts of the building do not meet requirements for best practice records storage and are the most risky places in a building to store records (e.g. attics get too hot and can have water issues if the roof leaks, while basements are likely to have water or dampness issues).

Ensure that the building chosen for records storage:

- is suitable and appropriate for the storage of records
- is soundly constructed of appropriate materials so that records are not in danger of exposure to the elements or to infestation by vermin
- is weatherproof
- insulated from the outside climate
- has good drainage and water run-off
- is secure against intruders
- has controlled access, and
- is 'fit for purpose'.

Storage areas and facilities should have a good level of security. This ensures that records stored in these locations are protected, that the authenticity and integrity of the records is not compromised, and helps to prevent misuse of the information contained within the records.

Access to buildings and storage areas must be controlled in order to prevent unauthorised access, which may result in the alteration, destruction, damage or theft of records. Only authorised users should be able to access records.

Why are well maintained storage areas important to records preservation?

Regular building maintenance ensures that a building can withstand most bad weather and remain 'fit for purpose'.

Remember, the building structure and fabric is integral to providing a stable and suitable environment for the storage of records, and protecting the assets stored within the building. Undertaking regular and programmed building maintenance can prevent many storage problems, reduce costs, and assist the building withstand bad weather conditions such as heavy rain and storms.

Your organisation should have regular building maintenance and pest inspections of all storage areas and facilities. Regularly inspect the building's exterior and its surrounds. Things to particularly look out for are:

- cracks or dampness in walls
- flaky paint/plaster
- signs of water leaks, spillages, blocked drains, roofs or gutters
- corrosion
- signs of pest infestation
- mould
- signs of damage or unlawful entry, such as vandalism or broken windows, and
- signs of new risks.

Make sure you also regularly inspect the building's interior and the storage areas to ensure that there are none of the above issues. All problems and risks should be fixed or managed to reduce their severity.

The frequency of monitoring and inspections should increase if an issue is discovered or if there has been bad weather, severe storms, high temperatures or humidity, or high winds. It always pays to check the storage area or facility as soon as possible after a storm or bad weather to make sure that the building has not been damaged during the storm. Remember, if there has been damage or water has got into the building, there is **high potential for mould growth once the relative humidity exceeds 60%**.

What can your organisation do?

Your organisation can:

- identify all records storage areas and facilities – know what records you have and where they are located
- undertake risk assessments to ensure that the storage areas and facilities are 'fit for purpose'
- move records out of facilities that are not appropriate and 'fit for purpose'
- ensure that records storage areas and facilities receive regular building inspections and maintenance
- be prepared for bad weather and disaster events.

There are a range of resources on our website that can assist you:

- [Standard on physical storage of State records](#)
- [Solutions for storage guidance](#)
- [Advice on disaster management](#)

Disposal authorities approved

State Records recently approved:

- the amendment of the *General retention and disposal authority: administrative records* to include coverage for the issue of corporate credit or purchase cards, the establishment and winding up of corporate-owned companies, the management of farm animals and agricultural areas, routine administrative matters relating to the leasing out of property, and to no longer require classification schemes, thesauri, authorised abbreviations, metadata rules, dictionaries etc as State archives.
- the extension of the application of FA367 covering water and wastewater management to Water NSW.

Copies of our retention and disposal authorities are available from the [Retention and disposal authorities](#) page on our website.

Christmas/New Year opening hours

Government Recordkeeping will be closed from 25 December to 1 January, resuming regular operating hours on Monday 4 January 2016.

We wish our colleagues all the best for the Christmas season and look forward to working with you in 2016.



