

## **State Records Authority of New South Wales**

### **General Retention and Disposal Authority: GA44**

This authority covers records documenting the function of statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training

This general retention and disposal authority is approved under section 21(2)c of the *State Records Act 1998* following prior approval by the Board of the State Records Authority of New South Wales in accordance with section 21(3) of the Act.



**State Records Authority of New South Wales**  
**General Retention and Disposal Authority**

**Authority no** GA44

**SR file no** 14/0326

**Scope**

This general retention and disposal authority covers records documenting the function of statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training.

**Public office**

Cancer Institute NSW

Board and chief executive-governed statutory health corporations established under the *Health Services Act 1997*, including the Agency for Clinical Innovation, the Bureau of Health Information, the Clinical Excellence Commission, the Health Education Training Institute and NSW Kids and Families.

**Issue date**

26/08/2014 Board and chief executive-governed statutory health corporations

29/06/2018 Cancer Institute NSW

## **About the General Retention and Disposal Authority**

### **Purpose of the authority**

The purpose of this general retention and disposal authority is to identify those records created and maintained by NSW public offices which are required as State archives and to provide approval for the destruction of certain other records created and maintained by NSW public offices, after minimum retention periods have been met.

The approval for disposal given by this authority is given under the provisions of the *State Records Act 1998* only and does not override any other obligations of an organisation to retain records.

### **The retention and disposal of State records**

The records retention and disposal practices outlined in this authority are approved under section 21(2)(c) of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW). Part 3 (Protection of State Records) of the Act provides that records are not to be disposed of without the consent of State Records with certain defined exceptions. These exceptions include an action of disposal which is positively required by law, or which takes place in accordance with a normal administrative practice (NAP) of which State Records does not disapprove. Advice on the State Records Act can be obtained from State Records.

The authority sets out how long the different classes of records generated by an organisation must be kept to meet its legal, operational and other requirements, and whether the records are to be kept as State archives. The State Records Authority ('State Records') reviews and approves organisations' retention and disposal authorities under the State Records Act.

This authority is the product of an appraisal process conducted in accordance with State Records' *Standard on the appraisal and disposal of State records*.

State Records' decisions take into account both the administrative requirements of public offices in discharging their functional responsibilities and the potential research use of the records by the NSW Government and the public. One of State Records' functions is to identify and preserve records as State archives. These are records which document the authority and functions of Government, its decision-making processes and the implementation and outcomes of those decisions, including the nature of their influence and effect on communities and individual lives. Criteria for the identification of State archives are listed in *Building the Archives: Policy on records appraisal and the identification of State archives*. The Policy also explains the roles and responsibilities of State Records and of public offices in undertaking appraisal processes and disposal activities.

## **Implementing the authority**

This general retention and disposal authority covers records controlled by the public office and applies only to the records or classes of records described in the authority. The authority should be implemented as part of the records management program of the organisation. Two primary objectives of this program are to ensure that records are kept for as long as they are of value to the organisation and its stakeholders and to enable the destruction or other disposal of records once they are no longer required for business or operational purposes.

The implementation process entails use of the authority to sentence records. Sentencing is the examination of records in order to identify the disposal class in the authority to which they belong. This process enables the organisation to determine the appropriate retention period and disposal action for the records. Advice on sentencing can be obtained from State Records. See *Implementing a retention and disposal authority*.

Where the format of records has changed (for example, from paper-based to electronic) this does not prevent the disposal decisions in the authority from being applied to records which perform the same function. The information contained in non paper-based or technology dependant records must be accessible for the periods prescribed in the classes. Where a record is copied, either onto microform or digitally imaged, the original should not be disposed of without authorisation (see also the *General Retention and Disposal Authority – Imaged records*). Public offices will need to ensure that any software, hardware or documentation required to gain continuing access to technology dependent records is available for the periods prescribed.

## **Disposal action**

### ***Records required as State archives***

Records which are to be retained as State archives are identified with the disposal action 'Required as State archives'. Records that are identified as being required as State archives should be stored in controlled environmental conditions and control of these records should be transferred to State Records when they are no longer in use for official purposes.

The transfer of control of records as State archives may, or may not, involve a change in custodial arrangements. Records can continue to be managed by the public office under a distributed management agreement. Public offices are encouraged to make arrangements with State Records regarding the management of State archives.

Transferring records identified as State archives and no longer in use for official purposes to State Records' control should be a routine and systematic part of a public office's records management program. If the records are more than 25 years old and are still in use for official purposes, then a 'still in use determination' should be made.

### **Records approved for destruction**

Records that have been identified as being approved for destruction may only be destroyed once a public office has ensured that all other requirements for retaining the records are met. Retention periods set down in this authority are *minimum* periods only and a public office should keep records for a longer period if necessary. Reasons for longer retention can include legal requirements, administrative need, and government directives. A public office *must not* dispose of any records where the public office is aware of possible legal action (including legal discovery, court cases, formal applications for access) where the records may be required as evidence.

Once all requirements for retention have been met, destruction of records should be carried out in a secure and environmentally sound way. Relevant details of the destruction should be recorded. See *Destruction of records: a practical guide*.

Regardless of whether a record has been approved for destruction or is required as a State archive, a public office or an officer of a public office must not permanently transfer possession or ownership of a State record to any person or organisation without the explicit approval of State Records.

### **Administrative change**

This general retention and disposal authority has been designed to link records to the functions they document rather than to organisational structure. This provides for a stable retention and disposal authority that is less affected by administrative change. However, when functions move from one public office to another the public office that inherits the new function should contact State Records to discuss use of any existing retention and disposal authority approved for use by a predecessor organisation.

#### Contact Information

State Records  
PO Box 516  
Kingswood NSW 2747  
Telephone: (02) 9673 1788  
E-mail: [govrec@records.nsw.gov.au](mailto:govrec@records.nsw.gov.au)

**General Retention and Disposal Authority**  
**Statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training**

**Authority number: GA44**

**Dates of coverage: Open**

<b>List of Functions and Activities covered</b>
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Function	Activity	Reference	Page
CLINICAL PRACTICES & PATIENT CARE		1.0.0	7
	Clinical networks	1.1.0	7
	Policies, standards and guidelines	1.2.0	8
	Program development and management	1.3.0	9
EDUCATION AND TRAINING		2.0.0	10
	Accreditation	2.1.0	10
	Education and training programs development and delivery	2.2.0	11
	Recruitment, internship and training placements	2.3.0	12
	Policy & procedures	2.4.0	12
	Reporting	2.5.0	13
HEALTH PROMOTION		3.0.0	13
PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING		4.0.0	14
	Investigations, inquiries and reviews	4.1.0	14
	Patient deaths and incidents	4.2.0	15

## Statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training

Authority number: GA44

Dates of coverage: Open

### List of Functions and Activities covered

Function	Activity	Reference	Page
	Service audits and assessments	4.3.0	15
	Reporting	4.4.0	16



**General Retention and Disposal Authority**  
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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
1.0.0	<b>CLINICAL PRACTICES &amp; PATIENT CARE</b>	<p>The development of policy, setting of standards and management of projects to improve clinical practices and standards and outcomes of patient care.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>COMMITTEES</b> for records relating to the management of internal, external or inter-agency committees, task forces, working groups or parties etc</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Grant funding</b> for records relating to the receipt of funding for research or programs.</p> <p>See <b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING - Reporting</b> for reporting on health system performance and the quality, safety and outcomes of patient care.</p>	
1.1.0	<b>Clinical networks</b>	<p>The establishment and management of clinical networks and referral services to improve patient safety and care.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - Advice</b> for records relating to advice provided to the Minister and other government departments or agencies.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Joint ventures</b> for records relating to managing collaboration or co-research between the organisation and external organisations and parties where there is a contract, joint contribution of funds and/or time.</p>	
1.1.1		<p>Records relating to the establishment of clinical networks, taskforces, practice groups and referral services to support the development, promotion and implementation of improvements or standards for clinical practices, service provision and patient care. Records include:</p>	Required as State archives

## Statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>CLINICAL PRACTICES &amp; PATIENT CARE - Clinical networks</i>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• terms of reference</li> <li>• appointments</li> <li>• master sets of minutes, agendas</li> <li>• resolutions and recommendations</li> <li>• advice, reports and associated background and working papers.</li> </ul>	
1.1.2		Records relating to the operational management of networks, taskforces, practice groups and referral services.	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy
1.1.3		Records relating to administrative arrangements for meetings, workshops etc. Records include venue, catering, accommodation and transport arrangements and bookings, notification etc.	Retain until administrative or reference use ceases, then destroy
1.2.0	<b>Policies, standards and guidelines</b>	The development of policies, standards and guidelines for clinical practices and the provision or delivery of patient care.  See <b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING</b> for monitoring, investigations etc	
1.2.1		Records relating to the development and review of policies, health standards, models of care, and guidelines for patient safety and the quality of clinical care. Includes the final version, drafts that incorporate major changes, reports or summaries of submissions and consultation, and the findings of supporting research.	Required as State archives

## Statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training

Authority number: GA44

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>CLINICAL PRACTICES &amp; PATIENT CARE - Policies, standards and guidelines</i>			
1.2.2		Working papers related to the development and review of policies, health standards, models of care, and guidelines for patient safety and the quality of clinical care.	Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then destroy
1.3.0	<b>Program development and management</b>	The development and implementation of programs and projects designed to improve patient safety and care at a system level. Includes sponsorship of research into clinical safety and quality.	
1.3.1		Records relating to the development, evaluation and review of programs designed to address problems at a systemic level affecting patient safety and care. Includes programs developed jointly with other parties. Records include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final copies of programs and associated guidelines, workshop materials or education packages</li> <li>• program plans and communication or implementation strategies</li> <li>• reporting on outcomes, evaluation or review of programs or associated research.</li> </ul>	Required as State archives
1.3.2		Records relating to the administration and coordination of programs and projects.	Retain minimum of 7 years after action completed, then destroy
1.3.3		Records relating to the provision of financial assistance to pursue research into clinical practices and patient care standards, outcomes etc. Includes applications, notifications, receipts, reimbursements.	Retain minimum of 7 years after research complete, then destroy

## Statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>CLINICAL PRACTICES &amp; PATIENT CARE - Program development and management</i>			
1.3.4		Records relating to the unsuccessful applications for financial assistance. Includes applications, notifications.	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy
2.0.0	<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	The development and provision of clinical and health care services education and training programs.  See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>COMMITTEES</b> for records relating to committees and councils.	
2.1.0	<b>Accreditation</b>	The accreditation of organisations to provide training and supervision.  See <b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Policy &amp; procedures</b> for records relating to policies, standards, and guidelines for the provision of clinical and health care services education and training.  See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>COMMITTEES</b> 1.0.8 for records of advisory committees such as the Prevocational Accreditation Committee.	
2.1.1		Records relating to the accreditation of health organisations, facilities and services to provide clinical training. Records include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applications and supporting documentation</li> <li>• assessment and site visit reports</li> <li>• determinations</li> <li>• correspondence.</li> </ul>	Retain minimum of 10 years after accreditation expires, then destroy

## Statewide health services, quality assurance, reporting, education and training

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Accreditation</i>			
2.1.2		Records relating to applications to become an accreditation assessor or surveyor. Records include applications, correspondence, notifications, training and confirmation of certification.	Retain minimum of 7 years after certification ceases, then destroy
2.2.0	<b>Education and training programs development and delivery</b>	The development, delivery and coordination of training programs.  See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - Reporting</i> for records relating to reports to the Minister or other Government agencies on training and education.	
2.2.1		Records documenting the outcomes of strategic planning for and the review and evaluation of clinical and health care services education and training programs. Records include final versions of strategic plans, discussion papers, reports of findings or recommendations coming out of reviews, evaluations and research.	Required as State archives
2.2.2		Records relating to the coordination and conduct of education and training planning, review and evaluation processes. Records include evaluation or survey templates and completed forms, collated evaluation or survey data, liaison with participants etc.	Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then destroy
2.2.3		Records relating to the establishment and coordination of sites or networks for the provision or delivery of clinical and health care services training and education programs. Includes liaison with training networks, partners, providers, health services, etc.	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy
2.2.4		Final versions of clinical and health care services education and training curriculum materials or training guidelines published, developed or commissioned by the agency.	Required as State archives
2.2.5		Material used in training and course presentations. Records include: lecture notes,	Retain minimum of 7 years after action

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<i>EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Education and training programs development and delivery</i>			
		handouts, audio-visual teaching aides, course readings lists etc.	completed, then destroy
2.2.6		Records relating to the delivery of training programs. Includes arrangements for the provision of training, records of attendees, course evaluations etc.	Retain until administrative or reference use ceases, then destroy
2.2.7		Records relating to the provision of financial assistance to attend education and training. Includes applications, notifications, receipts, reimbursements.	Retain minimum of 7 years after action completed, then destroy
2.3.0	<b>Recruitment, internship and training placements</b>	The administration of health workforce recruitment, including the recruitment and allocation of trainees, students or graduates to internship or training placements. Includes reviewing of positions.	
2.3.1		Records relating to the management and coordination of recruitment programs, including internship or trainee recruitment and placement programs. Includes liaison with health organisations and training providers regarding the availability of positions, requirements, provision of information and advice to applicants re process of applying, dates, etc. (includes information sessions, web information resources, etc.). Includes the reviewing and evaluation of healthcare positions.	Retain minimum of 15 years after action completed, then destroy
2.3.2		Records relating to internship applications. Records include applications and supporting documentation, offers.	Retain minimum of 7 years after action completed, then destroy
2.4.0	<b>Policy &amp; procedures</b>	The development of policies and procedures for clinical and health care services education and training programs.	

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<i>EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Policy &amp; procedures</i>			
2.4.1		Records relating to the development and review of policies, standards, and guidelines for the provision of clinical and health care services education and training. Includes final versions.	Required as State archives
2.5.0	<b>Reporting</b>	The processes associated with initiating or providing a formal response to a situation or request (either internal, external or as a requirement of corporate policies), and providing formal statements or findings of the results of the examination or investigation.	
2.5.1		Final versions of reports that summarise, evaluate or make recommendations concerning the provision of education and training in the health sector.	Required as State archives
3.0.0	<b>HEALTH PROMOTION</b>	<p>The promotion of consumer and patient awareness of health issues, the management/treatment of certain conditions, and services available.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>COMMITTEES</b> for records relating to community advisory or consultation committees.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - Advice</b> for records relating to advice to the Minister or other government departments regarding community or consumer health matters.</p>	
3.0.1		Final copies of campaign and information resources produced to inform or advise patients and consumers about particular health care issues e.g. brochures, posters and toolkits, and records relating to the evaluation and review of health promotion campaigns. Includes reports or recommendations arising from research or from the evaluation or review processes.	Required as State archives
3.0.2		Records relating to the implementation and administration of community education	Retain minimum of 5 years after action

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Dates of coverage: Open

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<i>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING</i>			
		programs.	completed, then destroy
4.0.0	<b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING</b>	Monitoring and reporting on the performance of the NSW health system, including safety and quality, effectiveness, efficiency, cost and responsiveness of the system to the health needs of the population.	
4.1.0	<b>Investigations, inquiries and reviews</b>	Conduct of investigations into or reviews of clinical practices or patient care.	
4.1.1		<p>Records relating to the conduct of reviews or investigations into systemic aspects of clinical practice or patient treatment and care e.g. reviews or investigations conducted at the request of the Minister or the Director General. Records include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• terms of reference and appointment of officers</li> <li>• reports</li> <li>• correspondence</li> <li>• findings of research</li> <li>• final reports.</li> </ul>	Required as State archives
4.1.2		<p>Records relating to the conduct of inquiry, investigation or review processes where the information is recorded or substantially summarised in reports, recommendations or advice resulting from the inquiry, investigation or review. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements for inspections</li> <li>• notes from interviews later incorporated into reports.</li> </ul>	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy



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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING - Patient deaths and incidents</i>			
4.2.0	<b>Patient deaths and incidents</b>	The activities associated with audits of patient deaths and incidents.  See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>COMMITTEES</b> for records relating to the appointment of committee members.	
4.2.1		Records of notifications of hospital deaths or incidents and follow up assessments, audits or reviews. Includes deaths involving anaesthesia or care by a surgeon. Records include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• notifications</li> <li>• questionnaires</li> <li>• assessment</li> <li>• case note reviews</li> <li>• appeals</li> <li>• correspondence with the clinician or practitioner</li> <li>• supplementary clinical information provided by clinicians or the health facility</li> <li>• coronial reports.</li> </ul>	Required as State archives
4.3.0	<b>Service audits and assessments</b>	The monitoring of services provided by hospitals and health services.  See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> <b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - Reporting</b> for reports to the Minister and Director General of Health on the performance of the health system.	

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<i>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING - Service audits and assessments</i>			
		See <b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING - Reporting</b> for final reports of audits of patient safety and clinical quality in health organisations.	
4.3.1		Records relating to the development of assessment methodology and framework. Records include: background research, correspondence, notes of meetings or reports analysing issues and the outcome of consultations with stakeholders and contractors, results of pilot projects.	Required as State archives
4.3.2		Records relating to the conduct of assessments and audits of patient safety and clinical quality in health organisations. Includes voluntary assessments carried out by private health organisations. Records include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• records of assessment planning and liaison with organisation</li> <li>• completed self-assessment surveys</li> <li>• correspondence, notes and reports from meetings</li> <li>• on-site assessments and interviews</li> <li>• advice provided.</li> </ul>	Retain minimum of 7 years after last action, then destroy
4.3.3		Records relating to the appointment of assessors and auditors to assess compliance of health organisations with quality systems requirements. Records include applications, correspondence, notifications.	Retain minimum of 7 years after expiry of appointment, then destroy
4.4.0	<b>Reporting</b>	Reporting on the performance of the health system.  See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records COMMITTEES</i> for records relating to project-specific advisory committees that inform the creation of reports.	

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<i>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING - Reporting</i>			
4.4.1		Final versions of reports on or key issues affecting public health and the overall state or performance of the health system and individual health organisations. Includes reports on safety and quality, effectiveness, efficiency, cost and responsiveness of the system to the health needs of the population, benchmarking reports on the overall state or performance of the public health system and individual health organisations, and reports of assessments and audits of patient safety and clinical quality in health organisations. Includes commissioned reports and technical supplements.	Required as State archives
4.4.2		Working papers relating to the development of health system reports.	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy
4.4.3		Records of unique survey data that is collected and managed by the organisation for analysis, reporting and future research.	Required as State archives
4.4.4		Data provided from third parties and follow-up case data including any questionnaires or surveys.	Retain minimum of 10 years after data is published and administrative use ceased, then destroy