



# 2023-24

State Records Commission

# Annual Report

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## Chairperson

Catherine Fletcher, Information Commissioner

## Executive Officer to the Commission

Damian Shepherd, State Archivist and Executive Director, State Records Office

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## We encourage feedback:

Email us so we can improve our Annual Report next year.

## Acknowledgement of Country

The State Records Commission acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, sea, culture and knowledge. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures and to Elders both past and present.

## Image sources

### Cover

Foreground: Hill shading on manuscript map - Map Making 1960s Cons 7733

Middle: Plans for new Perth GPO showing internal structure, 1913. Ref: NAA: PP324/2, SHEET NO 12

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# Chairperson's Foreword

**This is the 23rd Annual Report of the State Records Commission (the Commission) and my first since assuming the role of Chairperson of the Commission in August 2023.**

It is an honour to serve as a member of the four person Commission established under the *State Records Act 2000 (the Act)*, together with the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, and the Governor's appointee (who is an archives and records specialist from outside the public service).

As Chairperson, there is an opportunity to enhance awareness of the role of the Commission which is to ensure, as far as possible, that State record keeping is of a standard that best serves the interests of the people of this State and that, subject to the law, government records are accessible to the public.

There are important democratic objectives inherent in the statutory right to access government records (and archives), which includes enabling public participation in government and ensuring government is accountable.

Through my experience as Information Commissioner, operating under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, and as a State Records Commissioner, I am keenly aware that proper record-keeping, and effective records and archives management, is fundamental to being able to access government-held information.

Without lawful and timely access to relevant records the above democratic objectives may not be met. If they are not met, there is real risk of a decline in trust in government. With no or low trust in government, democracy itself is at risk.

Of course, there are many other compelling reasons why a right to access government-held records is important. Significantly, as records provide evidence of the development of policy, spending and other decisions of government, they are vitally important to the oversight work of the Parliament and accountability agencies (such as the CCC, Ombudsman and Auditor General). Public records are also often critical to the operation of the broader justice system and for the successful operation of government itself.

Effective records management is therefore critical from the moment information is created or captured, through to the point at which it is either disposed of responsibly or preserved permanently as archives.

To support the above objectives, the Commission's statutory functions include monitoring the operation of and compliance with the Act, monitoring compliance by agencies with record keeping plans, and inquiring into breaches or possible breaches of the Act.

**“I would like to acknowledge the support of the State Records Advisory Committee, working groups and communities of practice who work with the SRO to ensure regulatory and other requirements are not unnecessarily burdensome, whilst also being effective in ensuring the Parliament’s intentions expressed in the Act are achieved.”**



The Commission must also establish principles and standards for record keeping and archives management, report to Parliament about its activities and the operation of the Act, and recommend any legislative or administrative changes that, in the Commission’s view, could be made to help the objects of the Act be achieved.

Although the Commission has no staff or budget of its own to undertake the above responsibilities, it is greatly assisted by the Executive Director and staff of the State Records Office (SRO). The Director has certain responsibilities under the Act to provide the Commission with assistance. Our experience is that Director and his staff are dedicated and passionate about their work and are always helpful to the Commission. The Act also allows for the Commission to seek reasonably necessary services and facilities from the Minister responsible for the Act (currently the Minister for Culture and the Arts) to enable it to perform its functions. The Minister is, in turn, assisted by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (the Department), which also has responsibilities towards the SRO, including allocating it budgetary and other resources.

Upon becoming Chairperson I sought to better understand the current and historical operation of the SRO, including its resourcing.

Briefly, it is significant that the Act, the SRO and the independent Commission arose out of the findings and recommendations of the 1992 report of the *Royal Commission into the Commercial Activities of Government* (often referred to as the ‘WA Inc’ Royal Commission). The seminal lessons of that period are enduring and should not be forgotten. The Commission had a lot to say about the fundamental importance of records to good governance, transparency and government accountability. I have also read a number of (mostly unpublished) past reports into the operation and funding of the SRO (and, by extension, the Commission). I have reviewed many past annual reports of the Commission and numerous (almost 200) Parliamentary Questions or other relevant references in Hansard since 2000 that relate to or touch upon the operation of the SRO, the Commission and/or the State archives, or to public record-keeping or archive issues in Western Australia. I have also sought information on particular issues such as the provision of records training to the public sector by the SRO, breach action taken by the Commission, and comparative resourcing/archive repository and other information regarding such bodies across Australia and New Zealand.

While the issues are too extensive to fully canvass here, it is very concerning that in Western Australia the SRO currently does not and can not undertake the following: provide any direct records management training to the public sector, assist agencies with large-scale digitising of agency archives, receive any additional physical archives into its existing collection, regularly engage in conservation work of fragile archives, or receive any digital archives. This means that only a very small proportion (estimated at about 15%) of all physical State archives are held by the SRO and there is no centralised digital archive repository for digital government information in Western Australia. It is therefore up to agencies to undertake and pay for any necessary preservation/digitisation of archives, and for the storage and other associated costs of physical and digital archives that cannot be transferred to the SRO.

The SRO does however make available to agencies useful written, and sometimes in person or telephone, guidance on record-keeping and archival obligations under the Act. It can offer considerable expertise when called upon. But it is limited in how it can respond to requests for assistance and training, or address the issues above, due to severe resourcing constraints. Accordingly, the Director has made a strategic decision in recent years to engage in cross-sector working groups that deal with broader information management issues that involve reminders about record-keeping fundamentals.

A useful resource for comparing archival bodies is produced annually by the *Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities* (known also as CAARA). CAARA has been publishing data about the resourcing and capacity of its members across Australia for over 20 years (since 2000). For each jurisdiction the data includes recent and historical statistics on archival holdings (physical and digital), usage of the archives, digital services, repository storage and capacity, staffing, budget and expenditure, and income. The latest data set can be found [here](#).

It is of significant concern to the Commission that when the SRO is compared to the bodies in other Australian jurisdictions it is among the least well-resourced archival bodies, with virtually no growth in its physical archival collection in decades and (one of a number with) no digital archive capacity.

In comparison, most other jurisdictions have a higher budget, staffing, storage capacity and a number also now have a digital archive.

The inadequate resourcing of archival and records authorities in some Australian jurisdictions is aggravated by the fact that there continues to be across the country many reports of oversight or other investigative bodies that frequently refer to problematic government records & archive issues. For example, a recent (currently unpublished) study conducted under my supervision as part of my role as Chairperson, of almost 400 reports in Western Australia of the OAG, CCC and the Ombudsman (published over 10 years to 2023) suggests that record-keeping issues and/or recommendations arise in approximately 62% of the total number of those reports.

My office was also recently a co-sponsor of a report published by Monash University in June 2024, entitled *The culture of implementing freedom of information in Australia*. In addition to matters related to FOI, the report found significant records issues and lack of resourcing and/or executive support for records management across the public sector in Western Australia. The report is based on 3 years of research in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria with direct evidence from FOI and records practitioners in each jurisdiction.

As a result of all the above, and following discussions with my fellow Commissioners, I met earlier this year with senior executives in the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to express the Commission's concern about the resourcing of the SRO and the negative impact that is likely to have on the fulfilment of the purpose of the State Records Act and Commission's legislative functions. I am pleased to say the Department responded promptly to our concerns and offered to conduct a review into the issues raised (the Review). That Review is now underway and is expected to report to the Department in mid 2025. As Chairperson of the Commission, I was involved in scoping the Review, have been consulted as a stakeholder and am a member of the Review's reference group.

As noted above, despite resourcing constraints, the SRO undertakes some valuable work to uplift information management capability across the sector in order to support some other government initiatives.

The Commission especially notes and commends the publication by the SRO in March 2024 of the *Information Management Framework for WA Government*. This framework sets out the principles, capabilities and enablers to support information management across WA government agencies and uses them to help readers navigate across the various legislation and regulations, policies, standards, strategies and other frameworks that now govern how we manage information in this State.

The SRO has also made a significant contribution to the WA Government's commitment to introducing Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing (PRIS) legislation. The SRO worked with other agencies to develop and provide advice on the way in which the State Records Act 2000 can support the objectives on the proposed legislation. With the PRIS legislation currently before the Parliament, the SRO should be commended for making a strong and valuable contribution to the preparation of the public sector for the impending PRIS regime.

We have the opportunity in WA to significantly uplift our capacity and capability in records and archives management to facilitate the sharing of and access to government information for all the benefits mentioned above for years to come. Significantly, in only a few short years time, Western Australia will mark 200 years since settlement of the Colony: a significant occasion leading up to which our State archives are likely to be in strong demand. It would be very disappointing if many of the relevant records and archives needed to tell our State history for that occasion were not readily accessible.

Accelerating advances in technology, particularly in digitisation, cloud computing and artificial intelligence mean the technical barriers and costs for improving access are lower than ever. However the SRO and Commission must be able to carry out their respective legislative functions in order to assist the public sector and the community take advantage of such advancements.

In the immediate term the Commission recognises, and supports, the efforts of the SRO to engage with other agencies through external committees, groups and communities of practice, including a new online Information Management (IM) Hub for sharing IM experience.

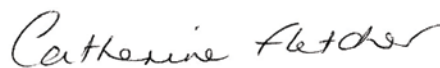
The view of the Commission is that this engagement is worthwhile, but with adequate SRO resourcing, this could expand into more direct education and training, and also enable the necessary goal of assisting ICT and information management functions to work more effectively together. In carrying out this work, the SRO is supporting the Commission achieve some of its key legislative obligations.

Recognising the very timely opportunity to support information sharing and collaboration across government, the Commission remains committed to development of a more streamlined standards for records management, including simpler online monitoring and reporting, with the aim of facilitating continuous improvement in practice.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the State Records Advisory Committee, working groups and communities of practice who work with the SRO to ensure regulatory and other requirements are not unnecessarily burdensome, whilst also being effective in ensuring the Parliament's intentions expressed in the Act are achieved.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my fellow Commissioners as well as the Director of the SRO, staff of the SRO and the Department. The broad range of work described again in this year's report is a testament to the dedication of those mentioned above and many others who bring the objectives of the Act to life.

On behalf of the Commission, I reiterate our deep respect for the wisdom of Parliament for enacting the Act, and our sense of responsibility and privilege for ensuring its benefits are realised for all West Australians.



**Catherine Fletcher**  
Chairperson  
State Records Commission  
October 2024

# The State Records Commission

The State Records Commission (the Commission) was established in July 2001 under Part 8 of the Act.

The Commission consists of four members: the Auditor General; the Information Commissioner; the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman); and an appointee with record keeping experience from outside government. The Governor appoints the fourth Commissioner for a three-year term.

## During 2023-24 the Commissioners were:

### Ms Catherine Fletcher

Information Commissioner  
Joined the Commission in July 2018  
Chairperson of the Commission since August 2023

### Mr Chris Field PSM

Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (or Ombudsman)  
Joined the Commission in 2007  
Chair of the Commission from March 2016 – August 2023

### Ms Caroline Spencer

Auditor General  
Joined the Commission in May 2018

### Mr Alan Ralph

Governor's Appointee to the Commission  
Joined the Commission in 2018 for a three year term. Reappointed to the Commission in November 2021 for a further term

## Commission Remuneration 2023-24

The three ex-officio Commission members (the Ombudsman, Information Commissioner and Auditor General) do not receive any additional remuneration for their roles on the Commission. Only the Governor's Appointee is paid remuneration and expenses for their role on the Commission (Schedule 4, Clause 7 of the Act).

<b>Position</b>	Commission Member – Governor's Appointee
<b>Name</b>	Mr Alan Ralph
<b>Type of remuneration</b>	Per annum
<b>Period of membership</b>	5 years
<b>Gross/actual remuneration</b>	\$8,946



The individual profiles of each of the Commissioners can be viewed at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/state-records-office-of-western-australia/state-records-commission>



Left to right: Mr Alan Ralph (Governor's Appointee), Ms Caroline Spencer (Auditor General), Mr Chris Field PSM (Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations), Ms Catherine Fletcher (Information Commissioner - Chairperson of the Commission).



# Role and Functions of the Commission

The Commission's main functions are set out in sections 60, 61 and 64 of the Act and include:

- Monitoring the operation of and compliance with the Act;
- Monitoring compliance by government organisations with record keeping plans; and
- Inquiring into breaches or possible breaches of the Act.
- Establishing principles and standards for:
  - governing record keeping by State organisations;
  - governing contracts or arrangements entered into by State organisations with persons under which they are to perform any aspect of record keeping for the organisations;
  - determining which State records should be State archives;
  - determining which State archives should be restricted access archives and the ages at which they should cease to be restricted;
  - determining which State archives should not be transferred to the State archives collection; and
  - determining the retention periods of State records that are not to be State archives.
- Submitting to Parliament:
  - before 1 November each year, an annual report about the activities of the Commission during the previous financial year, the operation of the Act, and about any legislative or administrative changes that, in the Commission's view, could be made to help the objects of the Act be achieved; and
  - at any time, a special report about a contravention of the Act by a government organisation.

The Commission meets regularly to carry out these functions.

In the last financial year, it met formally in Perth on 29 August 2023 and 27 November 2023. The Commission agreed to defer a formal meeting scheduled for April 2024.

The Commission also occasionally considers papers out of session where matters are time critical.

Accurate minutes of the Commission meetings are made by staff of the SRO who attend these meetings and are kept at the SRO, in accordance with the Commission's Record Keeping Plan.

Each of the ex officio Commissioners, through their own statutory roles, also support the objects of the Act where possible. They each participate, from time to time, in SRO or Commission events or other related forums with the aim of enhancing public sector and community awareness of the work of the Commission and the operation of the Act.

# The Commission's Relationship with the State Records Office and Others

Part 9 of the Act establishes the entity called the State Records Office (SRO) and prescribes the functions and role of the Director State Records. The Director State Records is generally referred to in this report as the Executive Director. A key function of the Executive Director under the Act is providing advice and support to the Commission as required.

The SRO is part of the DLGSC and reports through the Director General to the Minister for Culture and the Arts.

A key compliance requirement of the Act is the mandate for each government organisation to have a record keeping plan (plan). The value of a plan is that it enables an organisation to appropriately secure and make discoverable and accessible the records of information it creates and manages. The SRO provides advice and guidance to organisations to assist in completing plans for approval by the Commission, and in completing regular reviews of plans as required under the Act.

The Executive Director oversees the monitoring and evaluation of compliance on behalf of the Commission and presents compliance and suspected breach reports to the Commission regarding organisations' record keeping practices.

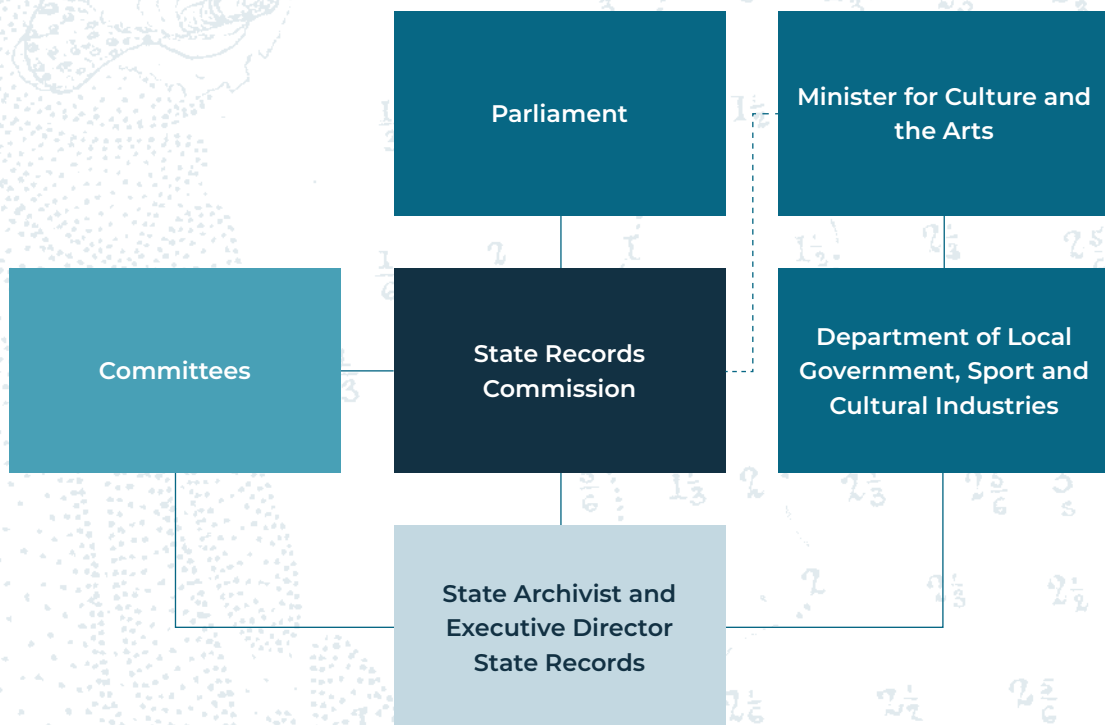
The Executive Director, through the SRO, is also responsible under the Act for the management of and access to the State archives collection, including supporting the Commission in its decision-making regarding restricting access to certain State archives.

For further information on the operation of the SRO see the Annual Report for the DLGSC.



Map making in the 1960s

Reporting and administrative arrangements under the  
*State Records Act 2000*



## The Commission has many other relationships across Western Australia, including with:



### State Parliament

which relies on State records and archives as the memory of government; and uses records of information to inform decision-making.



### Ministerial offices

in connection with their records concerning non-electoral functions.



### State public sector organisations

that create, manage and share records of information as they carry out the business of government.



### Local government authorities and elected members

that create, manage and share records of information as they carry out the business of local government.



### A range of statutory offices

including the Governor's Establishment, that create, manage and share records of information as they carry out their functions.



### Government trading enterprises

that rely on effective access to records of information to plan and deliver services to the community.



### Other Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

that rely on the evidential value of State records and archives to uphold the integrity of government in WA.



### The community

who seek to discover, access and use information in the State records and State archives collection; and ultimately benefit from the principles and standards through which State records and archives are secured and made discoverable and accessible.

## Client Story: Charlotte Ward



Charlotte Ward is a PhD candidate at Monash University and part of the University's research project "Global Encounters & First Nations Peoples: 1000 Years of Australian History". This project explores visitations to the Australian continent by European and Asian agents over many centuries prior to British colonisation.

Charlotte's research focus is on the West coast of Australia and how Dutch encounters have been memorialised (and how such encounters have in the past been a cornerstone of Western Australian history, overshadowing Aboriginal histories).

During her visit, Charlotte examined the State archives in connection with de Vlamingh's plate which was taken to Paris by Louis de Freycinet in 1818. Charlotte's research is revealing that the return of this plate came at a price, and that the Musee de l'Homme requested Aboriginal artefacts be provided by way of a trade. 46 of these artefacts still remain at the Musee du Quai Branly, with many having been provided by Aboriginal missions in the Kimberley in the 1940s. Charlotte's research is helping re-establish further information about these artefacts, as little has been known about them to date or has been incorrect.

De Vlamingh's plate is currently on display at the Shipwrecks Galleries, WA Museum, Fremantle.

## Client Story: Dr Eleanor Bland



Dr Eleanor Bland travelled from the UK to conduct research at the SRO of WA, looking into Western Australian policing practices up until 1914.

Eleanor is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford. Her research has been on the impact of targeted policing practices on suspected individuals and communities in the UK and Australia. Eleanor's focus for WA is looking at the policing of Aboriginal peoples, Asian immigrants and former Convicts. Eleanor has been reviewing the records of the WA Police Department and individual stations using Police Occurrence Books for the late 1800s/ early 1900s held in the State archives collection. Eleanor has also made extensive use of WA Police Gazettes prior to her visit. WA Police Gazettes up to 1945 are available online through the SRO.

Eleanor reported "I am amazed at how many WA Police records are available to assist this type of research." While WA Police records have been a critical source for historians over previous decades, there are many that have yet to be fully examined, with new insights still to be researched and written about.

# The Commission's Environment

**The Act defines a record broadly as any record of information, however recorded.**

Although State records may typically be thought to consist only of information of long-term significance that relates to key decisions, it should be remembered that under the Act 'State records' are defined as any recorded information and the media on which they are recorded, including digital files and data, paper files, microfilm, maps, plans, photographs, video and audio recordings. The obligations that arise under the Act therefore have broad application to many different types of records created by or held in agencies across the State and local government sectors.

State archives, on the other hand, are State records that are retained permanently because they have been assessed as having permanent value.

Once State archives are 25 years, provided they are not restricted archives, they become accessible under the *State Records Act* rather than the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

## Records Management in the Public Sector

In performing its functions, the Commission is responsible for ensuring that State record keeping is of a standard that best serves the interests of the people of WA.

There are some 300 government agencies and statutory organisations (including 139 local government authorities) and these entities employ over 100,000 people who produce or receive a very large volume of information in a wide range of formats.

## Information, Data and Records

The Act defines a record broadly as "any record of information, however recorded".

In practice, that means the Act and the principles and standards established by the Commission apply to the way organisations collect or create and manage all forms of recorded information regardless of whether that is referred to as data, data and algorithms, digital and hard copy documents, images, sound and video.

In 2024 the SRO published an Information Management Framework for WA that explains and illustrates the roles and responsibilities of every individual across government to manage the records of information they create and use. The Framework makes it easier to navigate these important responsibilities and will support a more integrated approach to information management across government.



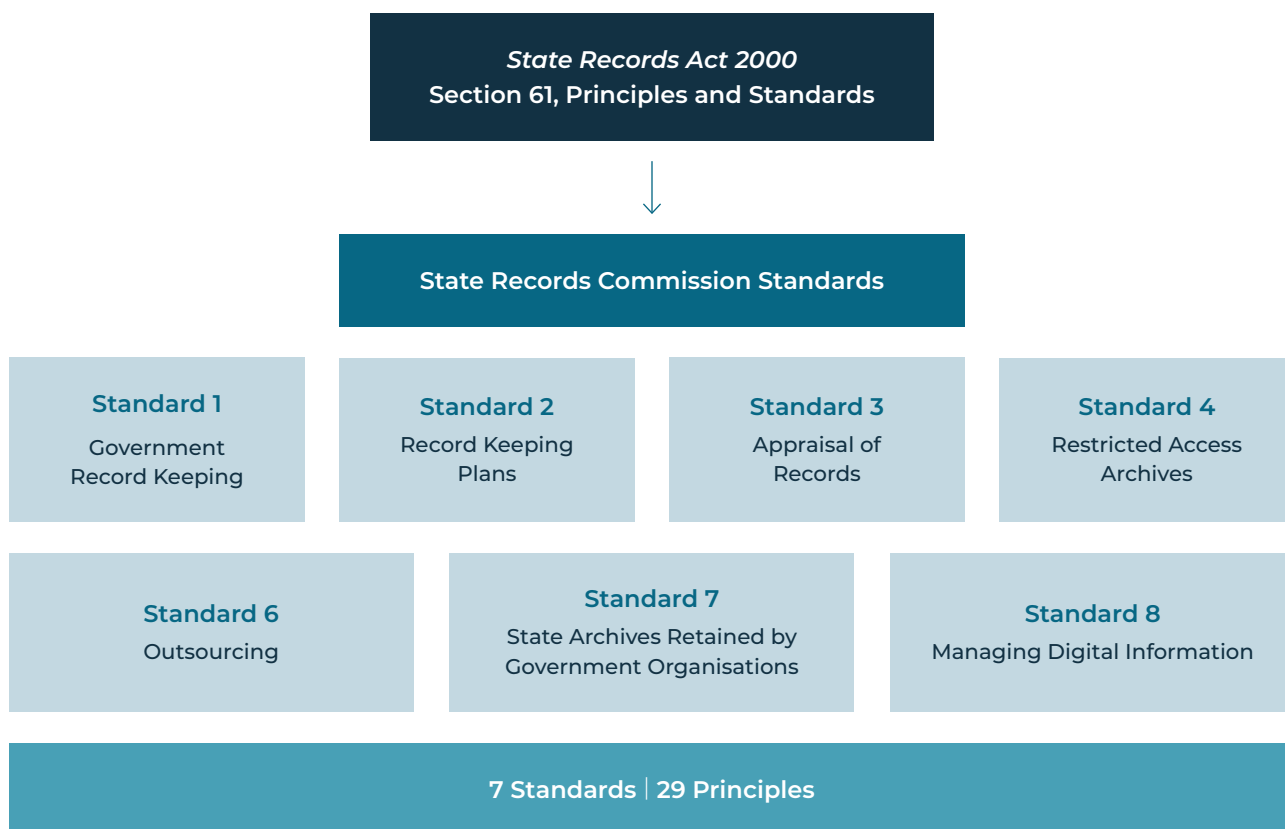
Under section 61 of the Act, the Commission must establish principles and standards for the governance of record keeping by State organisations and other matters relating to the management of State records. In administering the Act, the Commission has established a regime which places primary responsibility for effective records management on government organisations.

The SRO provides support to organisations to ensure compliance with the Commission's existing principles and standards by providing guidance material, records management advice and other advisory services.

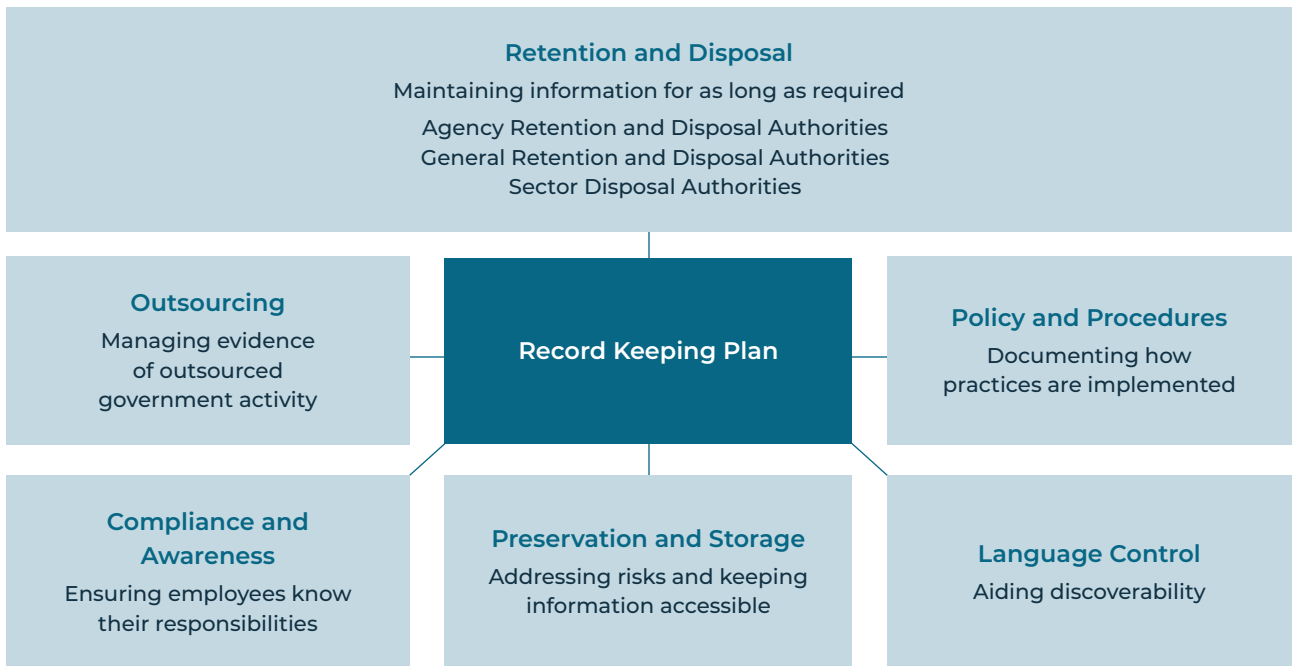
As of June 2024, there were seven Standards containing 29 Principles and 105 compliance requirements.

The SRO has commenced a project to simplify the principles and standards issued under section 61 of the Act. The proposal, which must be endorsed by the Commission, is to replace all seven existing Standards with a single Standard containing 3 broad principles, which will be supported by detailed written guidance material, as well as the ongoing advisory services of the SRO.

Under section 64(1) of the Act the Commission is required to report on any legislative or administrative changes that, in the Commission's view, could be made to help the objects of the Act to be achieved. This year, the Commission has considered minor editorial changes to the Act. Nothing substantive in terms of other changes is being put forward by the Commission at this time.



As of June 2022, there were seven State Records Commission Standards for the management of records of information. The Standards are numbered 1 through 8 in this diagram as Standard 5 was superseded by Standard 7 in June 2016.



Record keeping plans (plans) are required to be maintained by every parliamentary department and government organisation covered by the Act. They contain information about processes, documentation, and systems – planned or in place – for managing records of information.

Under the Act, each plan must also set out provisions for the retention periods and ultimate disposal actions for the records created and maintained by the organisation.

These retention and disposal provisions are stipulated either by a General Retention and Disposal Authority or another Disposal Authority that is approved by the Commission.

Government organisations' plans are based on the compliance requirements set out in SRC Standard 2: Record Keeping Plans and SRC Standard 6: Outsourcing.

These Standards address requirements for an organisation's employees and third-party providers working on an organisation's behalf.

## Keeping Records Accessible and Useful

In the Act any reference to 'record keeping' is described as including a reference:

- (a) to creating, maintaining, indexing, organizing, storing, preserving, securing, retaining and managing records; and
- (b) to maintaining, preserving, securing and retaining the means by which any information on a record can be recovered.

Commission standards require that government organisations managing records identified as State archives undertake preservation actions needed to ensure such records, both physical and digital, remain usable and accessible for the long term.



This image shows what happens when a digital file becomes unreadable and is essentially lost.



## State Archives – Physical and Digital

State archives are those records of long-term significance that are retained in perpetuity. Generally, we expect that only around five per cent of records created fall into this category. These are the most significant records of government business and have ongoing evidential and cultural value. Other State records can, and should, be destroyed over time according to approved Disposal Authorities.

Whether recorded on paper or in another physical format, or born-digital on a computer, State archives frequently contain a treasure trove of historically interesting information and useful data. Archival data includes names, locations, ideas, statistics, dates, transactions, and events in the thousands of stories stored in archives.

Archival information and data can often hold great value and opportunities for research, as well as providing an understanding of the past decisions and operations of government. The archives therefore also support government integrity by providing transparency and accountability, institutional memory, environmental management, social resilience, and inclusion. They help contextualise and build new knowledge as well as providing support for business and economic innovation. Archival datasets might also offer insights into trends and patterns over time via machine learning, data analytics, and artificial intelligence.

The SRO currently holds some 15 linear kilometres of physical permanent value records from over 2,000 government agencies dating from the first days of the colony in 1829 brought together in the State archives collection. This is the largest archival collection in WA.

However, what is known to be held in the State archives collection represents only a small portion (about 15%) of what is estimated to be the total sum of State archives that exists across the State. It is estimated that there are more than 75 linear kilometres of paper-based State archives, as well as thousands of films and photographs, representing millions of individual records, held across government in Departments and agencies, or in off-site storage facilities.

None of these archives sitting outside the SRO can be transferred to the State archives collection as the SRO ran out of storage capacity to receive additional archives in 2001.

In addition to the physical archives sitting outside the State archives collection, today we recognise that most State records are created in digital format, that is, they are born digital.

Currently, the SRO has no digital repository and therefore no capacity to receive any digital archives from across government. Accordingly, all born-digital State archives are only held by the government organisations that created or received them. It is estimated that these organisations hold tens of petabytes of data in this form and this volume of data is growing rapidly. It is estimated that some five per cent of these records are likely to be of long-term value (State archives), representing perhaps several hundred terabytes of data of long-term archival value.

The Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (known also as CAARA) has been publishing data collected from its archival and records authority members for well over 20 years (since 2000). On its website, CAARA states that “The statistical database is a valuable source of comparative information for individual archives to make use of, and it provides data to support applications for funding to governments and other resource-allocating bodies.”

Prior to that similar data comparing such bodies was published by the former Australian Council of Archives (ACA) since 1989. These survey results provide a rich and compelling data set about the resourcing and capacity of archival and records bodies.

The latest data set includes for each jurisdiction, the most recent and historical statistics on archival holdings (physical and digital), usage of the archives, digital services, repository buildings storage and capacity, staffing, budget and expenditure, and income. In summary, the latest data for WA's archives and records authority, SRO, when compared to that of other Australian jurisdictions, establishes that it is among the least well-resourced (e.g. storage capacity and staffing) archival bodies in Australia, with virtually no growth in its physical archival collection in decades and (one of a number with) no digital archive capacity.

In comparison, most other jurisdictions have significantly higher budgets, staffing, storage capacity and a number have a digital archive.

These issues should not be allowed to continue in WA.

In addition, despite a legislative requirement to do so under section 73(1)(d) of the Act, the Executive Director of the SRO has not yet established a register of all State archives, including those not in the State archives collection.

Unless this issue is urgently addressed, there is a risk to government that many significant records of permanent value may be lost, not discoverable and/or not accessible.

## Strategic Focus

The SRO's Strategic Plan (Plan on a Page) 2023-2026 describes how the SRO supports the Commission and its stakeholders through a series of strategic priorities.

This Plan on a Page 2023-2026 is published to [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au) and describes a vision for successful application of the Act.

## Keeping Archives Safe

Commission standards require organisations to preserve government records for as long as they are legally required. State archives are required to be kept in perpetuity.



This means organisations are required to have identified and assessed the risks and impacts of disasters on records of information under their responsibility, and planned strategies and actions to reduce and manage risks to records, in the event of a disaster occurring.

If a disaster does occur and an organisation's records are damaged (e.g. due to fire, flood, mould, pest damage) the SRO must be contacted and can provide advice regarding recovery and management of the damaged records, along with information about the appropriate and approved destruction of records damaged beyond recovery.

This image shows large format State archives (plans) stored safely in the State archives collection.

## The Right to Access State Archives

Guaranteeing open access to archives is how democratic societies sustain community memory, inclusion, and equity. In WA, the right to access State Archives is prescribed in law under section 45(3) of the Act.

Specifically, the Act requires that:

If a State archive –

(a) is in the State archives collection (managed by the SRO); or

(b) is not in the State archives collection but is at least 25 years old

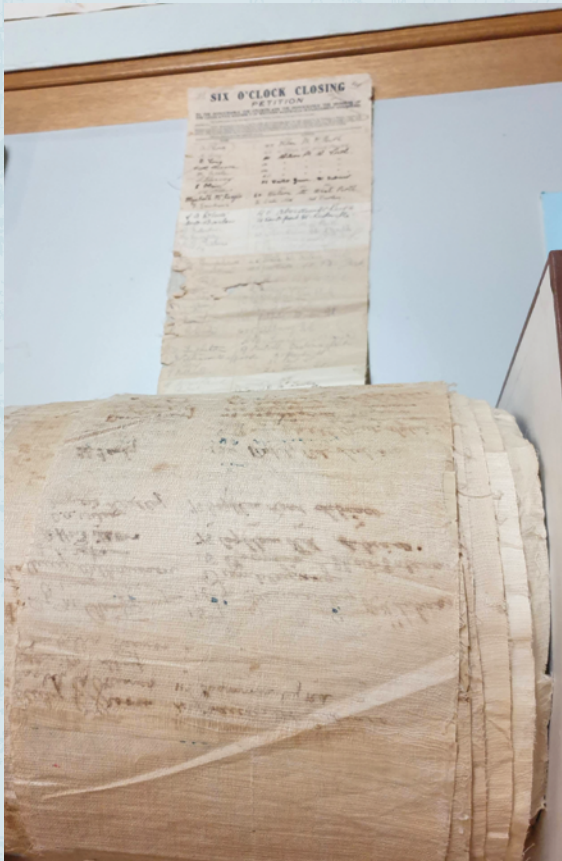
a person has a right to be given access to it (unless a restriction on access has been approved by the relevant authority or any express provision in another written law) and the *Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 1992* does not apply to or in relation to it.

For State archives less than 25 years old and/or outside the State archives collection, the Act also provides for access under FOI.

## Vision Statement



*A secure and discoverable record of government that is valued by our community and used to create a legacy for future generations of Western Australians.*



### Digitisation at the SRO

The SRO conducts digitisation both in-house as well as using commercial digitisation services. Over the last 18 months, the SRO has utilised the high-end services of the Digitisation Centre of WA (DCWA, operating from the University of WA) for challenging physical formats that require a specialist approach.

One of the State archives that was digitised by DCWA in 2023 was the Petition presented to WA Parliament in 1928 for hotels to close at 6 o'clock (during a time when prohibition was in place in the United States). This Petition is in a single roll that measures over 100 metres in length. Due to its physical nature, it has been impossible to access the Petition and to see who signed it. Digitisation of this record overcomes this issue, with the team at DCWA digitising the whole Petition in sections and stitching the images together.

The SRO is working on making the digitised Petition available online.

The three strategic priorities in the plan are:

- 1) Build better information management capabilities
- 2) Enhance information management awareness and knowledge

3) Improve access to State archives

For more information about the SRO's current Plan on a Page visit: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/state-records-office-of-western-australia-strategic-plan>

# Key Challenges

**Government faces a number of significant challenges regarding access to and management of State records and archives.**

The key challenges include:

## Managing records of information across diverse digital systems

Government organisations use a wide range of digital systems to capture and manage information. This presents both a challenge in terms of ensuring information is managed efficiently across these systems – including appropriate discovery and access, and an opportunity to simplify how we use these systems to reduce complexity and costs.

The SRO is pro-actively engaging with agencies across the public sector to better understand and support the management of records of information outside Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) traditionally used to manage records.

## Access to State archives outside the State archives collection

The SRO has established systems and facilities to provide an information service about State archives in the State archives collection in accordance with s73(1)c of the Act. This service is used extensively by government and the community to access the collection.

However, it is estimated that more than 80% of physical State archives are held outside of the State archives collection at the SRO by the agencies that created them or have become custodians for these important records. The SRO has limited information about what these records are and where they are held and regularly makes referrals for assistance to other agencies for assistance on behalf of the public and government organisations requesting access.

The SRO is working with other agencies to better understand and streamline access to State archives outside the collection wherever possible.

State records include all records of information collected, created and managed by government organisations. This includes data and other information managed outside EDRMS. It is critical that organisations leverage technology to manage all these records effectively.

# Performance

The functions of the Commission under section 60 of the Act include:

- monitoring the operation of and compliance with this Act;
- monitoring compliance by government organisations with record keeping plans; and
- inquiring into breaches or possible breaches of this Act.

The Act also requires that in performing its functions the Commission is, as far as possible, to ensure that:

- State record keeping is of a standard that best serves the interests of the people of this State; and
- subject to the law, government records are accessible to the public.

This report provides insight into the delivery of these functions and performance of organisations subject to the requirements of the Act.



*Watercolour painting of shacks on Heirisson Island c.1904. Painting by Percival Standway-Tapp. Image Courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia.*

# Highlights

On behalf of the Commission, the SRO has made significant progress on several actions in its Strategic Plan – with a focus on both strengthening and modernising regulation of government record keeping and working with government organisations to improve access to State archives.

## An Information Management Framework for WA

In April 2024 the SRO published the Information Management Framework (IMF) for WA.

The IMF was developed in consultation with a wide range of other organisations across government and in other sectors. It aims to help agencies more easily navigate across the information management requirements found in various legislation, regulation and policy documents. The IMF will also enable government organisations to more easily evaluate the effectiveness of information management plans and policies. It also provides a clear statement of responsibilities and accountability for staff at all levels.

## Strengthening Information Management in the WA Public Sector

Throughout 2023-24 the SRO continued development of, and consultation on, a draft single new State Records Commission standard for State records and a supporting framework. The proposed new standard would replace the seven existing Commission standards established under section 61(1) of the Act.

The proposed standard aims to simplify and modernise existing requirements by updating terminology and consolidating compliance requirements so they can be more effectively addressed and reported on. The draft single standard includes a new template for record keeping plans and a new online reporting approach based on a Records Management Maturity Model (or 'RM3'). The proposal has been broadly supported through public consultation and the SRO has been able to use feedback from this and subsequent consultation to enhance the draft.

The Commission and SRO are investing significant time and effort in preparing for the roll-out of this important reform to ensure WA government organisations are well supported through the transition from the current set of standards to the new standard and reporting framework.

### The principles are:



**Information rights are respected** by communicating a clear purpose when collecting or creating information, considering legal, ethical and cultural needs, upholding freedom of access, and safeguarding the privacy of individuals.



**Information is managed as a valuable public asset** and protected by maintaining it over time in appropriate systems and eventually disposing of it properly or retaining in perpetuity if a State archive.



**Information has integrity and can be trusted** as accurate and reliable to support decision-making, transparency, and accountability.

*The Information Management Framework published by the SRO in 2024 defines a simple set of three principles for information management, supported by capabilities and enablers common to most organisations.*

## State Records Commission Award for Excellence in Records and Information Management

The W.S. Lonnie Awards were established by the Institute of Public Administration Australia – WA Division (IPAA WA) to recognise excellence in annual reporting by public sector organisations. Since 2006, the Commission has sponsored a specialist Lonnie Award to acknowledge excellence in reporting about organisational records management programs.

The Commission was delighted to present its Award for the 2023-24 reporting year to the Western Australian Museum.

The Western Australian (WA) Museum demonstrated a clear commitment to exceptional information management in compliance with the Commission standards.

Efficiency and effectiveness in managing records in accordance with their current record keeping plan is reflected in a comprehensive and engaging annual report statement.

The judges were particularly impressed with the record keeping support offered to museum staff. Induction and ongoing training programs, individualised support, and staff feedback have ensured that new and existing staff are supported in their record keeping responsibilities.

The WA Museum's efforts towards developing an inclusive and ongoing training program have resulted in a marked increase in records capture and management over the past five years.

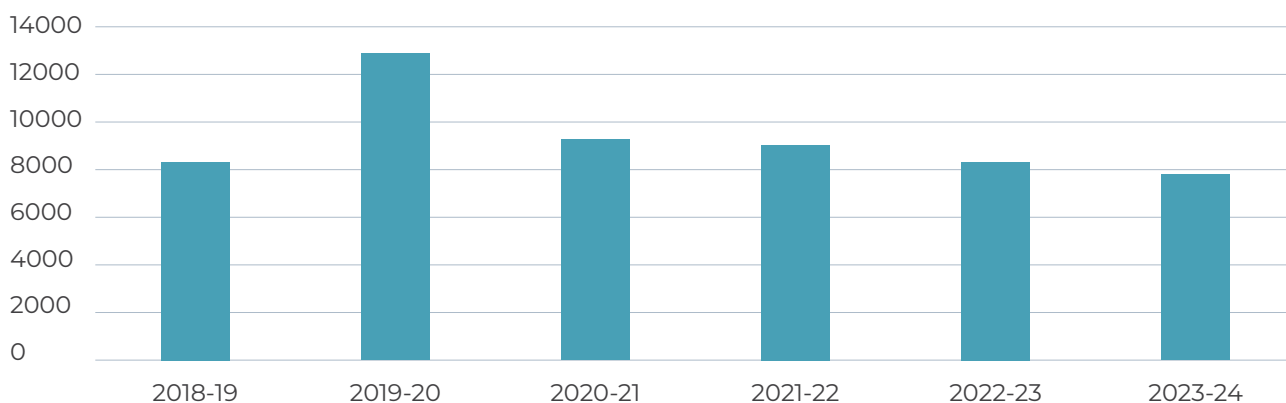
The WA Museum's annual report presents an excellent account of their work to monitor and improve its record keeping practices throughout the State.



*Chairperson of the State Records Commission, Catherine Fletcher (right) presents the award to Kirrily Williams, Director Strategy and Governance at the WA Museum.*

## Helping WA and the World Discover the State Archives

### State archives accessed by clients in the Reading Room



Source: SRO data contributed to reporting for the Council of Australasian Records and Archives Authorities (CAARA).

In 2020, the SRO transitioned in person public access services to the 3rd floor of the Alexander Library Building, where the SRO now shares resources with the State Library of WA. This collaborative arrangement ensures greater convenience and accessibility for users seeking to access important collections from WA history, including original State archives.

The Reading Room facility is located on the site of the J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History. This co-located facility, shared with the State Library, Family History WA and the Aboriginal History Research Unit from the DLGSC, enables original State archives to be accessible during all State Library opening times.



The SRO and Aboriginal History Research Services Unit from the DLGSC partner with the State Library and Family History volunteers at the Alexander Library Building in the Perth Cultural Centre to deliver a research facility that is open during Library opening hours, including most weekday evenings and weekends. The SRO deeply appreciates the support of these organisations for this partnership.



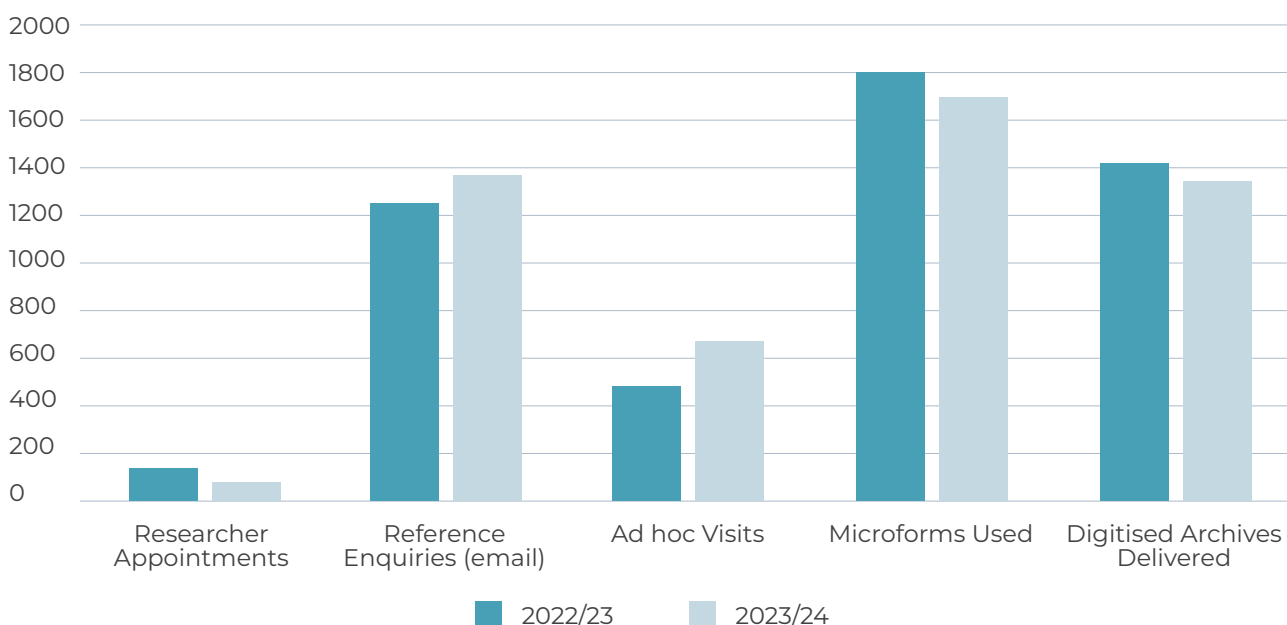
The SRO continues to offer an appointment-based support service that assists first-time clients and clients with complex research enquiries. Appointments are booked online and can be delivered in both online and face-to-face appointments with specialist archivists.

The SRO digitisation-on-request service which commenced in 2016 is an important part of making access equitable across WA and to clients in other jurisdictions who are unable to visit the Reading Room.

In the 2023–24 period, demand for digitised State archives remained high and in line with recent years, with 1,338 items being made available. This underscores the ongoing commitment to preserving and sharing these valuable historical records.

The decline in in-person visits to the reading room reflects a trend also seen in other jurisdictions as clients take-up online service options.

### Summary of Reference Services: 2022/23 – 2023/24



Figures for 'Digitised Archives Delivered' include both previously digitised records and records digitised for the first time.

Thousands of Western Australians have also continued to explore the State archives collection through a range of online platforms. These include the following examples:

**Culture WA**, a collaboration across the WA culture and arts institutions that provides a starting point for discovering the collections of the SRO, WA Museum and State Library.

**RetroMaps**, a collaboration with the Friends of Battye Library and Water Corporation that brings together historical plans of Perth.

**Ancestry**, which has digitised and made available a range of State archives, including historical shipping passenger lists, City of Perth rate books and employee records from the WA Government Railways.

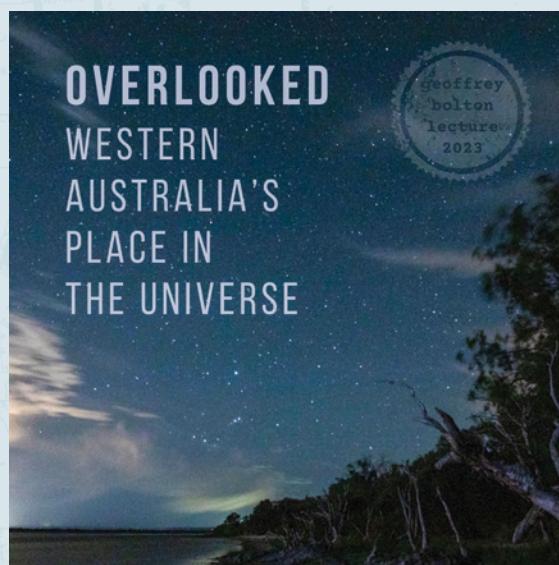
## Geoffrey Bolton Lecture 2023: Overlooked: Western Australia's Place in the Universe

The Geoffrey Bolton lecture honours Geoffrey Bolton AO (1931-2015), Australian historian, academic and writer, and is an annual celebration of discovery and insight, informed and enriched by archives.

A podcast recording of the 2023 Geoffrey Bolton Lecture was published in December 2023 and the speakers were:

Dr Natasha Hurley-Walker – is an award-winning local radio astronomer from the International Centre of Radio Astronomy Research. She works with the Pawsey Supercomputer and the Murchison Widefield Array – a precursor telescope to the Square Kilometre Array. Dr Hurley-Walker discusses her work, the important role of archival data in discovery, and the way the contributions of women were overlooked in the past – a challenge that continues today affecting the careers of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Mr Paul Jones – Secretary of the Perth Observatory Volunteer Group Inc.



Mr Jones discusses the history of the Perth Observatory, which has produced globally significant research and important State archives through its working life; and also highlights the overlooked contributions of women to scientific discovery.

Ms Julia Lawrinson – a local author, shares her work of the picture book 'City of Light'. Ms Lawrinson recounts astronaut John Glenn's famous flyover of Perth in 1962 and the value of the State archives collection and State Library as important resources for local writers.

## Digitising State Archives

Over the reporting period, the SRO continued several large-scale digitisation projects of existing physical State archives with the aim of both preserving and improving access to these important records.

These projects included digitisation of:

- City of Perth Council Minute Books (1858-1900, 1915-1926)
- Education Department Teacher's Record of Service Registers (1892-1954)
- Fremantle Asylum/Claremont Mental Hospital Patient Registers and Case Books (1857-1966)
- Fremantle Prisoner Photographs (1888-1922)
- Lands Department Roll Plans of Eucla Telegraph Line (1876-1878)
- Perth Police Station Ticket of Leave Registers (1851-1887)
- Supreme Court Registers of Grants of Probate/Letters of Administration (1832-1947), in partnership with Ancestry Global Holdings Limited.

In addition, the SRO accepted digitised copies of the WA Police Gazettes (1891-2010) from the WA Police Service. The SRO kindly thanks the WA Police Service for providing the SRO with digital copies of these critically important records.

The SRO was also allocated funding from the Friends of Battye Library Inc Sholl Bequest for the digitisation of the Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO) Inwards Correspondence for 1828-1850. The CSO correspondence is the most historically significant set of colonial records for WA. This digitisation project is due to be conducted in 2024-25.

## Why Aren't All Archives Digitised?

The SRO provides a digitisation-on-request service that allows for most public access items in the State archives collection to be digitised as they are needed by clients. This provides for a targeted approach to the digitisation of items of interest in the collection.

Special projects are also run by the SRO, often in partnership with other organisations, to digitise certain parts of the State archives collection of interest for various purposes, such as legal processes, reconciliation and truth-telling, heritage and family history research.

The State archives collection is so large that, even with increasing demand for digitisation on demand and a wide range of special projects completed over more than 20 years, and more underway, only around 3% of the collection has been digitised.

Digitisation of State archives is often challenging due to the age and fragile nature of the material. This work often involves specialised equipment and trained personnel to ensure archival material is not damaged during the process e.g. by carefully removing staples and other bindings. It usually takes considerable time for archives to be processed carefully in this way. The specialised equipment required to digitise certain archival material is also often challenging to find, and for organisations to maintain e.g. equipment to digitise film and magnetic media. It is likely that some of this equipment will no longer be available in the near future and the most at risk media essentially lost to time.

Digitisation does not usually create a duplicate copy of the archive record. At best the process creates a replica or 'surrogate' representation of the original. In some cases, this enables the critical information to be preserved and digitisation is often used to ensure the most fragile archives are not lost forever. However, certain information can be lost in the process, for example the dimensions, notes and other markings and other material associated with the original that can be important to the integrity of the record e.g. sticky notes with additional information.

Another important consideration is the need to store and maintain the digital 'surrogate' after digitisation. The digital files need to be safely stored so they don't become degraded and unreadable over time. The format also needs to be maintained and often regularly updated to ensure the files remain readable. After all, State archives are required to be kept in perpetuity.



Sample of Records Types

# Regulation of Records and Information Management

On behalf of the Commission, the SRO liaises with government organisations regarding their commitments to the standards-based approach to the governance of records management outlined earlier in this report.

## Reviews and Updates of Record Keeping Plans

Government organisations are required to submit record keeping plans (plans) for approval by the Commission. As part of a continuous cyclical process, plans must be reviewed within five years of its approval date (or previous review), with a report of the review to be submitted to the Commission.

A review can take the form of either a review report, or a fully amended plan.

This year 43 agencies were required to review their plans (see Appendix 1).

A total of 18 amended plans were due for submission in the reporting period and 9 were outstanding from previous reporting periods (Appendix 3).

## Margaret Medcalf Award for Excellence in Research Using the State Archives

The Margaret Medcalf Award is hosted by the SRO and is presented for excellence in research using the State archives collection. This annual award was established by the State Records Commission in 2003 and honours Ms Margaret Medcalf OAM, the second State Archivist for WA (from 1971 to 1989), for her valuable contribution to the development of archives in WA.

Nominations for the 2023 Award covered a wide range of topics of broad interest to the community, including the history of Kings Park, Fremantle Round House, Caves Road, Wadjemup (Rottneest Island) and the Irwin District, and outbreaks of Bubonic Plague and leprosy in WA.

On 17 November 2023 the SRO hosted the presentation of the Award, which was co-presented by the Chairperson of the Commission and Ms Margaret Medcalf OAM.

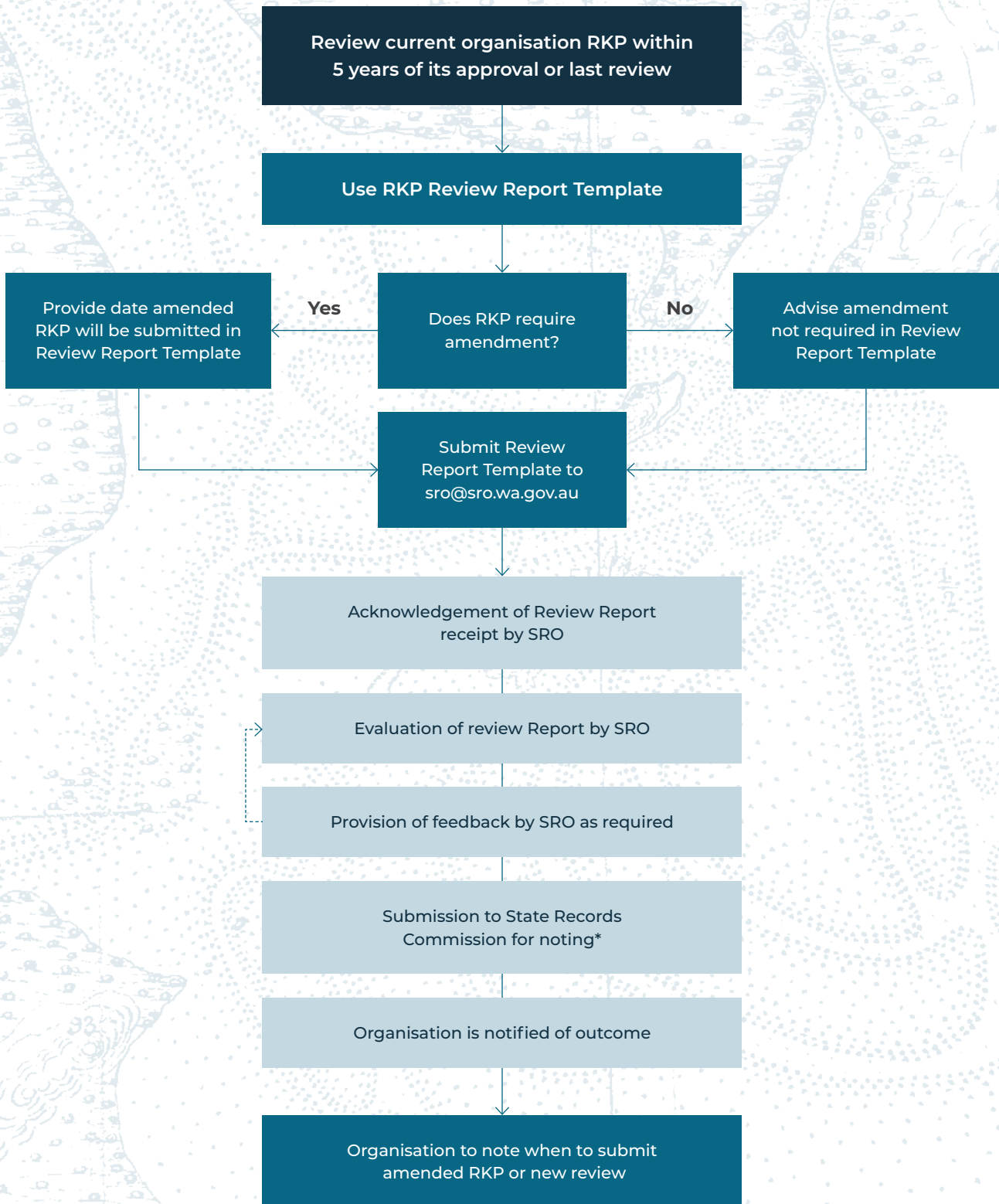
The winner of the Award was:

'The Lives and Legacies of a Carceral Island: A Biographical History of Wadjemup/Rottneest Island' by Professor Ann Curthoys, Associate Professor Shino Konishi and Professor Alexandra Ludewig.



*Pictured (left to right): Presentation of the 2024 Margaret Medcalf Award for Excellence in Research using State Archives. Ms Catherine Fletcher (Information Commissioner and Chairperson State Records Commission), Associate Professor Shino Konishi, Ms Margaret Medcalf OAM.*

## Process for review of Record Keeping Plans (RKP)



*\*The Commission meets three times a year. Scheduled dates are updated on the Commission webpage.*

Record keeping plans (plans) and disposal authorities received and considered during 2023-24

**43** new or fully amended plans

**21** plan review reports

**26** local government plans

**18** Identified amendments required and committed to submitting an amended plan

**5** identified no amendment required

**17** State government plans

Retention and Disposal Authorities approved during 2023-24

**4** Fully amended Retention and Disposal Authorities

**1** Amendment to an existing Sector Disposal Authority

**2** Sector Disposal Authorities

**1** Ad Hoc Disposal Authority

**3** Disposal Lists for specific records series

**2** Fully amended General Retention and Disposal Authorities

The SRO evaluates review reports and amended plans and liaises with organisations in order to finalise them for the Commission’s consideration.

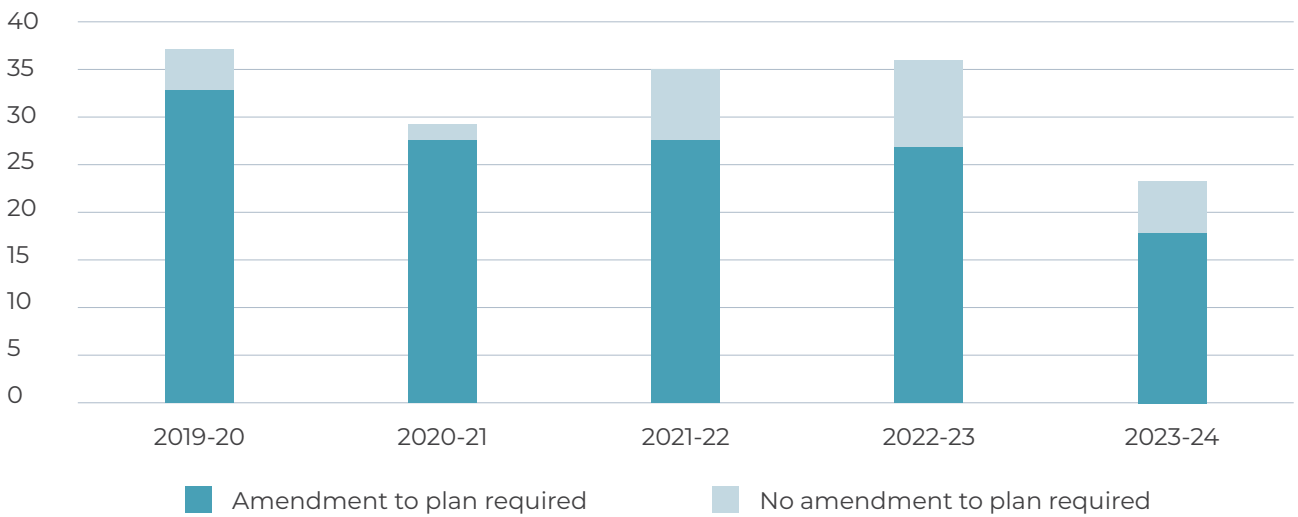
A total of 21 review reports and 43 fully amended plans were received by the SRO during the reporting period. Readers should note that several reviews were received from the 2022-23 reporting period or received before their due date in the 2024-25 reporting period. A number of agencies also submitted a review report prior to submitting an amended plan during 2023-24.

The Commission also noted the continuation of a further five plans requiring no amendment.

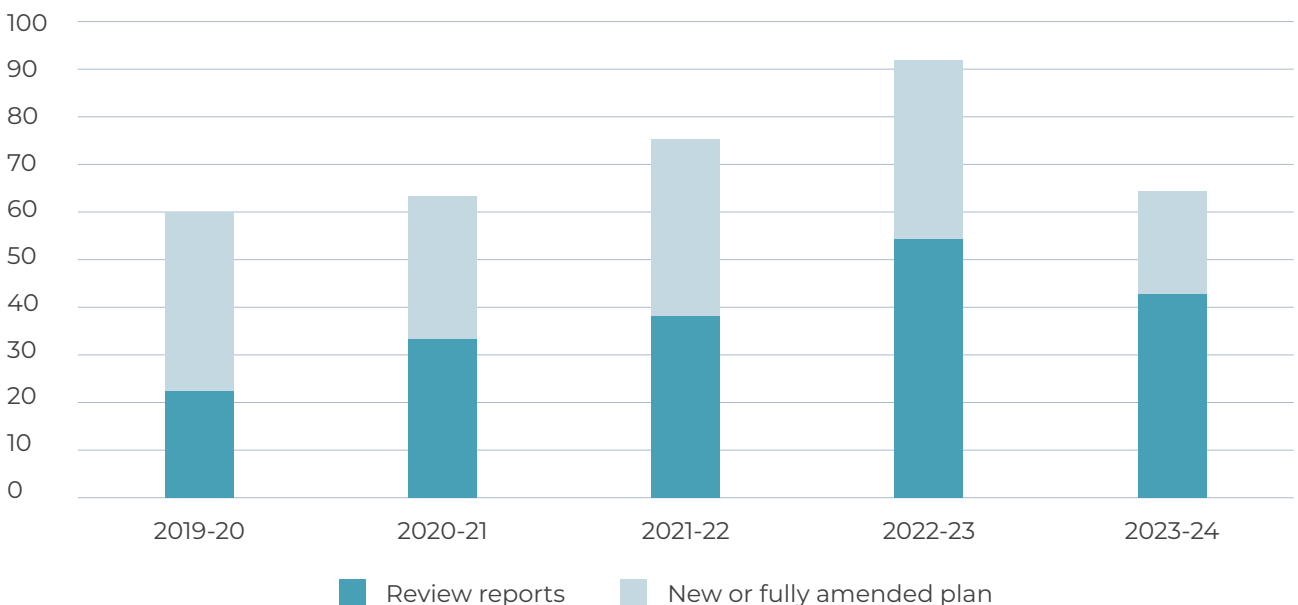
There were no new organisations which were required to submit a plan (Appendix 2).

For the 2024-25 reporting period, a total of 52 agencies will be required to review their plans (Appendix 4).

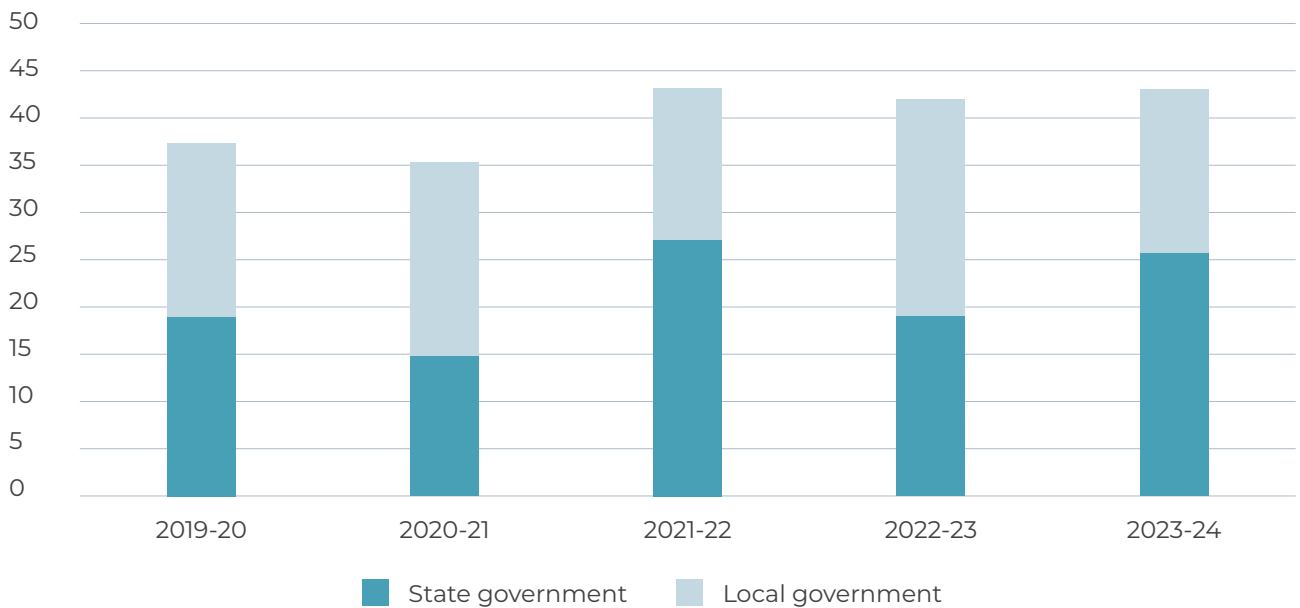
### Review reports identifying an amended plan is required



### Record keeping plans and review reports submitted



### State government and local government submissions of amended plans



These figures have remained consistent over the last few years.

Regularly reviewing and updating record keeping plans plays a vital role in ensuring that all agencies have confidence that their work to ensure the integrity of records is undertaken as effectively and efficiently as possible. We value the work government organisations do to maintain these important plans and encourage organisations to make use of these plans as a foundation for information and knowledge management.

**Catherine Fletcher** Chairperson, State Records Commission and  
**Damian Shepherd** Executive Director State Records and State Archivist.



## Updates to Retention and Disposal Authorities

Retention and Disposal Authorities are an integral part of an organisation's record keeping plan (plan), as they fulfil the legal requirement for the plan to identify State archives for permanent retention, and the retention periods for all other records.

All State records must be disposed of in accordance with an approved Disposal Authority. Disposal Authorities may take the form of a:

- 1 General Retention and Disposal Authority;
- 2 Retention and Disposal Authority;
- 3 Sector Disposal Authority;
- 4 Ad Hoc Disposal Authority; or
- 5 Disposal List

Authority number: 2023-005

No.	Description	Disposal Action	Custody
<b>Elections</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PROCEDURES</li> </ul>		
	Elections, including:		
45.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returning Officer's declaration of outcome</li> <li>Council president / mayor or deputy, including elections by other elected members</li> <li>Photographic history.</li> </ul> <p>For ballot papers resulting from popular votes, see 45.5.</p>	Archive	Retain as State archives.
45.2	Electoral roll – Returning Officer's copy.	Destroy	Retain 30 years after action completed, then Destroy.
45.3	Defunct Activity – Non-local government elections in which the local government is involved. Includes the election of members of the Water Board by the local government under Section 9 of the <i>Water Boards Act 1904</i> (repealed 2013).	Destroy	Retain 7 years after action completed, then Destroy.
45.4	<p>Disclosure of gifts forms completed by candidates and donors and received by the CEO and placed on the electoral gift register.</p> <p>NOTE: Details about disclosure of gifts are set out in section 30H of the <i>Local Government (Elections) Regulations 1997</i>.</p>	Destroy	Retain on electoral gift register for 4 years after the relevant election day, retain for 2 years after removal from register, then Destroy.

This is an excerpt from the **General Retention and Disposal Authority** for Local Government Information. This authority describes the types of records of information created and managed by local governments and the retention periods for those records.

### **General Retention and Disposal Authorities**

**(GRDAs)** are documents, developed by the SRO in consultation with other agencies, enabling the lawful disposal of information documenting the common operations within government.

They provide consistent disposal decisions throughout the State and eliminate the need for each government organisation to prepare individual disposal authorities for a large proportion of records.

Two revised GRDAs, one for the State government sector and another for the local government sector, were approved by the Commission in 2023 and then published by the SRO in January 2024. These are referred to as:

— the General Retention and Disposal Authority for State Government Information (GRDASG)

— the General Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government Information (GRDALG)

Major updates to the new GRDAs include:

- Updating, adding or removing categories to align with legislative requirements to keep records for specific retention periods.
- Ensuring classes are consistent across both the GRDALG and GRDASG where appropriate.
- Rationalising retention periods to reduce the number of classes.
- Amalgamating certain activities that have the same retention period.
- Changing reference numbers to accommodate updates.
- Changing 'disposal action' for records classed as State archives from 'Required as State archives' to 'Archive'.
- Changing 'custody action' for records classed as State archives from 'Retain [x] years after action completed, then transfer to SRO', to 'Retain as State archives'.
- Removing the function/activity REGISTERS and adding a note to retain in accordance with the subject matter to which they relate.
- Increasing the retention period of Personnel records from 75 years to 100 years.

- Revising terminology in functions and activities to align with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.
- Including the function/activity of PRIVACY to cover certain records containing personal information.
- Integrating the retention requirements of the following Disposal Authorities, now superseded, into the GRDAs:
  - DA 2020-003 - General Retention and Disposal Authority for Incidents and Allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect
  - DA 2021-010 - Ad Hoc Disposal Authority - COVID-19 Health and Vaccination Information
  - DA 2022-004/2 - Ad Hoc Disposal Authority - User Data in Government Mobile Device Applications ("Apps")

Other changes as appropriate to the specific needs of the State or local government sectors, which are outlined in the applicable supporting documentation.

### **Sector Disposal Authorities (SDAs)**

are developed by the SRO, in consultation with other organisations across these sectors, and cover records common to a group or sector of like organisations which operate with common functions.

These are also approved by the Commission where the Commission is the approving authority.

SDAs have also been developed by agencies in close liaison with the SRO. These include SDAs for Court and Tribunal Services, Western Australian Universities and State Training Providers.

There are currently 11 SDAs, covering the core business records of approximately 70 government organisations.

During 2023-24, the Commission approved two fully revised SDAs:

- SDA for University Student Guilds.
- SDA for Reviews, Investigations and Special Inquiries.

A minor amendment to the SDA for Racing, Gaming & Wagering, and Liquor Regulators was also approved.

Unless records are covered by a GRDA or a SDA, State government organisations are required to develop Retention and Disposal Authorities to authorise the disposal of their core business (or functional) records.

DA No.	Organisations	Type	Title	Status		
2021-010	[Applies to all State organisations]	Ad Hoc	Ad Hoc Disposal Authority - COVID-19 Health and Vaccination Information	DA Superseded	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2021-009	Gold Corporation	Functional	Retention and Disposal Authority for Gold Corporation (Perth Mint)	Approved by SRC	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2021-008	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation	Functional	Retention and Disposal Schedule for the Contaminated Sites Committee	Approved by SRC	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2021004	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation	Functional	Retention and Disposal Schedule for the Functional Records of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation	Approved by SRC	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2020-010	[All TAFE Colleges]	Functional	TAFE Colleges	Approved by SRC	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2020-009	Commissioner for Children and Young People	Functional	Retention and Disposal Schedule for the Commissioner for Children and Young People	Approved by SRC	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2020-006	[Applies to all State organisations]	Functional	Ad Hoc Disposal Authority - COVID-19 - Contact Registers	DA Superseded	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>
2020-003	[Applies to all State organisations]	General	General Retention and Disposal Authority for Incidents and Allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect	Approved by SRC	<a href="#">Workflow</a>	<a href="#">View DA</a>

The Online Record Keeping and Disposal Application (ORDA) is a web-based system that allows government agencies to draft and submit their Retention and Disposal Authorities to the SRO for review, and also facilitates associated approval processes.

Following advice from the SRO and the State Records Advisory Committee (see page 36), the Commission approved four fully revised Retention and Disposal Authorities, and one amendment, during 2023-24.

See also Appendix 5 for further detail on the progress of disposal authorities during 2023-24.

## Ad Hoc Disposal Authorities

An Ad Hoc Disposal Authority is a specific instance disposal authority relating to one or a limited number of series, or an identified part of a series of records. This kind of authority is most often used when old or superseded records are being appraised for disposal.

The purpose of an Ad Hoc Disposal Authority is to authorise disposal action on a once-only basis, i.e. for records in a specific category or date range.

During 2023-24 the Commission approved two new Ad Hoc Disposal Authorities, covering:

- Border Restriction Program Applications and Related Records
- Road Safety Commission - Safety Camera Caution Notice Program

## Migrating Data Between Information Systems

Records can be lost when migrating systems. It is important to conduct tests and check the sample to ensure that both metadata and documents have been imported before a system is decommissioned.

If migration is not done properly, there is a risk of unauthorised destruction. For example, metadata is imported but the content is lost. Or there is the risk of the lack of context to a document.

For example, the content is imported but the metadata is incomplete and does not provide enough information about the record.

Organisations can take the opportunity to conduct disposals of information in systems that are due for disposal prior to migration. This will reduce the cost and time of the migration process, and save ongoing storage costs.

Some things to consider:

	Existing system	New system
Metadata	What fields are to be exported?	Are these fields available in the new system?
Context	What information needs to be created for context e.g. does the existing record number need to be created for reference and traceability?	What information needs to be created for context e.g. adding a note that "These records were migrated from [system X] due to machinery of government"
Formats	Are any of the documents in old formats that may no longer be supported? Example: older Office versions	Can the new system support old formats? If not, consider how to extract and convert the documents

## Disposal Lists

Disposal Lists are considered by the Commission when an agency has identified the need to approve a one-off disposal of a discrete set of records, often in the event of physical damage, where the records are deemed irreparable.

During 2023-24 the Commission approved three Disposal Lists.

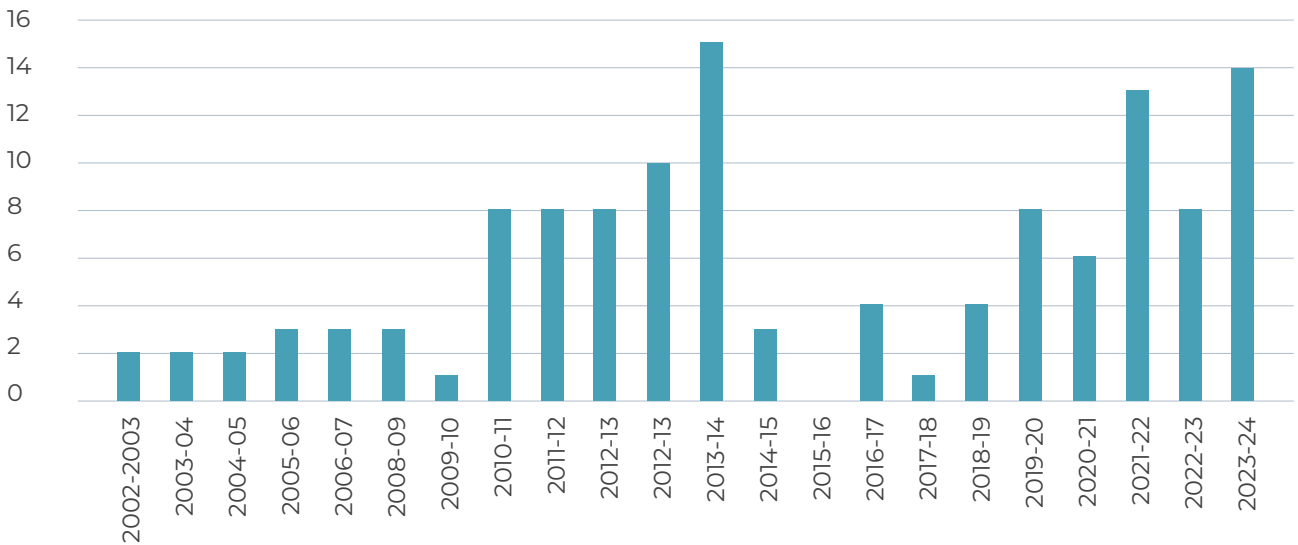
## Monitoring Compliance with the Act

Under section 60(1) of the Act, the Commission is required to monitor the operation of the Act, and government organisations' compliance with their record keeping plans. Monitoring is achieved through a range of regulatory mechanisms, including education, training and self-evaluation undertaken by government organisations, as well as the SRO's inquiries into reports of alleged non-compliance with (breaches of) the Act on behalf of the Commission.

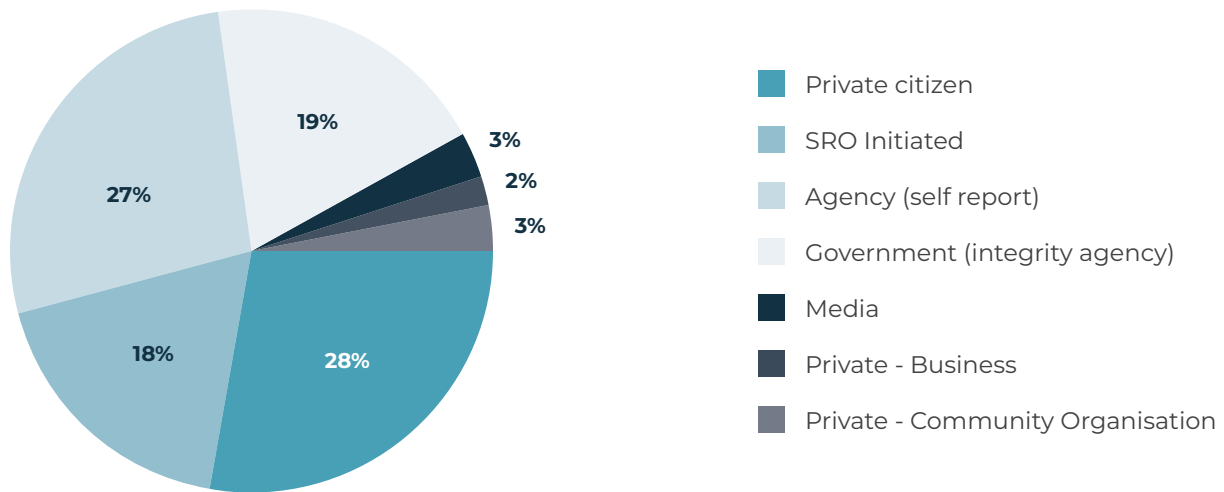
In 2023-24 the SRO received 14 reports of alleged breaches of the Act. This is the second highest number of breach reports received by the SRO in its history. It includes an increasing number of self-reports by agencies. Whilst high numbers of alleged breaches is always concerning to the Commission, the increase in self-reports can be regarded as reflecting well on the integrity of government organisations that make such self-reports.

Of the reports received in 2023-24, five were self-reported by government organisations, three by private citizens, two identified via media reports, one identified by an integrity agency and three initiated by the SRO. Historically, reports have also been received from private organisations i.e. commercial and not-for-profit businesses.

### Number of reports of alleged breaches of the *State Records Act 2000*



### Source of reports of alleged breaches of the *State Records Act 2000*



The SRO makes inquiries into alleged breaches on behalf of the Commission and follows-up with agencies where required to address issues. The Commission receives reports on the status of these inquiries at each Commission meeting and makes decisions on actions where required and appropriate.

In most cases, the issues are addressed through corrective actions and/or improvements to systems and processes to avoid similar issues recurring.

However, where the breach is established and considered more serious, the Commission has powers to take other action, including making a special report to Parliament about a contravention of the Act by a government organisation.

Division 3 of the Act describes investigative powers of the Commission, which include:

- a right of access to government records;
- power to request a report on record keeping from a government organisation, other than a Schedule 3 organisation; and
- powers of special inquirer under *Public Sector Management Act 1994*

## Record keeping issues reported by other integrity agencies

Through a project conducted with the support of an intern from the McCusker Centre for Citizenship the Office of the Information Commissioner conducted research into the prevalence of record keeping issues reported by integrity agencies in WA other than the State Records Commission.

Reports from the Ombudsman, Auditor General and Corruption and Crime Commission were considered in this research, which has shown that of 400 reports published by these agencies between 2013 and 2024, 232 (or 62%) of the reports cite issues with record keeping as contributing to or resulting from problems with agency performance.

Common record keeping issues reported include:

- Poor processes
- Issues with the quality of information
- Problems with the creation and/or capture of information
- Inadequate systems for managing information
- Issues with security of information
- Issues with the capability and/or capacity of staff regarding information management

## State Records Advisory Committee

The State Records Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established under section 62(1) of the Act to advise the Commission about:

- State records that should be State archives;
- Retention periods for those State records that are not to be State archives; and
- Associated matters (as prescribed by the Commission).

The Committee plays an important role in assisting the Commission with its responsibility to ensure that principles, standards and other requirements established by the Commission, and guidance developed by the SRO, strikes the right balance between the need to meet the requirements of the Act whilst also being practical for organisations to implement.

Members and deputy members are appointed for three-year terms by the Commission and include representatives from the public service and relevant industry bodies.

During 2023-24, the Committee met on 19 October 2023 and 20 June 2024.

The Chairperson of the Commission also attended part of one of these meetings, in October 2023, to meet the members of the Committee to discuss issues and thank them for their contribution to the work of the Commission.



## Membership of the Committee During 2023-24:

### Chair of the Committee

Mr Damian Shepherd – Executive Director State Records and State Archivist (supported by staff of the SRO)

### Aboriginal Interests

Ms Melanie Walley-Stack (Member)

### Aboriginal Interests

Ms Mikaela Trenorden (Deputy)

### Australian Society of Archivists

Ms Lesley Jolliffe (Member)

### Australian Society of Archivists

Mr Tom Reynolds (Deputy)

### Historical Interests

Mr Michael Nind (Member)

### Historical Interests

Dr Bobbie Oliver (Deputy)

### Institute of Public Administration Australia (WA Division)

Ms Emma Forrest (Member)

### Institute of Public Administration Australia (WA Division)

Ms Tami Maitre (Deputy to 19 October 2023)

### Institute of Public Administration Australia (WA Division)

Ms Cassandra Jaeger (Deputy from 12 April 2024)

### Law Society of Western Australia

Mr Robert O'Connor KC (Member to 7 August 2023)

### Law Society of Western Australia

Ms Belinda Brady (Member from 27 November 2023 to 30 May 2024)

### Local Government CEO (Metropolitan)

Mr Bill Parker (Member to 18 December 2023)

### Local Government CEO (Metropolitan)

Mr Stuart Downing (Member from 12 April 2024)

### Local Government CEO (Metropolitan)

Mr Ben D'Lima (Member from 12 April 2024)

### Local Government CEO (Regional)

Mr Tim Clynych (Member to 28 September 2023)

### Local Government CEO (Regional)

Mr Stuart Taylor (Member from 12 April 2024)

### Local Government CEO (Regional)

Ms Tamara Clarkson (Deputy from 12 April 2024)

### Local Government Practitioner

Ms Eddy Brown (Member to 18 December 2023)

### Local Government Practitioner

Ms Crystal Gardner (Member from 12 April 2024)

### Local Government Practitioner

Mr Terry Lyons (Deputy from 12 April 2024)

### Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance – Global (RIMPA Global)

Ms Lauren Gray (Member from 29 August 2023)

### Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance – Global (RIMPA Global)

Ms Tanya Wright (Deputy)

### State Government CEO Representative Commissioner

Darren Klemm AFSM  
(Member to 01 February 2024)

### State Government CEO Representative

Ms Michelle Hoad (Member from 12 April 2024)

The Commission extends its appreciation to all Committee representatives, past and present, for their participation and contribution to the important work of the Committee.

## Committee Member Profiles



RIMPA Global is proud to support the work of the Commission by providing representatives for the Committee. Ms Lauren Gray (member) commenced her term on the Committee in August 2023, replacing Ms Ming Ghee Khoo, and Ms Tanya Wright (deputy) has continued in her role as deputy for a second term, originally commencing in November 2021.

For more than two decades, Lauren has dedicated her professional career to the fields of Archives, Records, Freedom of Information, and Knowledge Management within the Western Australian public sector and at an international organisation in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to her professional roles, Lauren has achieved a Master of Information Services, currently pursuing a PhD in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney, focusing on transparency in Australian law and practice, and has lectured on the unit Introduction to Records Management at the Haute école de gestion de Genève.

Lauren has a deep commitment to promoting records, archives, transparency, and effective governance which underpins her active participation in the Committee. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Committee, which plays a critical role in reviewing and providing recommendations on updates to retention and disposal authorities.

Lauren has stated “Although I have only recently joined the Committee, my experience so far has been highly positive. Being part of the Committee has provided me with the opportunity to engage in important discussions and initiatives aimed at improving records management practices within the WA public sector.



I have found the collaborative environment within the Committee to be enriching and look forward to continuing to support the work of the SRO in ensuring that recommendations submitted by the SRO and government agencies are given due consideration.”

Tanya’s experience working in the ‘records’ sector began twenty years ago with an opportunity to work in records in a regional local government. This sparked for her a love of all things ‘information management’, a desire to improve record keeping in the sector, and led to her completing a BA in Librarianship and Corporate Information Management. Tanya has held roles in local and state government, in regional, remote and metropolitan locations. A role in Fitzroy Crossing WA at the Education Department opened her eyes to the importance of good record keeping and reignited her passion for information and archives management. For the last six years Tanya has been at the City of Melville in a variety of roles from Governance Services to Information Management and she aims to inspire best practice now and as a legacy for future generations. Her experience and understanding, from both a regional and local government context, is invaluable to the Committee.

Tanya as a deputy member of the Committee has expressed that she values the dedication and vast knowledge of members at each meeting and admires the differing views and healthy debate that occurs.

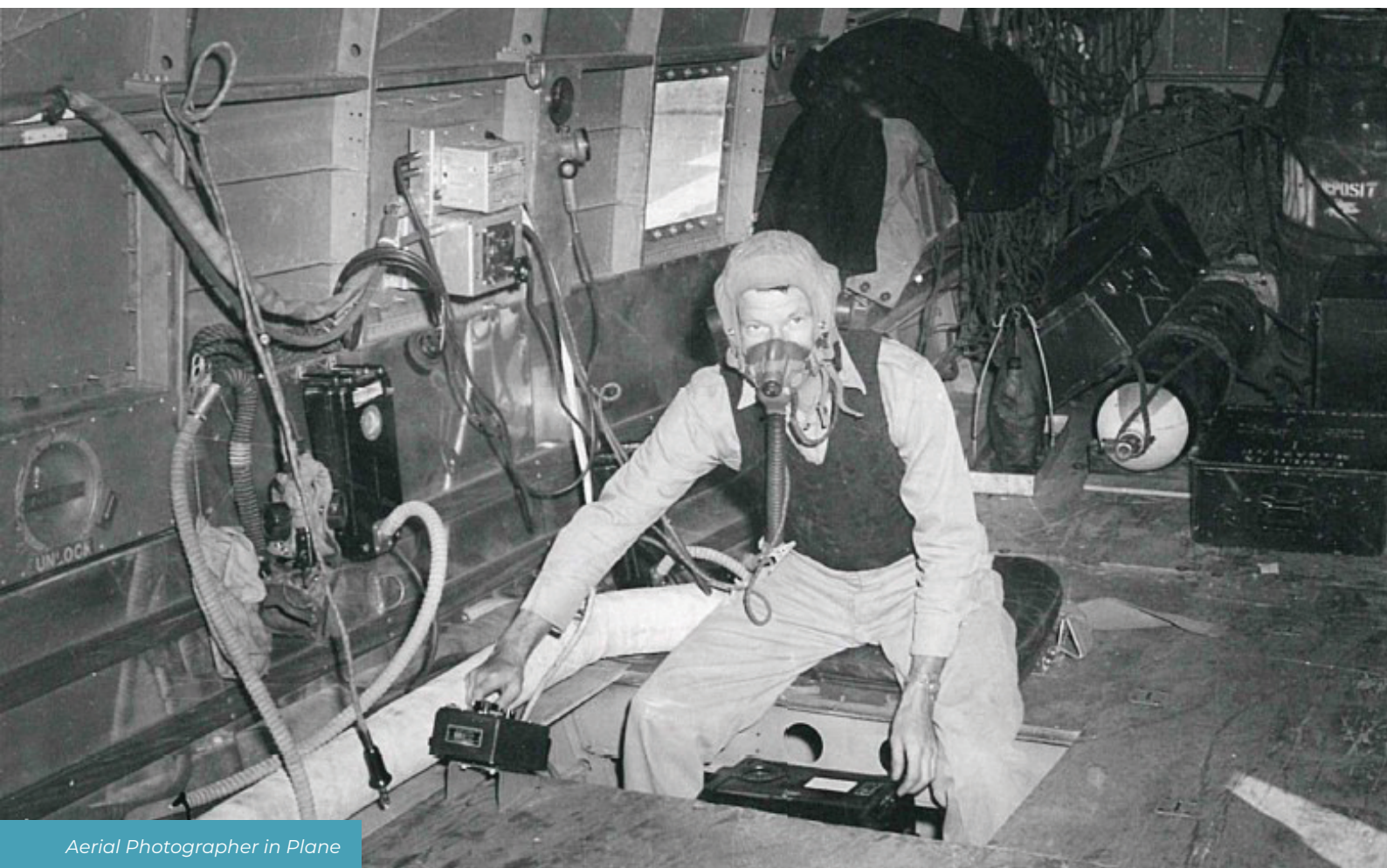


## Records and Information Practitioners Alliance (RIMPA) Global

RIMPA Global is a leading organisation in Australia representing Records and Information Practitioners worldwide and committed to ethical, secure, and efficient information practices. As well as advocating for best practice in information and records management, they are dedicated to empowering organisations and individuals with the knowledge and tools to effectively manage information in the digital age, fostering learning, collaboration and innovation within the profession.

RIMPA Global has extensive experience working alongside government and non-government organisations, facilitating a variety of professional development and educational opportunities for individuals and organisations via workshops, recognised certificates, short courses, as well as applying its knowledge and expertise in information management to formally recognise courses at Tertiary institutions.

The Commission appreciates the experience of RIMPA Global professionals and their assistance in supporting the Committee meet its obligations under the Act.



*Aerial Photographer in Plane*

# Publications on Records Management

During 2023-24 the SRO continued to simplify its published records management guidance. This included a review of publications and other documents to address government requirements and other records management issues, targeting specific activities.

The SRO published the following guidance documents during the reporting period:

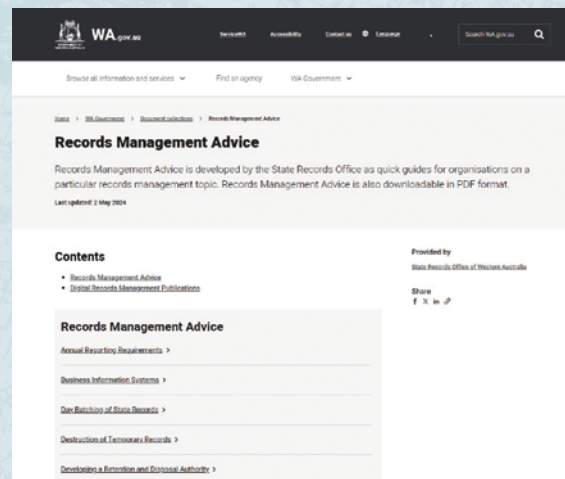
- Developing a Retention and Disposal Authority
- SRO Guideline – Records Retention, Disposal and Destruction (which superseded the SRO Guideline – Records Retention and Disposal Instructions and the SRO Guideline – Sanitizing of Digital Media and Devices).

It also updated the following guidance:

- Glossary of Terms
- Implementing a Revised Retention and Disposal Authority – Resentencing Records
- Metadata
- Management of Digital Records
- Retention of Personal Information

## Records Management Advice from the SRO

The SRO has developed a library of short Records Management Advice documents to assist organisations with certain aspects of records and information management.



# Knowledge Sharing and Training

## Training

The SRO receives regular requests for training from government agencies. The table below provides an overview of requests made to the SRO between 2017 and 2024.

	2017-2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Requests for training	14	8	13	12	4	5	8

The SRO has not been in a position to provide any requested training or offer regular training to agencies over the above periods.

The requests to the SRO for training on record keeping are generally referred to consultants and other non-government providers.

The current approach focuses on working with other agencies on priorities for record keeping matters e.g. Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing (PRIS) and Information Classification – largely through interagency working groups and communities of practice.

This is in line with the requirement of the Director State Records under section 73(1)(a) – to advise government organizations on record keeping and on training their staff in record keeping and to assist in such matters.

However, the Commission considers that, in light of the extent of record keeping issues across government, that resourcing of the SRO is urgently needed to meet with agency requests for records and information management training, and that the SRO also be resourced to provide regular training to government agencies.

## Information Classification Working Group and Community of Practice

The SRO continued to facilitate a Working Group and a Community of Practice to support implementation of the WA Government Information Classification Policy. These groups reviewed and recommended updates to the Policy and supporting Supplementary Guide and developed a draft training package which was approved and published to [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au). The annual survey of implementation progress was sent to government organisations in December 2023 for completion by February 2024. Results of the survey were issued to responding organisations in March 2024.

## Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing

The Executive Director and SRO have supported the Office of Digital Government and other agencies throughout the reporting period by providing advice on readiness activities for potential implementation of Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing legislation. This advice aligns with existing requirements of the *State Records Act 2000* and the Commission's principles and standards.

## State Records and the culture of implementing Freedom of Information in Australia

The Chairperson of the Commission in her capacity as Information Commissioner, and the SRO, contributed to a study by Monash University into the culture of implementing Freedom of Information (FOI) in Australia.

The study was conducted across three years between 2021–2024 and was funded by the Australian Research Council and the Information Commissioners in Victoria and WA and the South Australian Ombudsman.

Proper record keeping is an essential enabler for access to information, including through FOI requests.

Key findings from the study included:

- That proactive information release should operate as the default rather than the use of FOI applications as a means for providing access to information.
- Terminology and procedures used should reflect modern digital environments, rather than the paper-based environments that prevailed when the FOI Acts were first enacted.
- Regular records management and FOI education should be conducted for wider agency employees, including executives.
- Rollout of records management should be consistent with FOI efficiency.

The full report on this study is available online at: <https://apo.org.au/node/327233>

### Information Management Framework Working Group

The Information Management Framework (IMF) provides greater clarity regarding how today's records and information management environment interacts with existing and developing legislation, regulations and policies for information management and sharing.

Throughout the reporting period, the SRO continued to facilitate the IMF Working Group, to develop the IMF through to completion.

The IMF was published on [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au) in April 2024 and communicated across the public sector. To further assist users, a tool which maps information management compliance requirements across the various legislation was also made available on the Information Management Hub.

### Information Management Hub

The SRO continued to expand the use of an Information Management (IM) Hub established in 2023 using Microsoft Teams and SharePoint. The Hub includes a general channel for information management matters (called IM Central) and a dedicated channel for matters related to Information Classification. The SRO will consider adding other channels in the future based on demand from the community of users. Uptake to join the Hub has been steady, with users keen to stay informed of new events and information released on the Hub.

# Engagement and Collaboration

It has never been more important for all organisations to leverage collaboration and partnerships to achieve outcomes.

Given the increasingly rapid and disruptive change in information management technology and approaches to the way government and other organisations conduct business,

it is essential that the SRO continuously develops its working relationships with a wide range of public and private sector professionals and organisations to ensure the Commission can continue to support effective records management across WA.

## Guide to State Cabinet Papers

Each year the SRO publishes an online Guide to State Cabinet records which have been released from their 30-year restriction access period in the previous calendar year. The Guide for the 1993 State Cabinet minutes and decisions will be released in September 2024 to coincide with International Access to Information Day.

State Cabinet records are historically significant documents which reveal the decisions made by the government of the day. These unique records are the primary source documents for information about the issues raised at Cabinet meetings. This online Guide is intended to assist the Western Australian community with access to these records.

This year (2024) the Guide to the 1993 State Cabinet Records has been produced with the assistance of Ms Sarah Edland, a student from the University of Western Australia during a McCusker Centre for Citizenship Internship at the SRO. During her placement Ms Edland researched the 1993 State Cabinet Records comprising the minutes and decisions of the Court/Cowan Government, compiling a detailed list of Cabinet meeting subjects as well as drafting sections on world, national and local events.



## Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities

The Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA) comprises the heads of the government archives authorities of the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and each of the Australian States and Territories. It is the peak body for government archives and records institutions in Australia and New Zealand. The SRO is CAARA's Western Australian representative.

The leadership focus of CAARA is:

1. Sharing Experience and Knowledge to unlock the long-term value of government records and archives for the people of Australia and New Zealand.
2. Collaborating and Building Expertise to secure, preserve and make records available to communities today and in the future.

3. Creating Common Understanding of emerging issues and opportunities for records and information management, so we can respond more effectively together.

In 2024 CAARA launched a new website following the publication of a new 'Statement of Intent'. The website more clearly explains the role of CAARA and provides easier access to publications and advice developed through this collaboration.

The new website can be accessed at [www.caara.org.au](http://www.caara.org.au)

## Australian Society of Archivists

According to the website of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA), the ASA is Australia's peak professional body for archivists and recordkeepers – advocating on behalf of archivists, and the archival and recordkeeping profession, and seeks to promote the value of archives and records as well as support best practice standards and services.

In August 2023 the ASA hosted a presentation and discussion session with the Executive Director SRO on the proposed new State Records Commission standard and principles for State Records at the National Archives of Australia, Perth Office.

In May 2024 the Chairperson of the Commission was invited by the ASA to discuss record keeping and the WA Government.

## Local Government Records Management Group

The SRO continued its engagement with the Local Government Records Management Group (the Group) during 2023-24.

The SRO hosted the December meeting of the Group where there was an opportunity for records and information managers working in local government to ask questions of the SRO regarding records management and disposal. SRO staff attended a meeting in March 2024, to provide updates regarding the revised *General Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government Information*, and in June 2024 to present on the new Information Management Framework.

## RIMPA (Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance) Global

According to the website of the Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance (RIMPA) Global, RIMPA Global represents records and information management practitioners, sets industry standards, fosters professional development, and brings people together to achieve positive outcomes through information management.

The SRO contributed to a National Education Summit, hosted by RIMPA Global in October 2023. An SRO Program Manager also delivered a presentation on the Information Management Framework for WA at a RIMPA Global Roadshow event in June 2024.



The Chair of the Commission spoke at a Branch Meeting of Australia Society of Archivists (ASA) WA on 9 May 2024 on the topic of 'Recordkeeping and the WA Government: Governance, practice and outcomes.' Picture courtesy of the ASA Inc.

## Volunteers

The SRO values contributions from our volunteers both past and present who provide important assistance to our office in listing State archives so these can be added to our catalogue. The work of our volunteers has huge public value, in making these archives searchable and more easily accessible.

David Jones commenced as a volunteer with our office in 2022 having retired the previous year. David is a former public servant, starting as a cadet draftsman with the Public Works Department in 1970. David went on to work in senior and executive roles in State government, mainly in the health infrastructure field. David also provided some work-related assistance to our office in 2011, which sparked his interest in historical records.

David is currently checking the Supreme Court criminal indictment files the SRO holds from 1832, so that we can list these case files on our catalogue.



## Other Engagement

SRO staff also attended regular meetings of the:

- Accountability Agencies Collaborative Forum – hosted on rotation by members of the Forum
- Business and Technology Advisory Committee – Office of Digital Government
- Data and Linkage Advisory Committee – Office of Digital Government
- Friends of Batty Library Inc
- Portfolio Business and Innovation Management Group (DLGSC)
- WA Government Artificial Intelligence Working Group – Office of Digital Government



# Events

SRO staff delivered the following presentations in 2023-24:

## July

### 13 July – Round table on AI and the responsibilities of government

Hosted by the University of Western Australia, Office of Digital Government and Department of Communities WA.

Attended by the Information Commissioner and the Executive Director.

### 20 July – Public Sector Network Data and Analytics Roadshow

Hosted by Deloitte.

Attended by the Executive Director who participated in a panel discussion on the topic *The Missing Data – A Re-Evaluation* – with representatives from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Office of the Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy.

### 28 July – Cabinet Liaison Officers Network

Hosted by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Presentation from the Executive Director about the operation of the Act and the work of the SRO.

## September

### 28 September – Local Government Records Manager Group Meeting

Attended by SRO Record Keeping Consultants – participating in a discussion on management of personal data.

## November

### 2 November – Freedom of Information in WA Conference

Hosted by the Office of the Information Commissioner WA.

Attended by the Executive Director who participated in a panel discussion on the topic of 'Case studies in open government' and an SRO Program Manager who participated in a panel discussion on the topic of 'Records in the Digital Age – challenges and opportunities for FOI and Open Government' with the Department of Communities and Office of the Information Commissioner.

## February

### 13 February – Innovate WA

Hosted by the Public Sector Network.

Attended by the Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Commission (Information Commissioner) who presented jointly on 'The Open by Design Imperative' – highlighting the fundamental importance of good records management to enable rights of access to information.







## March

### **22 March 2024 – Institute of Public Administration Australia WA (IPAAWA) Lonnie Awards for Excellence in Annual Reporting**

Attended by Commissioner Fletcher, Executive Director, and an SRO Program Manager.

## April

### **30 April – IPAAWA Integrity and Accountability Conference**

Hosted by the Institute for Public Administration Australia (WA).

Attended by the Chairperson of the Commission and the Executive Director who jointly presented on the topic of 'Accountability and the Public Record'.

## May

### **7 May – Digital Confidence for Government Executives**

Hosted by Microsoft and the Office of Digital Government.

The Executive Director provided a briefing on 'digital confidence for government executives' and highlighted how records management underpins digital services.

### **8 May – Public Sector Commission**

Hosted by the Public Sector Commission (PSC).

Briefing for the Agency Capability Review team at the PSC. Attended by the Executive Director and an SRO Program Manager who presented on the topic of 'healthy record keeping practices'.

## June

### **6 June – RIMPA Roadshow**

Hosted by RIMPA Global.

Attended by an SRO Program Manager who presented on the topic of the 'Information Management Framework for WA' to around 100 attendees from the records and information management professions.

### **27 June – Department of Fire and Emergency Services**

Hosted by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).

Attended by the Executive Director who provided an executive briefing on information governance to staff from across DFES.

### **28 June – Local Government Records Managers Group**

Attended by an SRO Record Keeping Consultant who presented on the Information Management Framework.

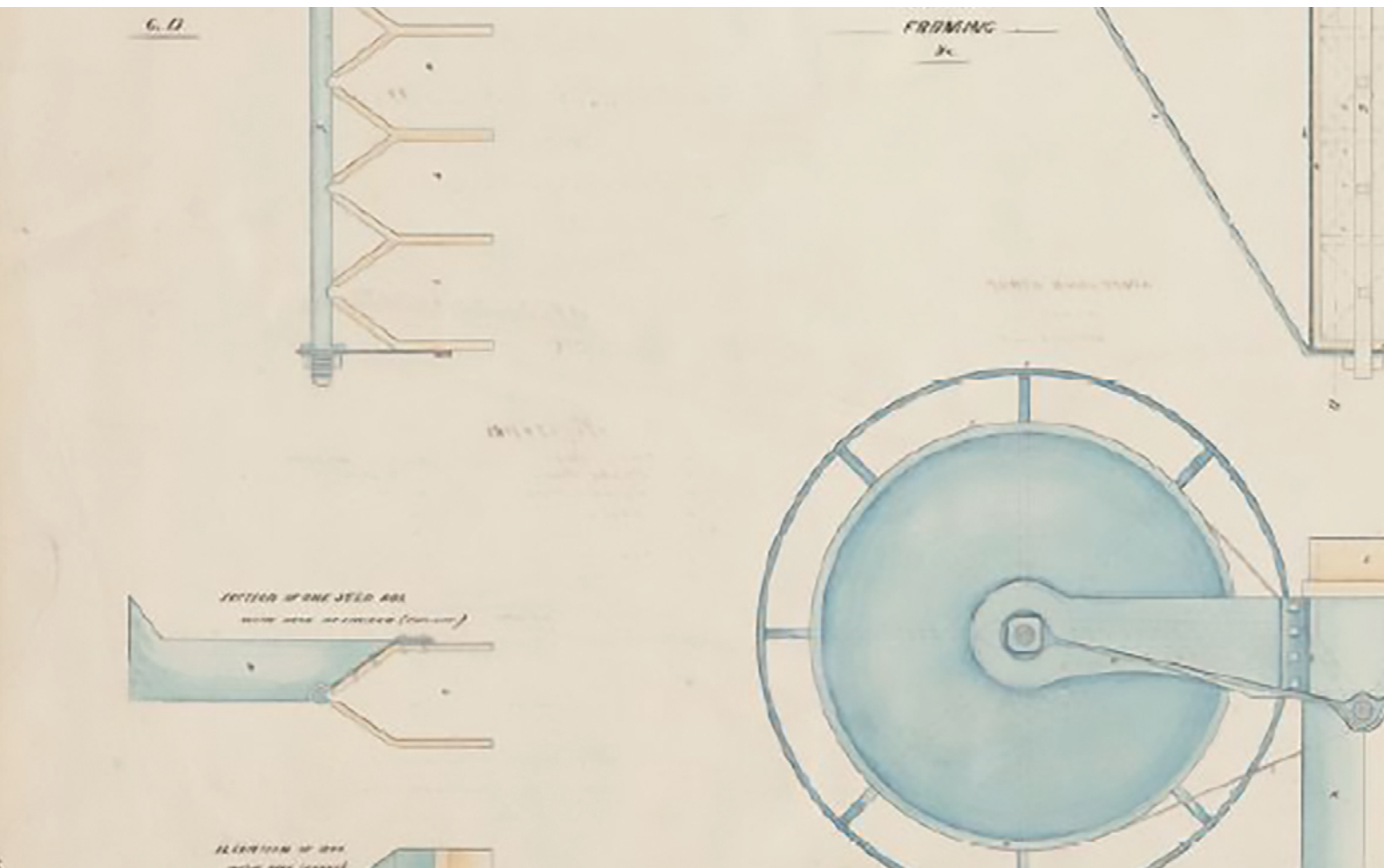


Senior Archivist SRO presenting on RTR FM radio

# Disability Access and Inclusion

In 2023-24 the SRO continued to deliver its obligations under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan for the DLGSC.

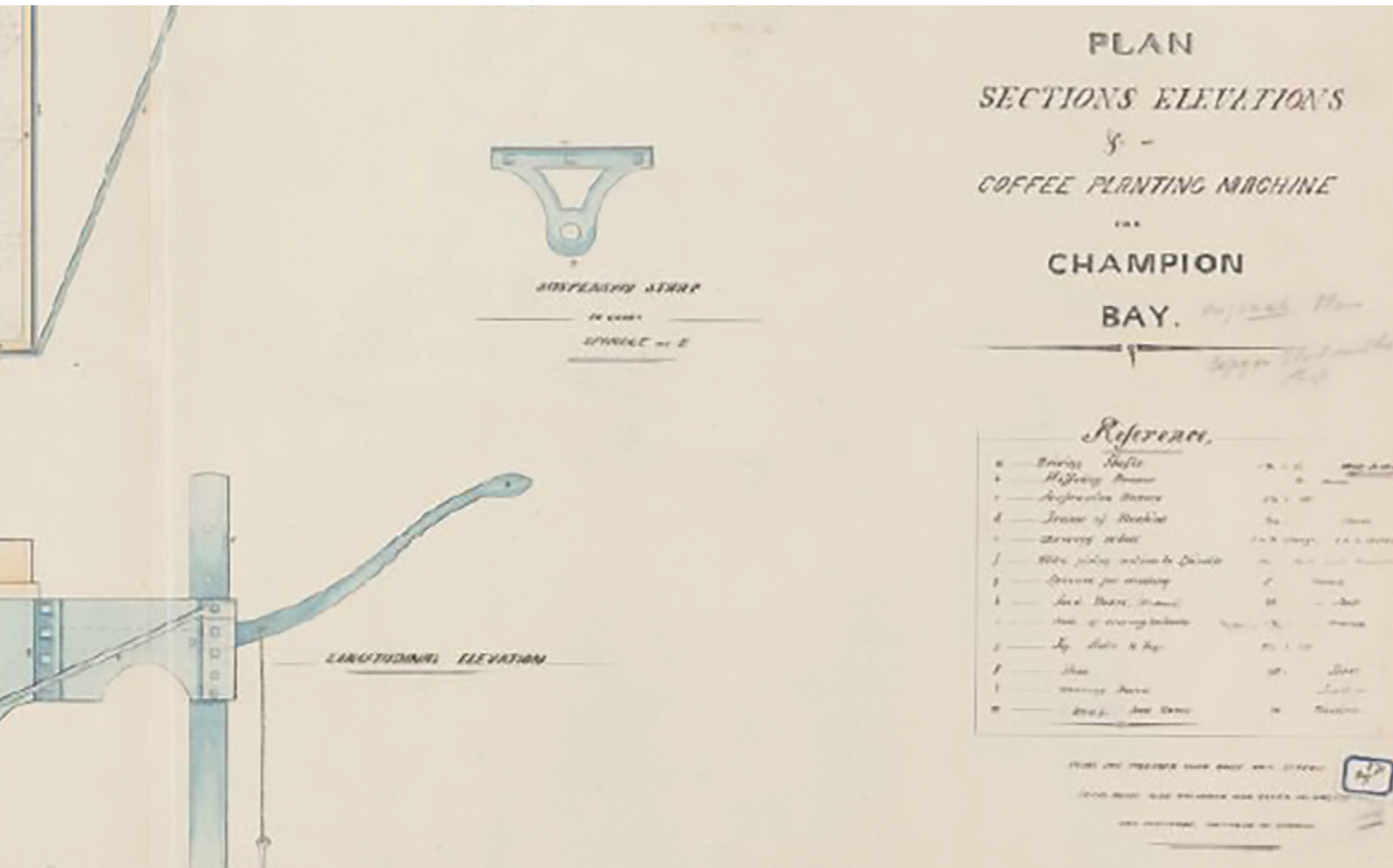
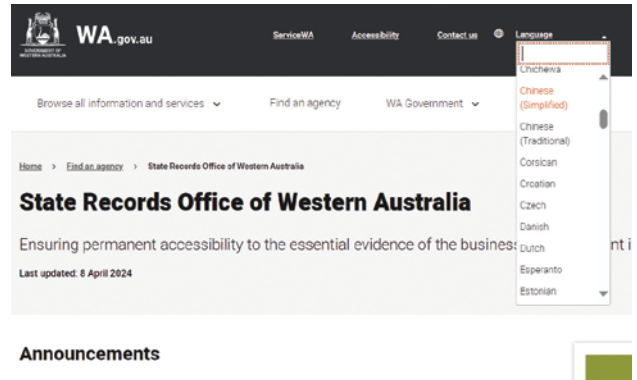
The SRO continued to leverage improvements to wa.gov.au to check content against international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to meet Digital Services Policy requirements (Level AA) and higher.



# Multicultural Plan

In 2023-24 the SRO continued to deliver its obligations under the Multicultural Plan for the DLGSC.

The SRO was able to leverage improvements to wa.gov.au that included translation functionality for SRO webpage as illustrated. Whilst imperfect, this functionality assists with improved access for non-English speaking clients or clients who prefer to read in other languages.



# Reconciliation Action

The SRO Plan on a Page 2023-2026 supports reconciliation action for the Commission by giving a high priority to establishing meaningful and ongoing engagement with Aboriginal people to facilitate access and use of State archives.

In 2023-24 the SRO contributed to the development of the DLGSC's Reconciliation Action Plan, which was launched in May 2024 during National Reconciliation Week.

In September 2023 the SRO held a joint workshop with the State Library, the Aboriginal History WA Research Unit (DLGSC), and Yokai – Healing Our Spirit. The workshop was attended by fifty Elders and Aboriginal stakeholders and provided guests with information about services available from the State Library and DLGSC (through the SRO and Aboriginal History WA Research Unit). The Commission and SRO acknowledge and thank Ms Shahna Rind, Manager Aboriginal Engagement at the State Library, and the staff of the Aboriginal History WA Research Unit for their leadership and collaboration through this event.



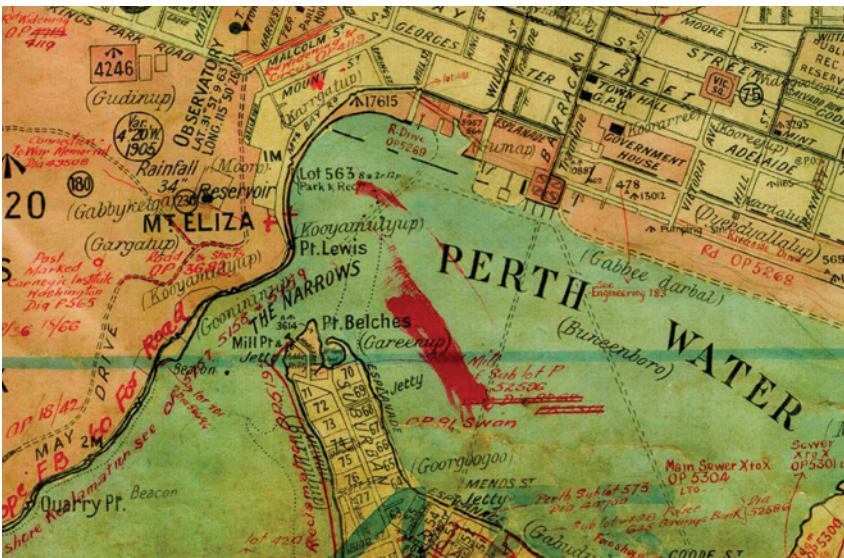
*Pictured: Jim Morrison, Chairperson – West Australian Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation, Shahna Rind, Manager Aboriginal Engagement – State Library WA, Elizabeth Gogas – local singer-songwriter, at the Elders morning tea in September 2023.*

In November the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, attended a presentation from the Aboriginal History WA Research Unit, SRO and State Library on a new dedicated Cultural Hub space to support family history and research for Aboriginal peoples in the Perth Cultural Centre. The Hub features original artwork, funded by the State Library, called Boodja Wangkiny by prominent Noongar artists Peter Farmer Jr, Kayley Emery and Jason Hirst depicting the six Noongar seasons.

In May the SRO assisted the State Library with a cultural safety professional development workshop for the Aboriginal Education Team at Catholic Education Western Australia.

In support of National Reconciliation Week 2024 - 'Now More Than Ever' – the SRO partnered with the Aboriginal History WA to present a Street Banner at Karrgatup (Kings Park) between 27 May and 3 June 2024.

Throughout this reporting period the SRO continued to provide assistance and advice on access to State archives to the Yamatji Government Partnership Committee. In January, SRO staff attended a workshop with the Bundi Yamatji Aboriginal Corporation at Boola Bardip (WA Museum) on Yamatji Country in Geraldton.



Many maps of Perth in the State archives collection include Aboriginal place names and are used to support Aboriginal history research in WA.

The SRO proudly shared a street banner with the Aboriginal History WA from the DLGSC again for National Reconciliation Week 2024. The artwork for the banner this year is:

**“Jartuti water place east of Parnngurr. In pujiman (traditional, desert dwelling) days old people walked and hunted there, we went there recently with KJ (Kanyirn inpa Jukurpa) ranger mob, lovely place.”**

**Beverley Rogers**

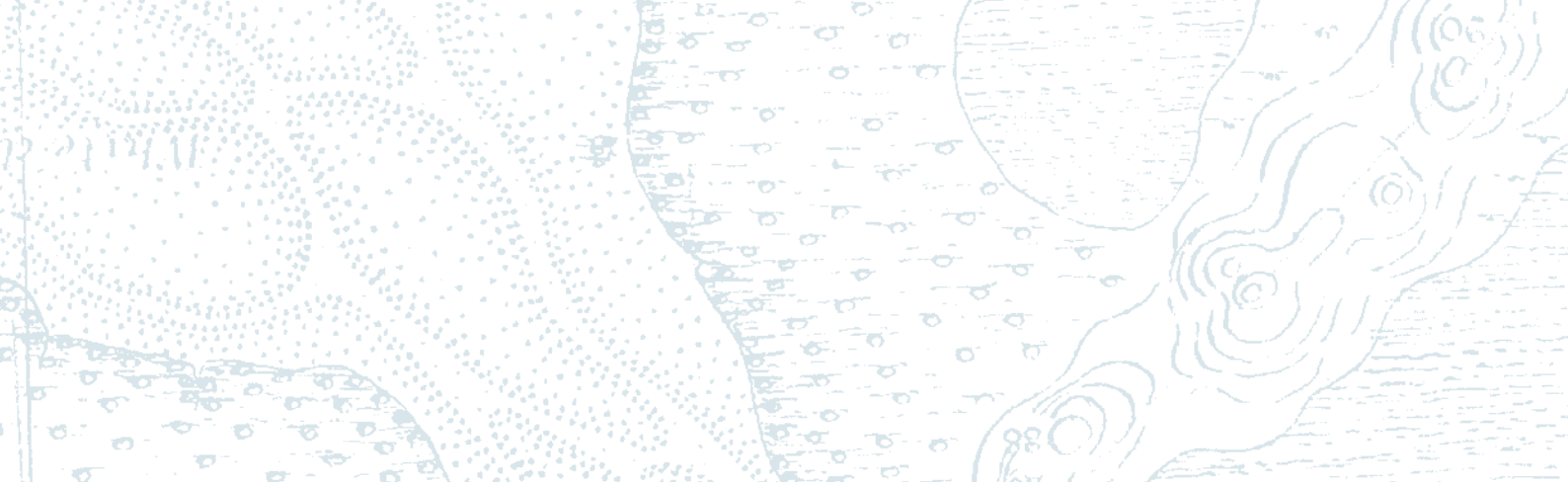
The SRO has renamed its quarterly newsletter to reflect the Noongar seasons of the Perth (Boorloo) region.

# Compliance Report – State Records Act 2000

Part or Section	Notes
<b>Part 2 – Record keeping plans for parliamentary departments</b>	
Section 13 – Amending plans	No action required during 2023-24
Section 14 (2) – Review of plans	No action required during 2023-24
<b>Part 3 Division 2</b>	
Section 23(1) – approve or refuse to approve record keeping plans	The Commission approved 43 record keeping plans
Section 23(2) – give reasons for refusal to approve record keeping plans	All approved
<b>Part 3 Division 3</b>	
Section 25 – Commission to have a plan	Current report on the review of its plan noted 27 November 2023. Amended plan due 3 December 2024
Section 26 – State Records Office to have a plan	The SRO submitted an amended plan in August 2021 which was approved by the Commission in November 2021
Section 27 – Schedule 3 organisations to have plans	There were no Schedule 3 plans approved during the 2023-2024 reporting period
<b>Part 3 Division 4</b>	
Section 28(3) – the Commission may require an agency to review its record keeping plan (discretionary)	None required
Section 28(5) – five yearly review of all record keeping plans	The record keeping plans of 43 organisations were due for review during 2023-24 (see Appendix 1)
Section 29(1) – give directions as to intervals for periodic reporting on record keeping plans (discretionary)	Nil
Section 30(1) – give Parliament copies of reports received under section 29	Nil
<b>Part 4</b>	
Section 32 – State archives to be transferred to the State Archives Collection	In 2023-24, the SRO received emergency transfers of State archives from the WA Police Service, Department of Justice, the Department of Communities, the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and the WA Museum

## Key

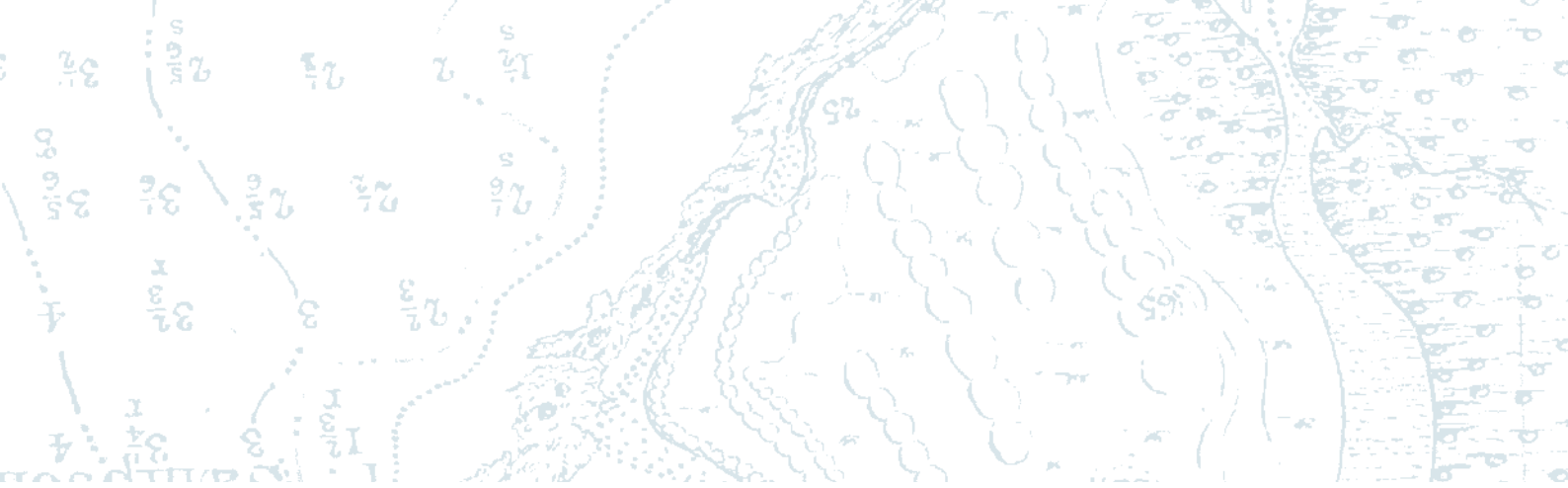
■ approved or completed    
 ■ ongoing action    
 ■ issue identified



Part or Section	Notes
<b>Part 5 Division 2</b>	
Section 37(2)(b) – restricted access archives identified	In 2023-24 the Commission approved a 50 year restriction period for Department of Transport Vehicle Registration Reports 1979-1981 (cons7659) which are in microform
Section 37(5) – Review of archives restricted under 37(2)(b)	The next five yearly review is due to be completed during 2025-26
Section 38 (3) – change in restricted access period for records in the State archives collection	Nil
<b>Part 5 Division 3</b>	
Section 40(2) – approve or refuse to approve the archives keeping plan	The archives keeping plan will be reviewed by 6 December 2024 and a report of the review submitted to the Commission by that date
Section 40(3) – give reasons for refusal to approve the archives keeping plan	Not required
Section 40(4) – direct time for resubmission of the archives keeping plan refused approval under section 40(3)	Not required
Section 41 – archives keeping plan to be reviewed	The archives keeping plan will be reviewed by 6 December 2024 and a report of the review submitted to the Commission by that date
<b>Part 5 Division 4</b>	
Section 43(3), (4) & (5) – deal with applications from the Director to destroy archives	Nil
<b>Part 6</b>	
Section 48 – Archives containing exceptionally sensitive information	The next five yearly review is due to be completed during 2025-26
<b>Part 8 Division 1</b>	
Section 60(1)(a) – monitor the operation of and compliance with the Act	The Commission continues to rely on the record keeping plan review cycle as the chief mechanism for ensuring agency compliance with the Act
Section 60(1)(b) – monitor compliance by government organisations with record keeping plans	The SRO evaluated record keeping plan review reports and amended record keeping plans and results were reported to the Commission

Key

- approved or completed
- ongoing action
- issue identified



Part or Section	Notes
<b>Part 8 Division 1</b>	
Section 60(1)(c) – inquire into breaches or possible breaches of this Act	Alleged breaches 23-24 22-23 21-22 20-21
	Active 18 12 19 9
	Resolved 5 8 15 5
	Carried Forward 13 4 4 4
Section 61 – establish principles and standards	The SRO continued refining supporting documents and seeking Commission input during 2023-24. No new record keeping principles and standards were issued during 2023-24
Section 62 – establish committees	The State Records Advisory Committee met two times during 2023-24. No new committees were established
Section 64(1) and (3) – submit annual report to Parliament by 1 November each year	Submitted to both Houses of the State Parliament on 23 October 2023. Copies were tabled in Parliament on 7 November 2023
Section 64(2) and (3) – submit reports to Parliament re contraventions of the Act (discretionary)	Nil
Section 64(4) – give the Minister a copy of any report submitted to Parliament	Commission Annual Report delivered to the Minister on 23 October 2023
<b>Part 8 Division 2</b>	
Section 65(4) – include in annual report any policy directions given by the Minister	None issued
Section 66(4) – comply with requests by the Minister for information and make facilities available	None received
<b>Part 8 Division 3</b>	
Section 68 – Commission may request a government organisation to report about its record keeping or an aspect of its record keeping	No requests issued

Key

- approved or completed
- ongoing action
- issue identified





Part or Section	Notes
Compliance with SRC Standard 2, Principle 6	<p>The SRO manages the Commission's records, and therefore its compliance with SRC Standard 2, Principle 6 is linked to the compliance of the SRO. The following actions were taken this year to ensure the Commission's compliance:</p> <p>The Commission's Record Keeping Plan (the Plan) fell due for review in December 2023. A report of the review of the Plan was completed in November 2023. The report includes a commitment to amend the Plan to reflect changes to records management practices. The amended Plan is to be submitted for Commission endorsement at its meeting scheduled for November 2024, and subsequently submitted to the Minister for Culture and the Arts for approval.</p> <p>The current SRO Plan, approved by the Commission in November 2021, contains information on records management policies and procedures and the SRO's Disaster Recovery Plan, incorporating management and protection of the Commission's records.</p> <p>A single streamlined Retention and Disposal Authority, covering the records of both the Commission and the SRO, was approved in 2022 and comprised the retention and disposal component of the Commission's Plan.</p>

# Appendix 1

## Record Keeping Plans Required for Review in 2023-24

Agency	Due Date	Received Date
Albany Cemetery Board	3 June 2024	15 February 2024
Art Gallery of Western Australia	10 August 2023	11 August 2023
Building and Construction Industry Training Fund	5 December 2023	5 December 2023
Bunbury Harvey Regional Council	10 August 2023	11 August 2023
Burswood Park Board	22 March 2024	20 February 2024
Chemistry Centre	22 March 2024	26 March 2024
City of Albany	22 March 2024	15 April 2024
City of Rockingham	7 December 2023	10 August 2023
City of Wanneroo	10 August 2023	26 July 2023
Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety	10 August 2023	1 September 2023
Department of Health	22 March 2024	5 March 2024
Department of the Premier and Cabinet	7 December 2023	9 October 2023
Department of the Registrar, Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission	10 August 2023	21 July 2023
Dwellingup Cemetery Board	22 April 2024	18 April 2024
Gascoyne Development Commission	22 March 2024	20 March 2024
Geraldton Cemetery Board	9 March 2024	1 May 2024
Mental Health Advocacy Service (Council of Official Visitors)	10 August 2023	4 August 2023
Murdoch University	10 August 2023	10 August 2023
Parliamentary Services Department	15 February 2024	24 January 2024
PathWest Laboratory Medicine Western Australia	30 March 2024	18 March 2024
Public Transport Authority	7 December 2023	18 October 2023

### Key

■ Agencies who submitted a record keeping plan as proof of their review.



Agency	Due Date	Received Date
Salaries and Allowances Tribunal	6 December 2023	13 November 2023
Shire of Bruce Rock	22 March 2024	30 April 2024
Shire of Coolgardie	9 August 2024	17 June 2024
Shire of Cranbrook	22 March 2024	22 March 2024
Shire of Derby West Kimberley	7 December 2023	14 December 2023
Shire of Goomalling	30 August 2023	26 July 2023
Shire of Kulin	6 December 2023	6 December 2023
Shire of Leonora	6 December 2023	16 January 2024
Shire of Mount Magnet	22 March 2024	4 April 2024
Shire of Murray	22 March 2024	13 February 2024
Shire of Northam	1 September 2023	27 July 2023
Shire of Northampton	10 August 2023	25 July 2023
Shire of Three Springs	29 August 2023	29 August 2023
Shire of Wagin	10 August 2023	2 October 2023
State Records Commission	7 December 2023	27 November 2023
State Solicitors Office	1 March 2024	4 June 2024
Supreme Court of Western Australia	21 March 2024	6 June 2024
Town of Bassendean	2 August 2023	4 August 2023
Town of Cambridge	7 December 2023	20 November 2023
Town of East Fremantle	12 April 2024	12 April 2024
University of Western Australia	22 March 2024	13 February 2024
Western Australia Police Force	7 December 2023	14 November 2023

# Appendix 2

## New Organisations Required to Submit Record Keeping Plans in 2023-24

Agency	Due Date	Received Date
Nil.		

# Appendix 3

## Record Keeping Plans Due in 2023-24 Reporting Period

Agency	Due Date	SRO Received Date	Status	Original Due Date
Building and Construction Industry Training Fund	30 June 2024	28 June 2024	Awaiting Organisation	
Chemistry Centre	31 May 2024	26 June 2024	Awaiting the Commission	
City of Perth	24 March 2024	23 May 2024	Awaiting the Commission	
Department for Communities	30 May 2024	Not Yet Received		
Department of Health	22 March 2024	5 March 2024	Commission Approved 22 May 2024	
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	30 June 2024	7 May 2024	Awaiting the Commission	
East Metropolitan Health Service	30 April 2024	24 May 2024	Awaiting the Commission	17 March 2022*
Horizon Power (Regional Power Corporation)	29 September 2023	8 May 2023	Awaiting Minister Approval	
Kalgoorlie Boulder Cemetery Board	3 June 2024	Not Yet Received		
Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia	31 December 2023	21 December 2023	Commission Approved 22 May 2024	
PathWest Laboratory Medicine Western Australia	30 June 2024	25 June 2024	Awaiting Organisation	

Agency	Due Date	SRO Received Date	Status	Original Due Date
Pharmacy Registration Board	30 September 2023	1 February 2024	Awaiting the Commission	31 December 2022*
Shire of Coorow*	31 December 2021	24 December 2021	Awaiting Organisation	
Shire of Goomalling	31 August 2023	22 August 2023	Commission Approved 27 November 2023	
Shire of Mount Marshall	31 December 2023	Not Yet Received		
Shire of Narembeen	23 June 2024	Not Yet Received		
Shire of Northam	1 September 2023	11 September 2023	Commission Approved 27 August 2023	
Shire of Ravensthorpe*	31 August 2022	Not Yet Received		30 November 2021*
Shire of Wongan Ballidu	17 March 2024	15 March 2024	Commission Approved 22 May 2024	
Shire of Woodanilling	31 December 2023	Not Yet Received		1 June 2023*
Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley*	30 April 2023	Not Yet Received		
South West Development Commission	1 November 2023	27 October 2023	Awaiting Organisation	16 December 2022*
State Solicitor's Office	24 May 2024	4 June 2024	Awaiting the Commission	1 March 2024
Swan Bells Foundation Incorporated	31 October 2023	30 October 2023	Awaiting Organisation	31 December 2022*
Town of Mosman Park	12 August 2023	31 August 2023	Commission Approved 27 November 2023	12 August 2022*
Town of Victoria Park	31 March 2024	29 March 2024	Awaiting the Commission	
Western Australian Local Government Association	31 December 2023	2 January 2024	Commission Approved 22 May 2024	30 June 2023*

\*Plans submitted or due outside of the reporting period.

# Appendix 4

## Record Keeping Plans Due for Review in 2024-25

Agency	Review Due
Bunbury Cemetery Board	8 April 2025
Bunbury Water Corporation (Aqwest)	21 April 2025
Busselton Water Corporation	31 October 2024
Chowerup Cemetery Board	6 December 2024
City of Kalamunda	8 April 2025
City of Kalgoorlie Boulder	12 December 2024
City of Melville	8 April 2025
City of South Perth	8 April 2025
Coal Miners Welfare Board	7 April 2025
Commissioner for Children and Young People	9 August 2024
Corruption and Crime Commission	12 December 2024
Curtin University Student Guild	9 August 2024
Department of Finance	9 August 2024
Department of Fire and Emergency Services	12 December 2024
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	8 April 2025
Infrastructure Western Australia	8 April 2025
Kimberley Development Commission	12 December 2024
Kimberley Ports Authority	8 April 2025
Mental Health Commission	9 August 2024
Mental Health Tribunal	12 December 2024
National Trust of Australia (Western Australia)	9 August 2024
Office of the Auditor General	9 August 2024
Office of the Chief Psychiatrist	17 March 2025
Pilbara Ports Authority	12 December 2024
Public Sector Commission	8 April 2025
Rottneest Island Authority	9 August 2024
Shire of Beverley	8 April 2025



Agency	Review Due
Shire of Broome	9 August 2024
Shire of Coolgardie	9 August 2024
Shire of Cunderdin	9 August 2024
Shire of Dalwallinu	8 April 2025
Shire of Dumbleyung	9 August 2024
Shire of East Pilbara	12 December 2024
Shire of Esperance	17 March 2025
Shire of Gnowangerup	12 December 2024
Shire of Kondinin	20 March 2025
Shire of Meekatharra	9 August 2024
Shire of Moora	12 December 2024
Shire of Morawa	8 April 2025
Shire of Mundaring	8 April 2025
Shire of Murchison	9 August 2024
Shire of Tammin	12 December 2024
Shire of Toodyay	12 December 2024
Shire of Wyalkatchem	8 April 2025
Small Business Development Corporation	1 August 2024
Southern Metropolitan Regional Council	9 December 2024
Town of Cottesloe	9 December 2024
Town of Port Hedland	9 August 2024
University of Western Australia Student Guild	9 August 2024
Water Corporation	20 October 2024
Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation (Healthway)	12 December 2024
Western Metropolitan Regional Council	20 March 2025

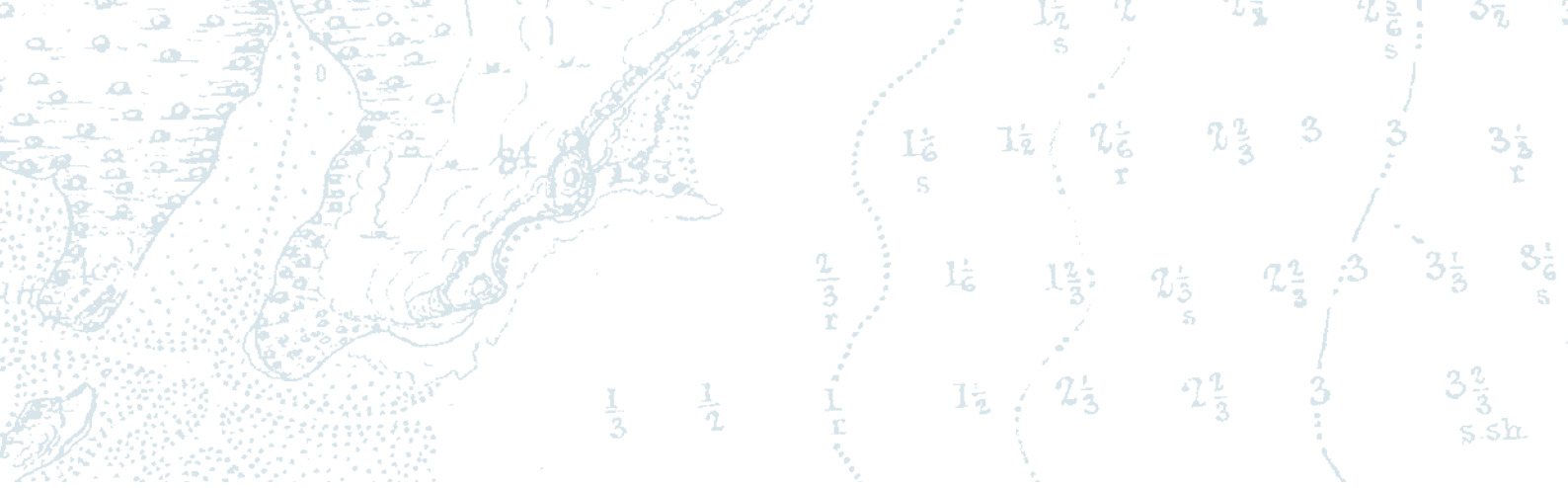
# Appendix 5

## Changes to Retention and Disposal Authorities During 2023-24

Note – The State Records Advisory Committee reviews Retention and Disposal Authorities which are then submitted to the State Records Commission for approval.

Name		Status
13-COVID Hotline Recordings	Ad Hoc	In Progress
Arts and Culture Trust	RDA	In Progress
Border Restriction Program Applications and Related Records	Ad Hoc	Commission Approved
ChemCentre	RDA	In Progress
Contaminated Patient Record - North Metropolitan Health Service Site (Graylands Hospital)	DL	Commission Approved
Contaminated records - City of Greater Geraldton	DL	Commission Approved
Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions	RDA	In Progress
Department of Communities	RDA	In Progress
Department of Education/Southern Grove Primary School	DL	Commission Approved
Department of Education and other Education agencies	SDA	In Progress
Department of Finance	RDA	In Progress
Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation	RDA	Commission Approved
Department of Justice	RDA	In Progress
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	RDA	In Progress
Department of Planning Lands and Heritage	RDA	In Progress
Department of the Premier and Cabinet – Ministerial Records	RDA	In Progress
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	RDA	In Progress
Department of the Registrar, Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission	RDA	In Progress
Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation (Synergy)	RDA	Commission Approved
General Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government Information	GRDA	Commission Approved
General Retention and Disposal Authority for State Government Information	GRDA	Commission Approved
Gold Corporation (Perth Mint)	RDA	In Progress
Horizon Power	RDA	In Progress





Name		Status
Legal Aid Western Australia	RDA	In Progress
Legal Practice Board of Western Australia	RDA	In Progress
Lotteries Commission (Lotterywest)	RDA	In Progress
Main Roads Western Australia	RDA	Commission Approved
National Trust	RDA	In Progress
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Western Australia	RDA	In Progress
Racing, Gaming & Wagering, and Liquor Regulators	SDA	In Progress
Racing, Gaming & Wagering, and Liquor Regulators – Amendment	SDA Amendment	Commission Approved
Retention and Disposal Authority for continuing and former functions of the Department of Mines and Petroleum	RDA	In Progress
Reviews, Investigations and Special Inquiries	SDA	In Progress
Road Safety Commission – Safety Camera Caution Notice Program	Ad Hoc	In Progress
Salaries and Allowances Tribunal	RDA	In Progress
School, College and Campus Records	SDA	In Progress
University Student Guilds	SDA	Commission Approved
State Library of Western Australia	RDA	Commission Approved
Veterinary Practice Board of Western Australia	RDA	In Progress
Western Australia Police Force	RDA	In Progress
Water Services Corporations	SDA	In Progress
Western Australian Meat Industry Authority	RDA	In Progress

**Type of Authority:**

Ad Hoc: Ad Hoc Disposal Authority

DL: Disposal List

RDA: Retention and Disposal Authority

GRDA: General Retention and Disposal Authority

SDA: Sector Disposal Authority

This annual report is submitted to Parliament in accordance with the obligations of the State Records Commission under section 64(1) of the *State Records Act 2000*.

The Report outlines the activities of the State Records Commission during 2023-24 and comments on matters that pertain to the operations of the State Records Office.

Note: The State Records Commission is not an accountable agency with respect to the requirements of the *Financial Management Act 2006*.

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