

Terms of Reference for the State Records Advisory Committee

1. Purpose of the Committee

The State Records Advisory Committee is established under Section 62 of the *State Records Act 2000*, to advise the State Records Commission (SRC) about:

- (a) the State records that should be State archives; and
- (b) the retention periods for those State records that are not to be State archives; and
- (c) associated matters.

The scope of (c) 'associated matters' is taken to include matters related to records management that may impact (a) and (b) including, but not limited to:

- SRC Standards, Policies and other guidance developed by the SRO that may impact retention and disposal of State records; and
- The management of records of information that may impact the discovery of, and access to, State records and archives.

2. Membership

2.1 Membership will be drawn from relevant professional, industry and public sector groups to ensure a broad range of expertise is available to the Committee as outlined in Section 62(2) of the *State Records Act 2000*.

2.2 Up to two (2) persons (Member and Deputy) will be appointed to represent each of the relevant professional, industry and public sector groups.

2.3 Members and Deputies appointed to the Committee represent the professional, industry or public sector group to which they belong and not the organization with which they are employed.

2.4 Members and Deputies will be appointed for a term of up to three (3) years.

2.5 The term "members" is used in this document to refer to Members and / or Deputies as relevant.

3. Chair

Meetings will be chaired by the Director State Records, or the Director's delegate.

4. Meetings

4.1 Meetings will be scheduled so that recommendations of the Committee can be referred to the next meeting of the State Records Commission in time to meet the Commission's deadlines.

- 4.2 Meetings will generally be held every third month unless otherwise advised.
- 4.3 In addition to scheduled meetings, special meetings may be convened by the Chair.
- 4.4 Meetings may be conducted via digital technology, for example video conferencing, or email.
- 4.5 Accurate minutes will be kept.
- 4.6 The Member from each professional, industry or public sector group will be invited to all Committee meetings. If the Member is unable to attend they are to advise the Executive Secretary of the Committee and the Deputy's attendance will be requested.
- 4.7 Each attendee will receive formal notice of the meeting they are expected to attend, at least five (5) working days before the meeting.
- 4.8 The notice of each meeting is to be accompanied by an agenda and supporting papers as appropriate. Supporting papers may be distributed in hard copy or in electronic form.
- 4.9 Notices of urgent business may be given at the commencement of each meeting. Such notices may be supported by tabled papers if necessary.
- 4.10 A quorum, which must include the Chair, comprises five (5) Committee members.
- 4.11 No business may be transacted unless a quorum is present.
- 4.12 If a quorum is not present, the meeting may be adjourned to a time and place to be decided, provided that such decision is made in consultation with the Chair.
- 4.13 Members are to declare conflicts of interest prior to, or at the start of each meeting. A member may excuse themselves from discussion of the relevant item/s. The Chair may also require that a member excuse themselves from a discussion where a conflict of interest is declared or identified.

5. Committee Papers

- 5.1 Committee members may provide a corporate or personal mailing address for the delivery of Committee papers.
- 5.2 Committee papers must not be incorporated into the corporate record of the organization with which the member is employed or represents.
- 5.3 The exception to rule 5.2 is a member consulting on behalf of a government organization, where papers may be incorporated into the corporate record of the organization.

5.4 Committee papers should be treated as confidential and be returned to the Executive Secretary for confidential shredding at the close of the Committee meeting.

6 Attendance at Meetings

6.1 Attendance at meetings is voluntary (see also item 8 for sitting fees).

6.2 Committee members must advise the Executive Secretary, in advance, of their ability or inability to attend meetings (see also 4.6 above).

6.3 It is essential for the Chair to know prior to the meeting that there will be a quorum in attendance so that agency attendees (should they be invited to attend the meeting), particularly from country and regional areas, are not inconvenienced.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations are to be considered by the Committee, and following endorsement, referred to the State Records Commission for approval.

7.2 Where consensus is not achieved, questions arising shall be put to the State Records Commission, with all relevant background information, for consideration.

7.3 Determinations, once approved by the State Records Commission, will be in force notwithstanding that Commission approval of the Recordkeeping Plan, of which they form part, may still be pending.

8. Sitting Fees

8.1 In accordance with Government policy, sitting fees may be paid to members for their attendance at Committee meetings provided they are not government employees.

NB: This document should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines for Members*.

Guidelines for members of the State Records Advisory Committee

The following information is provided to assist Members and Deputies of the State Records Advisory Committee (the Committee), established by the State Records Commission under section 62(1) of the *State Records Act 2000*.

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee is to support the work of the State Records Office (SRO) in ensuring that recommendations submitted by the SRO and government agencies are given due consideration. Following each meeting, the Committee will report, via the Chair, to the State Records Commission regarding the recommendations.

Ex Officio Members

The Committee is chaired by the Director State Records, or their delegate.

The Executive Secretary to the Committee is the Director State Records' delegate and all queries regarding the operation of the Committee may be referred to sro@sro.wa.gov.au.

Membership of the Committee

The Committee has been established with up to 8 Members and 8 Deputies from a broad cross section of relevant professional, industry and public sector groups.

Members and Deputies are selected and confirmed by the State Records Commission from a list of nominees submitted by each interest group. The term "members" is used in this document to refer to Members and / or Deputies as relevant.

Committee Meeting Dates

The Committee meets generally every three months unless extraordinary meetings are convened by the Chair or unless special circumstances require more frequent meetings. All members will be issued a schedule of meeting dates at the start of the calendar year.

Attendance at Committee Meetings

Each Member will receive formal notice of the next scheduled meeting approximately two weeks prior to the meeting. Deputies are not expected to attend meetings unless the Member is unable to attend or the Member and Deputy agree that the Deputy can better address items on the meeting agenda.

Members who are unable to attend meetings must notify the Executive Secretary to the Committee, so that the Deputy may be contacted regarding their availability to attend.

Meeting Time

Meeting times will be included in the schedule provided to members and members will be advised at least five (5) working days in advance if a change is required.

Venue

Meeting venues will be included in the schedule provided to members and members will be advised at least five (5) working days in advance if a change is required.

Member and Deputy contact details

Members are to contact the Executive Secretary to the Committee if their mailing address or other contact details change.

Committee Papers

Minutes of meetings will be provided to Members and Deputies within two weeks of the meeting for out-of-session review and feedback. Minutes will be confirmed as accurate out-of-session prior to the following meeting.

Where possible, the agenda and supporting papers for the next meeting will be sent to attendees at least five working days before the meeting.

Agenda items will generally be scheduled 20 minutes apart.

Each Committee member represents a specific professional or interest group and not their employing organization (except in cases where a Committee member is consulting on behalf of a government organization), therefore Committee papers should **not be registered or filed** as part of the organization's corporate memory.

Arrangements can be made to mail Committee papers to a private address if necessary.

Confidentiality

Sensitive issues discussed at the meeting are to be held in the strictest confidence. At the completion of each meeting, members are to leave papers with the Minutes Secretary for confidential destruction.

Agency Representation

Each party submitting a paper for consideration may be required to have a representative (who may be an SRO Officer) in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Committee Sitting Fees

Sitting fees may be provided for those non-government employee members of the Committee, for the time spent at the Committee meeting.

If members require consideration of paid sitting fees, they should contact the Executive Secretary.

Scope and Requirements for Papers

General papers on State records management

The SRO may submit papers regarding various aspects of State records management for consideration by the SRAC, including:

- a) the State records that should be State archives; and
- b) the minimum retention periods for those State records that are not to be State archives; and
- c) associated matters.

The SRAC includes representation from a wide range of stakeholders in the operation of the *State Records Act 2000* (the Act) and is a valuable source of experience and knowledge regarding practical application of the Act.

Papers on Retention and Disposal Authorities

Retention and Disposal Authorities submitted to the Committee will generally comprise:

- An agency specific Retention and Disposal Authority; or
- A Sector Retention and Disposal Authority; or
- A General Retention and Disposal Authority.

Retention and Disposal Authority (R&D Authority) (formerly Retention and Disposal Schedule)

An R&D Authority is a systematic and comprehensive listing of categories of records created by a government organization to plan the life of their current records from the time of creation to their eventual disposal.

Every government organization requires an approved R&D Authority, General Retention and Disposal Authority and/or Sector Disposal Authority to cover their core-business / agency specific records. The Committee predominantly considers revisions of approved R&D Authorities, apart from the R&D Authorities presented by new government organizations.

General Retention and Disposal Authority (GRDA) (formerly General Disposal Authority)

A document to provide government organizations with a consistent approach for retention and disposal activities, covering records common to specific sectors, eg State or local government, which eliminates the need for each organization to prepare its own authority.

The *General Disposal Authority for State Government Information* provides broad coverage of records common across State government, such as financial and accounting records, human resources management records and general administrative records.

The *General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records* covers the broad range of records common to local governments such as Rates records, Road and Street Management records, financial and accounting records and human resources management records.

Sector Retention and Disposal Authority (SRDA) (formerly Sector Disposal Authority)

A retention and disposal authority that authorises the disposal of records created by a group of organizations that perform the same or similar functions. Sector Retention and Disposal Authorities eliminate the need for individual organizations within a “sector” to produce and review separate R&D Authorities.

Assessment of Disposal Authorities

To limit workload and assist with the flow of Committee meetings, members are requested to remember the following in relation to disposal authorities submitted for consideration:

Items that are considered part of Committee responsibility:

- Disposal instructions – are appropriate and not contradictory;
- Retention periods - are appropriate for the type of information;
- Temporary records - have been correctly identified;
- Archival records - have been correctly identified;
- All record categories have adequate description to determine their value; and
- No record categories have been omitted.

Items that are not considered part of Committee responsibility:

- Grammar, spelling or punctuation errors, unless they create serious ambiguities to the intention of the text;
- Format and structure of the authorities;
- File title classification;
- Agency administrative issues; and
- Restricted access records.

Further information regarding retention and disposal can be found in the SRO's *Retention and Disposal Instructions*, which are available on the SRO website.

Useful Definitions

Archival Records – A record that is to be kept permanently (i.e. never to be destroyed) because of its continuing value (i.e. historical, evidential etc.) (also known as a State archive).

Destruction – The physical destruction of records that are no longer of value, ensuring that no information is retrievable.

Disposal – the removal of records from the agency once they have reached the inactive phase, and their subsequent destruction **or** permanent retention as State archives in the State archives collection (at the SRO) or some other accommodation approved by the State Records Commission.

Disposal Instruction – the instruction to keep records for a set period of time and then to either archive with the State Records Office or destroy.

State Record – Any form of information created, received or maintained by a government organization or parliamentary department in the course of conducting its business activities.

Temporary Records – Records which are not of permanent value and which will eventually be destroyed.

A ***Glossary of Terms*** is also available on the SRO website. The Glossary is a comprehensive set of definitions of terms used across all State Records Commission and SRO publications. It is a dynamic document that is periodically updated to ensure consistent and current definitions of relevant terminology are used and reflected in publications.

Thank you for volunteering your time to this important Committee.