

Appraisal Characteristic Statement for the identification of permanent Public sector organisations records

Public sector organisations intending to use the characteristics outlined in this appendix should be aware:

- the characteristics are applicable to public sector organisations records in all formats
- all characteristics are equally significant
- where records meet more than one characteristic, all characteristics should be documented
- while no quotas or limits exist on how many records should be retained as permanent public sector organisations records, generally only a small proportion of records created by organisations will warrant permanent retention
- NT Archives Service will work with Public sector organisations developing functional records disposal schedules to identify records which best represent the characteristics described
- Public sector organisations records which meet any of the characteristics for the identification of permanent records should not be exempted from permanent retention because of privacy or security concerns (note there are measures in place to address these concerns)
- examples are intended to provide the basis for further detailed discussion and analysis of the records between the NT Archives Service and Public sector organisations.

The following framework will explain the set of characteristics used to identify permanent Public sector organisations records.

- [**Characteristic 1**](#) – Authority, Foundation & Structure of Public sector organisations
- [**Characteristic 2**](#) – Primary Functions & Programs of Public sector organisations
- [**Characteristic 3**](#) - Enduring Rights & Entitlements
- [**Characteristic 4**](#) – Significant Impact on Individuals
- [**Characteristic 5**](#) – Substantial Contribution to Community Memory
- [**Characteristic 6**](#) – Environmental Management & Change

These guidelines apply to public sector organisations, as defined in the *Information Act part 1, section 5*. This link takes you to the Information Act

<http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/d2bdab159924e72269257c5300834300?OpenDocument>

Expanded table for the identification of permanent public sector organisations records

Appraisal characteristics for the identification of permanent records	
Characteristic	Evidenced by:
<p>Characteristic 1 – Authority, Foundation & Structure of Public sector organisations</p> <p><i>Public sector organisations records providing evidence of the source of authority, establishment and structure of NT Government (including all Northern Territory Government organisations and local authorities). This includes government records that define the function of government, such as the nature and extent of the government’s jurisdiction, obligations and powers.</i></p>	<p>Records providing evidence of the following may meet this characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development, passing, commencement and review of legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ legislation ○ subordinate legislation (regulations) ○ development and review files • formal instruments authorising the establishment or dissolution of a Northern Territory Government organisation, its functions and operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrator approvals ○ Ministerial duties outside the Minister’s current portfolio which are official assignments from the Chief Minister and may lead to the creation of a new agency • legal delegations to perform duties and functions of the territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministerial delegations ○ Delegations to a Chief Executive Officer or a statutory office holder • judgements or rulings determining the extent of jurisdictions and powers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ where the Supreme Court determines the validity of legislation made by the legislature ○ where a court determines that the power to charge a person is not within the powers set up by a specific act ○ judgements that a tribunal/lower court does not have the necessary power/jurisdiction to have dealt with a matter • agreements with other state governments, territories and the Commonwealth regarding responsibility for functions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ contracts ○ complementary legislation ○ other COAG (Council of Australian Governments) agreements

Appraisal characteristics for the identification of permanent records

Characteristic	Evidenced by:
<p>Characteristic 2 – Primary Functions & Programs of Public sector organisations</p> <p><i>Public sector organisations records providing evidence of NT Government deliberations, decisions and actions which influence the administration of government and the people of the Northern Territory. These records relate to primary functions, programs and significant issues faced in governing the Northern Territory. Examples include records documenting the background, basis and outcomes of those decisions and actions.</i></p>	<p>Records providing evidence of the following may meet this characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cabinet minutes • the formulation and determination of policy across all-of-government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ policy proposals, consultation and evaluation reports ○ endorsed all-of- government policy ○ Ministerial media statements • the formulation, determination and implementation of high level policy and strategic management decisions within Public sector organisations and across government sectors and industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ policy proposals, consultation and evaluation reports ○ endorsed key functional policy ○ implementation plans and timeframes • the monitoring, analysis and review of policy affecting government functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reports of Commissions of Inquiry or Review ○ policy evaluations • major reforms of the Northern Territory's political and administrative structures and institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ research and reports into restructure proposals ○ final, approved versions of restructures and organisational charts • setting legal precedents and amendments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coroner's report recommendations • implementation of major decisions through the formulation of procedures and strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office of the Public Service Commissioner directives • formulation and delivery of major infrastructure or planning schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ planning scheme and/or town plan ○ specifications for the design and construction of major infrastructure • local authorities decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council minutes • registration of regulated professions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ medical registration • development of, reaction to, and impact of reports on major social issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ response of the Northern Territory government to reports and recommendations of Commissions of Inquiry or Review

Appraisal characteristics for the identification of permanent records

Characteristic	Evidenced by:
<p>Characteristic 3 – Enduring Rights & Entitlements</p> <p><i>Public sector organisations records providing evidence of the legal status of individuals and groups within the community, as well as their fundamental rights to participate in the affairs of the territory, and to lay claim to entitlements and protection of the territory. This includes government records documenting the significant interaction of individuals with government, which are necessary to protect their rights and entitlements.</i></p>	<p>Records providing evidence of the following may meet this characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of significant life events and rights and entitlements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ births, deaths and marriages registrations ○ adoption records ○ official changes of name e.g. deed polls ○ administration of deceased estates e.g. grants of probate ○ Aboriginal heritage site registration ○ native title determinations of land and sea owner rights ○ land titles and easements which document property rights and entitlements

Appraisal characteristics for the identification of permanent records

Characteristic	Evidenced by:
<p>Characteristic 4 – Significant Impact on Individuals</p> <p><i>Public sector organisations records providing substantial evidence of the significant impact of decisions and actions on individuals and communities, the interaction of people with the organisation, and the influence of the territory community on government decision-making. This includes records that might be required where the government's actions alter or change the lives of individuals or groups of people, particularly the most vulnerable members of territory society.</i></p>	<p>Records providing evidence of the following may meet this characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning and decision-making in relation to issues significantly affecting the community or the provision of essential services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ collections and analyses of data ○ high-level planning and execution of major public works, e.g. main roads and residential developments ○ land-use and zoning plans • individual case management where the government functions and programs had far reaching impact or influence on the lives of individuals within the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ guardianship records ○ prison admission and discharge records ○ mental health service provision ○ details of the territory's care of children removed from their family • identifying the persons, groups or areas affected by the implementation of policy decisions (whether positively or negatively) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ representations and appeals against the decisions/actions of government or legislature ○ petitions documenting significant community opposition to government actions or policies • impact of legal decisions on the lives of individuals and communities and the setting of precedents for community behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enforced acquisition of land for specific purposes • outcomes of decisions and their implementation, whether successful or unsuccessful <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ statistical analyses ○ reports ○ reviews

Appraisal characteristics for the identification of permanent records

Characteristic	Evidenced by:
<p>Characteristic 5 – Substantial Contribution to Community Memory</p> <p><i>Public sector organisations records substantially contributing to the knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history, society, culture or people of the Northern Territory. This includes public records relating to events, persons, places and phenomena or social, environmental, cultural, aesthetic, scientific, research or technical significance to the broader community and the Northern Territory and public records that provide a representation of the Northern Territory way of life including work, education and culture.</i></p> <p><i>While public sector organisations records arise from and document activity, they may warrant retention as permanent records because of the relevance beyond government functionality. For instance, a routine approval of a building’</i></p>	<p>Records providing evidence of the following may meet this characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sites of conservation, cultural, social, spiritual or heritage significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identification, development and site management records • individuals or organisations that have significantly contributed to Northern Territory society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ award recipients ○ titles administration (e.g. conferring the title of “Honourable” to eligible persons) • Northern Territory’s population and its circumstances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ statistical data • major social, economic, cultural or scientific discoveries or developments with significance to, or a special relationship with, the Northern Territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ planning and management of major infrastructure development projects ○ planning and management of the Northern Territory’s economic resources • major social, economic, cultural or scientific discoveries with significance to or having a special relationship with, specific regional or local communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ speeches made by the Mayor on occasions of regional and local significance including local government centenary or a royal visit • major advances, changes or achievements, in a particular field or area of endeavour, and the key people or organisations contributing to it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ technical, botanical, scientific, social science, genealogical, medical or other specialist research¹ • those which significantly add to an understanding of a particular time for different types of people – how people lived, what they thought, what their major concerns/issues were <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ planning and management of significant cultural events and celebrations ○ heritage listings • major events, developments or trends in political, social, legal or economic history <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chief Minister’s speech notes

¹ Any potential uses must be fully explained and justified in order for criterion to be applied

Appraisal characteristics for the identification of permanent records

Characteristic	Evidenced by:
<p>Characteristic 6 – Environmental Management & Change</p> <p><i>Public sector organisations records providing evidence of the Northern Territory government’s significant actions in relation to environmental management and change, including the occupation, management and use of the Territory’s natural resources. This also includes records that may contain a history of land use which has, or may, impact on the health and well-being of the Northern Territory community and the natural environment, and records that may contribute to an understanding of climatic change, weather patterns and natural disasters.</i></p>	<p>Records providing evidence of the following may meet this characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history of land use and occupation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ landfill sites ○ town planning • collections and analyses of data compiled for planning and decision making in relation to issues significantly affecting the environment or resource management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ environmental observational research and/or surveillance ○ hydrographic charts and flood maps • collections and analyses of data detailing environmental change which have occurred over time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ soil feature statistics • individual case management where the government functions and programs had far reaching impact or influence on the environment or the development of the territory and its resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ spread and control of diseases or biological agents ○ major changes to land use, such as the establishment of Parks and Reserves • administration and enforcement of environmentally relevant activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ applications ○ environmental monitoring • where there is a potential for contaminants to be released into the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ development approvals for gas extraction and mining ○ Identification and monitoring of toxic sites.