



STATE RECORDS NSW

Input on New Retention and Disposal Authority
Policy and Procedures



NSW CHAPTER

Submission issued 08 July 2024

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) supports more than 14,000 members to be ethical, effective, and engaged practitioners. Its work strengthens the architectural profession and shapes egalitarian communities. Since its inception in 1929 and with a rich history spanning over nine decades, the Institute has consistently championed the highest standards of professionalism, creativity, and ethical practice across the built environment.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Institute appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the revised retention and disposal authority policy and procedures. We believe our contributions will enhance the management of architectural records within the state, ensuring that significant documents are preserved for future generations.

The Institute's [2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#) emphasises our commitment to advancing architecture, supporting our members to be ethical and effective practitioners, and contributing to a sustainable built environment. Our strategic goals align with the objectives of the State Records Authority in several key areas:

- **Collaboration and Communication:** We work collaboratively with stakeholders across government and industry, advocating for robust archival practices.
- **Guardians and Custodians:** As custodians of architectural history, we emphasise the importance of preserving significant architectural documents.
- **Advocacy and Public Interest:** We advocate for the preservation of records that reflect the architectural heritage and public interest.

2 BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS FOR RETENTION

a) Chapter Annual Award-Winning Projects

These records, including sketches, plans, specifications, project minutes, key milestone correspondence, and photographs, are crucial for understanding the evolution of architectural practices and significant contributions by architects. We recommend the retention of these records in both hard and soft formats to facilitate future archival transfers.

b) Chapter's List of Significant Buildings

Project information, including plans, specifications, minutes, correspondence, and photos, should be retained to prevent the loss of important historical data. Examples like the Dupain Photo collection and original plans of St Saviour's Cathedral Goulburn highlight the need for systematic retention policies.

3 TYPES OF RECORDS FOR RETENTION

a) Design and Construction Documentation

Records such as concept sketches, developed designs, tender and construction documentation, and specifications are essential. These documents often feature innovative techniques or materials, contributing to the architectural heritage. For

instance, the method of corrosion protection used at the Sydney Opera House is a significant detail that should be preserved.

b) Project Procurement and Management

Records of project procurement and management, including correspondence, meeting minutes, authority approvals, and site records, tell the story of architectural projects beyond just the physical designs. These documents are crucial for understanding the historical context and evolution of procurement practices.

4 PROPOSED MINIMUM RETENTION PERIODS

We propose that the mentioned records be retained in perpetuity. Digital technology advancements should be leveraged to streamline the receiving, storage, and retrieval processes, ensuring that essential historical records are preserved and accessible.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECORD MANAGEMENT

a) Standardized Formats and Procedures

State Records NSW could develop standardized formats for record-keeping to ensure consistency and facilitate easier archival processes. This would involve collaborating with stakeholders, including the Institute and the Registration Board, to agree on preferred formats and procedures.

b) Stakeholder Consultation and Collaboration

We recommend ongoing consultation with various stakeholders, including Engineers Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, to ensure that the archival processes reflect the diverse needs and contributions of all involved in the built environment sector.

6 CONCLUSION

The Institute is committed to supporting State Records NSW in developing comprehensive and effective retention and disposal policies. We believe that our input, aligned with our strategic goals and the detailed insights provided by our Heritage Committee, will contribute significantly to the preservation of architectural heritage in New South Wales. We look forward to further collaboration and are available for any additional consultations or discussions required to refine these policies.