**Records Management Policy Frequently Asked Questions**

**Introduction**

These frequently asked questions are to be read in conjunction with the Records Management Policy.

**What is a record?**

Every time we put pen to paper, create a document on a computer, write a memo, record official details, send a fax or e-mail we create a record.

There are many types of records, both hardcopy and electronic, that we can create. Examples are:

* disks and tapes
* databases
* photographs and films
* faxes
* correspondence
* memos
* reports
* word processing documents / spreadsheets / presentations
* e-mails
* web pages.

The [*State Records Act, 1997*](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/STATE%20RECORDS%20ACT%201997.aspx) defines a record as:

* written, graphic or pictorial matter
* a disk, tape, film or other object that contains information or from which information may be reproduced (with or without the aid of another object or device).

**What is an official record?**

An official record is defined as a record made or received by an organisation in the conduct of its business.

**Why are official records important?**

Official records are the university’s memory of decisions and transactions across a range of legal, business and social issues. Records are evidence as well as assets. Effective records management minimises risk to the university and enables the provision of an efficient service to the public.

In addition to the legal and evidential role records play, official records also contribute to our State's heritage

**What have records go to do with me?**

All staff with the University of South Australia will create and receive official records. These records provide evidence of actions and decisions to support our daily functions and operations. The records provide documentation of the university's transaction.

**What is records management?**

Records management is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

**Can the university dispose of official records?**

The university needs to ensure that official records are only disposed of in accordance with the [*State Records Act, 1997*](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/STATE%20RECORDS%20ACT%201997.aspx).

Records may be disposed of without breaching the Act:

* by normal administrative practice (NAP)
* where disposal is required by legislation (other than the *State Records Act, 1997*)
* with the approval of General Disposal Schedules 15 (GDS15) and 24 (GDS24).

The unauthorised destruction of or tampering with official records can have serious consequences for any agency and/or individual. Under section 17 of the *State Records Act, 1997*, unauthorised and intentional damage, alteration or disposal of an official record is an offence and fines and/or imprisonment can be imposed.