

Why is good recordkeeping important?

Information is a primary organisational asset that is needed now and into the future. Good recordkeeping underpins the provision of good business information.

Good recordkeeping helps you to find and share the information you need

Your business relies on information. Without it, it cannot function. Good recordkeeping can help you to find the information you need. It promotes the creation of full and accurate records in the first place. It also involves storing and managing records appropriately so that the information will be available to you when you need it. It can also assist you to promote information sharing and collaboration.

Good recordkeeping results in information that can be trusted

Good recordkeeping enables you to trust the information you find. Thanks to proper recordkeeping processes, you can be confident that information has authenticity and integrity, that data is in context, that you will be able to understand past decisions and actions and that the information will withstand scrutiny as evidence.

Good recordkeeping helps you to make sound decisions

If you can access and trust information then you can use it to make more informed decisions and to take appropriate actions. Good recordkeeping helps you to conduct better business.

Good recordkeeping protects you and your organisation from risk

Good recordkeeping can be your proof that you have made considered decisions and taken appropriate actions. Records become your protection if you are questioned or challenged. Without them, you are at risk.

Good recordkeeping can not only protect you but can support your organisation in legal or other challenges. It also protects the rights of your clients and ensures that they have what they are entitled to. Without records, your organisation and your clients are at risk.

Good recordkeeping can also help you to comply with a range of legislation and prevent legal challenges arising. It is a very powerful risk mitigation tool. It also ensures that records are destroyed in a timely way which again mitigates risk.

Good recordkeeping helps you meet your responsibilities for open government

Open government and the proactive release of information, under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, needs to be supported by good recordkeeping. Good recordkeeping will help you to know what information you have and what you can make more openly available.

Good recordkeeping enables information to be reused

Business information that can be found easily and trusted can be repurposed and reused in multiple ways. This creates efficiencies and business advantages. It can help you to maximise scarce resources.

Good recordkeeping can bring you commercial advantage

Good recordkeeping can bring enormous competitive advantages and adds value to your business. For example, information can be repackaged or mined for business intelligence in innovative ways.

Good recordkeeping can save you money

Good recordkeeping also helps you to routinely purge time expired business information and therefore save money.

Good recordkeeping helps to build better business systems

Good recordkeeping involves the proactive identification of information requirements and the configuration of business systems to meet these requirements. Such work can guarantee that the business information can be accessed, used and understood for as long as the business requires it, beyond the life-span of individual business applications.

Good recordkeeping supports long term accountability and sustainability

Good recordkeeping doesn't only support your business now. It also supports it in the future.

With the challenges of media degradation, rapid technological change and the barrage of new formats and applications lacking inherent recordkeeping capability, this task is not easy and requires planning and vigilance.

Some government business information will continue to be needed for a long time into the future. For example:

- information that documents the rights and entitlements of staff and clients will be needed to ensure rights and entitlements are honoured now and in the future
- information about the expenditure of major public funds or the decision making process for major policy developments will continue to be needed by organisations to demonstrate their accountability
- information about the construction of bridges, roads and other public infrastructure will be needed to manage those assets in the future
- key information will continue to be needed to document the rich history of our localities, our states and our nation.

Good recordkeeping ensures that longer term needs for information are identified at creation and that the right information is sustained and remains accessible for as long as it is needed.

Further information

If you are from the NSW public sector contact State Records NSW on email: govrec@records.nsw.gov.au or visit our website at www.records.nsw.gov.au for more information about good recordkeeping.

If you are from another jurisdiction, contact your relevant records and archival authority.

<http://futureproof.records.nsw.gov.au>
Future Proof: protecting our digital future