

Appraisal Policy

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Policy owner:	Manager, Appraisal
Sections of PRA:	s20, s36, s38, s40, s42, s7

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the Chief Archivist's decision making around the appraisal of government records for the purposes of disposal, as required by section 20 of the Public Records Act 2005.

This policy includes:

- a definition of appraisal in the New Zealand government and local authority context
- an outline of the need for appraisal:
 - I. in the context of government and local authority recordkeeping
 - II. for the purposes of determining which records become public archives or local authority archives
- the principles of good records appraisal
- a set of collection objectives which articulate Archives New Zealand's view on what type of records are significant enough to become a public archive or local authority archive.

This policy will be supported by standards, guidelines and procedures that outline the requirements and best practice for the creation, maintenance, disposal and transfer of public records and protected records as issues by Archives New Zealand.¹

2. Scope

This policy applies to the appraisal of all public records, protected records and other records as defined by the Public Records Act 2005:

- a record or class of records, in any form, created or received by a public office in the conduct of its affairs
- any record declared to be a protected record under section 40 of the Public Records Act 2005
- any record covered under sections 36, 38 and 42 of the Public Records Act 2005.

¹ These supporting products are available through the Continuum suite of recordkeeping publications at <http://www.archives.govt.nz/continuum/>

This policy applies to the appraisal of public records or protected records undertaken by:

- Archives New Zealand staff
- public offices and local authorities (as defined by section 4 of the Public Records Act 2005)
- consultants, contractors or persons acting on behalf of a public office or local authority.

This policy does not cover:

- procedures for appraising, acquiring or disposing of public records
- the financial value of records.

Appraisal is a multifaceted activity that is used to support recordkeeping programmes and build archival collections – see section 3.1 for a full definition. However the focus of this policy is on the decision making around which records are determined to be significant enough to become archives.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Definition of appraisal

Appraisal is the process of evaluation to determine whether records are needed by a public office or local authority and how long they should be kept. Appraisal involves deciding which records of an organisation are retained permanently as public archives, and which records are destroyed once the organisation's business and accountability requirements have been met. This is based on analysing the organisation's business activities, while weighing up community expectations about permanent retention of those records.

3.2 The need for appraisal

Public records and local authority records are an important and unique account of the activities of government, and are essential to an accountable and transparent government. However the benefit derived from retaining most records created by government diminishes over time and the cost of storing such records makes it unreasonable and unrealistic to do so. Even in the current electronic environment, with falling digital storage costs, it is an inefficient use of resources to maintain, migrate and make accessible all records created by government. Therefore, appraisal decisions have to be made to determine how long records should be maintained.

Appraisal is also the process through which decisions are made concerning which records are transferred to an archive. To this end, it is a fundamental practice which creates a memory of significant government activities and contributes to the broader collective memory of New Zealand.

As part of a well managed recordkeeping programme, appraisal supports good business practice and contributes to government and societal memory by allowing:

- the identification of the records that need to be created and maintained in a public office or local authority
- the identification of records that need to be retained as an archive
- efficient resource use by not storing records for longer than necessary, and by not migrating electronic records that could otherwise be disposed of
- improved ability to retrieve records of continuing value to the public office or local authority
- the legal disposal of records under the Public Records Act 2005 (s20).

4. Policy Principles

Archives New Zealand acknowledges that appraisal is a process that includes a series of evaluative judgements. It is therefore important to establish principles that guide those making appraisal decisions. These principles also outline some fundamental rules that underpin appraisal decision making.

4.1 Lawful

Care must be taken to ensure the appraisal process identifies and complies with the statutory or other legal obligations for the creation, maintenance and destruction of records. In addition to the Public Records Act 2005, these obligations include (but are not limited to) any financial, company or information laws relevant to the public office or local authority whose records are being appraised.

4.2 Supports accountability and transparency

Records are fundamental to documenting a public office or local authority's decision-making, and measuring its performance and conduct in any specified role or function. The specific accountability requirements of the public office or local authority need to be ascertained and applied to appraisal decisions.

4.3 Responsive to stakeholders

A good appraisal process identifies and considers the rights and interests of all relevant stakeholders, and within reason attempts to ensure the views of stakeholders are taken into account in the decision-making. Care must be taken to ensure that fair consideration is given to the views of different stakeholders.

Stakeholders include (but are not limited to) the management and business units of the public office or local authority, its clients, other public offices or local authorities, Maori advisory groups and other internal advisory groups, and community stakeholders.

Community stakeholders include (but are not limited to) advocacy or interest groups, Maori and other experts who have a particular interest in the records of the public office or local authority.

5.4 Consistent

Appraisal should be undertaken in a planned and systematic manner, following the procedures and requirements established in the standards and guides produced by Archives New Zealand. The disposal criteria used to determine the archival value should be based on the Archives New Zealand Appraisal Standard. The measure of consistency is that if a group of records were appraised under the same circumstances, the same appraisal decision would be reached.

5.5 Considerate of resources

It is unrealistic and inefficient to retain and manage all records created by a public office or local authority. Therefore, appraisal should promote the efficient use of resources so as to not place an unreasonable cost on the public office or local authority (including Archives New Zealand) undertaking of an appraisal or implementing any of its decisions.

5. Selection of Archives²

Public records and protected records are determined to have value as public archives or local authority archives because they either:

- I. document significant activities of government and contribute to the memory of government
- II. relate to something significant that is secondary to their documentation of a government activity. That is, they contain information that relates to special persons, events or phenomena that have significant ongoing national interest and therefore contribute to New Zealand's collective memory.

While government creates large quantities of records that are required to be retained as evidence of activity for a long time, only a very small percentage of these records are needed to be retained permanently as archives. Therefore, records that are selected as

² These statements were adapted for the New Zealand context from the following documents:
National Archives of Australia. (2000). *Why Records are Kept: Directions in Appraisal*
Public Records Office Victoria. (2006). *Appraisal Policy*
State Records New South Wales. (2001). *Building the Archives. Policy on records appraisal and the identification of State archives.*

archives should relate to one or more of the following broad objectives, and meet the appropriate level of significance described in them.

These objectives outline Archives New Zealand's view on what type of records constitute an archive. Each objective includes a description of the related activities of government that are likely to meet the objective and will form the basis of any further guidance developed by Archives New Zealand on the determination of archival value of records.

5.1 Memory objective

To identify and preserve records that substantially contribute to the knowledge and understanding of New Zealand's history and communities.

Public records or local authority records are created and managed in relation to their documentation of a government activity. However, many records have value as archives beyond the initial documentation of a government activity. For example, 19th century records relating to Maori interaction with the Crown, or the records of immigrant ships were initially required as evidence of business transactions, but are now valuable historical records that assist with understanding early race relations and migration patterns in New Zealand.

To meet this objective, records will be identified that have the capacity to substantially contribute to the existing body of knowledge or understanding of aspects of New Zealand's history, culture or people. This includes records that have the highest levels of historical, social, cultural, aesthetic, scientific, research or technical significance.

Some types of records may be kept because a New Zealand community holds them, or the information they contain, in high esteem. This may be evident, for example, from continuing high usage rates or by a community expressing its concerns to Archives New Zealand or its stakeholders.

5.2 Accountability objective

To identify and preserve records that are fundamental to the protection and well being of the community or provide substantial evidence of the condition of the country, its people and the environment and the impact of government activities on them.

To meet this objective, records will be identified that are considered essential for, or that contribute to, the protection, wellbeing, and/or social benefit of current and future generations. This includes records documenting the impact of government activities on the environment, the community or individuals and the interaction of people with the government.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include:

- case files where it is evident that government activity has had significant impact on the lives of individuals or the community
- significant collections and analysis of environmental data
- identification, monitoring and rehabilitation of sites affected by toxic materials
- representation and appeals against the decisions and actions of the government or the legislature
- transactions in relation to the management of natural resources.

5.3 Machinery of government objective

To identify and preserve the best evidence of the source of authority, foundation and machinery of the government of New Zealand and its public sector bodies.

To meet this objective, records will be identified that best document the establishment, structure and function of government and its public offices and local authorities and define the nature and extent of their jurisdiction, obligations and powers.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include:

- passing and promulgating of legislation
- formal instruments or authorities establishing functions, jurisdictions, powers and operations of all levels of government
- judgments or rulings determining the extent of jurisdiction or powers
- agreements between governments.

5.4 Decision-making objective

To identify and preserve records providing the best evidence of the decisions and actions of the government of New Zealand and its public sector bodies relating to important functions, programmes and significant issues faced in governing New Zealand

To meet this objective records will be identified that provide the evidence of key decisions and activities influencing the administration and governance of New Zealand and its people. This includes relevant records documenting the background to, basis for, and outcomes of those decisions and activities.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include:

- formulation and determination of significant policy across the whole of government
- implementation of high level policy and strategic management decisions within public offices and local authorities
- government decisions made in response to Waitangi Tribunal recommendations
- monitoring, analysis and review of policy affecting key government functions
- significant reforms of New Zealand's political and administrative structures
- implementation and review of legislation.

5.5 Rights and entitlements objective

To identify and preserve records providing evidence of the legal status and fundamental rights and entitlements of individuals and groups.

To meet this objective records will be identified that are essential for the establishment and protection of fundamental rights and entitlements of individuals and groups within the community, and the ongoing administration of the government of New Zealand. This includes records establishing the existence of individuals or groups, their rights to participate in the affairs of the government and make claim to entitlements and protection provided by the government.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include:

- registration of births, deaths and marriages
- registration of citizenship
- records of land ownership
- administration of probate.

6. Responsibilities

There are four participants involved with the appraisal of public records and local authority protected records. Within the framework of the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA), each has its own responsibilities.

Public offices

Public offices are responsible for:

- analysing their business activities to determine which records need to be created and maintained and how long they need to be retained to meet their business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations
- identifying and consulting with relevant internal and external stakeholders at an appropriate and pragmatic level on appraisal decisions
- recommending which records should be retained as public archives.

Local Authorities

Local authorities are responsible for:

- analysing their business activities to determine which records need to be created and maintained and how long they need to be retained to meet their business requirements
- seeking authorisation from the Chief Archivist prior to disposing of any protected records (s40(3) PRA)
- identifying and consulting with relevant internal and external stakeholders at an appropriate and pragmatic level on appraisal decisions relating to protected records

Archives New Zealand

Archives New Zealand is responsible for:

- ensuring public offices apply best practice in appraising their business activities and the records for which they are responsible
- ensuring that the appropriate records are retained as public archives
- providing advice and guidance to public office and local authority staff and other stakeholders on the appraisal of government records
- reviewing appraisal documentation to ensure that public records are retained for a period that reflects business needs, organisational accountability and community expectations.

The Chief Archivist

The Chief Archivist is responsible for:

- giving no less than 30 days notice, in a manner they consider appropriate, of their intention to dispose of public records, with a general description of the public records concerned (s20(2) PRA).
- Ensuring that, in accordance with the Crown's responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi, processes are in place for consultation with Maori in relation to the disposal of public records and local authority records (s7 PRA)
- reviewing the recommendations of public offices, Archives New Zealand staff, and the community and authorising the disposal of public records after agreed retention periods have expired (s20(1) PRA).

7. Policy signoff

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Greg Goulding Acting Chief Archivist and Chief Executive	25 / 09 / 2008