#### **What is GDS 20? Source Sheet No. 48**

GDS stands for General Disposal Schedule. GDS 20 is the number given to the General Disposal Schedule that relates to local government authorities in South Australia.

Put simply, GDS 20 regulates how records which no longer need to be available to use at desktops are disposed of – i.e. whether they need to be kept permanently, kept for a specified period of time, or can be destroyed because they are considered to be of no further use.

The Local Government Disposal Schedule (GDS 20) is a document created and issued by State Records to control the disposal of local government records.

State Records is the South Australian government agency charged with overseeing the application of the State Records Act, 1997. The Act authorises State Records to issue disposal authorities that control the disposition of records created and used by all state and local government agencies in South Australia.

Disposal is an administrative activity controlling the status and fate of records. It is the process by which official records of government agencies are ‘sentenced’ to establish how long they need to be kept. It determines whether the records are of permanent value or temporary value or of no value at all.

The disposal process results in the issuing of a series of records disposal actions. These can range from permanent retention, to temporary retention, through to immediate destruction of records.

A Disposal Schedule is an authority issued by State Records that contains a collection of disposal actions relating to particular categories of records. It is a formal document that defines how long particular categories of records should be retained (retention periods) and what should ultimately happen to them.

State Records defines a Disposal Schedule as being

*a systematic listing of records, created by an organisation or agency, which plans the life of these records from the time of their creation to their disposal. It identifies business activities, classes of records (which result from each activity) and specifies retention periods and disposal action. It ensures that in-active records are disposed of efficiently and effectively in accordance with legislative, evidential, financial, social and historical requirements.*

General Disposal Schedules (GDS) cover functions common to a number of agencies. A GDS can be used to sentence those records that provide evidence of generic functions and activities carried out by most agencies e.g. personnel, financial management, strategic management, occupational health and safety, etc.

The State Records Council has approved General Disposal Schedules for State Government Agencies (GDS 15), Local Government Authorities (GDS 20), Native Title (GDS 16) and Ministerial Offices (GDS 18).

General Disposal Schedule No.20 (GDS 20) applies to **all** **records created or received** by any local government authority in South Australia, irrespective of format or media and including all paper-based, electronic, graphic, microform (film or fiche) and audio-visual records

**Disposal Actions**

GDS 20 is arranged into a number of key functions that relate to a council’s functional responsibilities. These functions are in turn divided into a series of discreet activities performed as part of that function. Within each activity various classes of records are identified. These are records that are associated with the carrying out of that activity. The records are given a description and a disposal action based on an appraisal of their ongoing value to the organisation, the community, society at large and posterity.

Disposal actions relate to the record classes arranged under activities. Status of the action is either PERMANENT or TEMPORARY with a disposal trigger and retention period given for all temporary records. It is to be noted that the retention period for temporary records is the **minimum** period.

Some examples of disposal actions are:

**Function 14.16.1** **INFRASTRUCUTRE –** **Compliance** – Records relating to the opening and closing of roads

**PERMANENT**

**Function 12.35.2 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – Employment Conditions** – Records relating to the management of rosters, conditions of flexi-time and taking leave

**TEMPORARY** Destroy 6 years after last action.

**Function 13.63.3 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT – Policy** – Reference material relating to policy matters – Copies of circulars and reports, copies of other councils policies or publications

**TEMPORARY** Destroy when reference ceases

The disposal actions define the length of time classes of records should be kept. Some examples of these actions are:

* Retain permanently.
* Destroy 7 years after date of last action
* Transfer to Archives one year after date of last action.
* Destroy when reference ceases.
* Sample – retain every fifth year permanently.
* Destroy remainder 5 years after last action.
* Destroy 20 years after action completed.

GDS 20 is reviewed, revised and updated every 5 years to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of local government recordkeeping.

**Further Information**

**City Archives:** Topham Mall, off Currie and Waymouth Streets, Adelaide 5000

**Counter / telephone enquiries:** 9**.**00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

**Search Room open for public research:**10.00 am to 4.00 pm Tuesday to Thursday

**Telephone:** +618 8203 7439

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