

# Queensland State Archives record systems



*DR2276 - Government House, Brisbane, 1898*

Research Guide to Queensland State Archives  
record systems

Queensland State Archives (QSA) is the official repository for Queensland Government records selected for permanent retention because of their continuing value. The archived public records are from state government departments, state courts, local government authorities and statutory authorities. The records are in our facility at [Runcorn, Brisbane](#), and open records are available for viewing in the Reading Room, free-of-charge.

### Principles of arrangement

The record systems at Queensland State Archives (QSA) follow two archival principles: the principles of provenance and original order. The term 'provenance' refers to the creator and/or custodian of the records. The term 'original order' refers to the order in which records were created or maintained by the public servants who originally used them. The finding aids to these records are arranged according to the title of the agency directly responsible for their creation and/or collection, and the records are kept in their original order.

To find a particular record, generally the search strategy is:

- identify the government agency which created, kept or is responsible for the record
- identify the relevant series created or kept by that agency (a series consists of records grouped by subject or function)
- identify the relevant item (retrieval is at item level).

The main finding aid for records held at QSA is the [Queensland State Archives' online catalogue](#) (known as ArchivesSearch).

The following citation abbreviations are used throughout our catalogue:

ITM	QSA Item (describes the item)
PR	Physical Representation (generally the original or microfilm copy)
DR	Digital Representation (for a digital image)
S	Series (for a series of records)
A	Agency (for the creating or responsible agency).

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that our catalogue contains images, names and voices of people who have died.**

### Unique item identifier

The arrangement and control of records system, the Australian Series system, was introduced at QSA in 1996. This archival system is based on the identification, registration and numbering of items, series and agencies. It documents the items belonging to each series with item level metadata. Each item within a series is assigned a unique item identifier, or ITM. Previous system numbers formerly used by QSA can also be used to find the item and its unique item identifier.

### Keyword searching

Records in our catalogue are discoverable using keyword searching. Try searching a family name/surname, place name or a subject. This is not an archival search, however, it may open new avenues for searching.

### Other finding aids

The following finding aids are available on the QSA website:

- [Indexes](#) - these online indexes are compiled from series of records held at QSA
- [Research guides](#) – brief guides to particular series or groups of frequently used records

Search procedures are available in the Reading Room, and give step by step instruction to guide researchers.

### Access categories

Many records at QSA are open for the public to access, however, some records are subject to restricted access periods to protect the privacy of individuals. This information is visible in the [ArchivesSearch](#) catalogue and the date the restriction expires will be noted if the record is subject to a restricted access period. If a record is restricted you may apply for permission to access. You can make your application through [ArchivesSearch](#). Access to restricted records permission is granted at the discretion of the responsible agency.

### Digital records

Some open records have digitised copies available in [ArchivesSearch](#). To view the digital copy, follow the links to view the digital representation.

### Staff assistance

Researchers in our Reading Room may request assistance from the Archivist on duty in the Reading Room. For all other enquiries, researchers can refer to [our website](#) or [contact us](#).

### Useful tips

QSA has developed a number of resources to assist researchers, including:

- [Youtube videos](#) – watch the QSA *Using ArchivesSearch* videos to learn how to create an account in ArchivesSearch, search for records and request access to restricted records
- [ArchivesSearch Help Guide](#) – view the user guide for catalogue search tips

### Need more information?

Check our online catalogue [ArchivesSearch](#).  
Phone us on (07) 3037 6777 or you can [email](#) an archivist.