

2.00 What is a Record?

A record is any recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity. (Ellis (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 477)

Each Congregational Group and Presbytery creates and collects all kinds of records but there are records that are uniform to most Groups.

- Minute Books, Agendas and meeting papers
- Reports - annual and committee
- Correspondence and Memos
- Financial records- cash books, ledgers, journals,
- Annual reports
- Newsletters- magazines, church bulletins, orders of worship (weekly and special)
- Rolls/Registers, - Marriage, Membership – communicant, adherents and pastoral, Baptism, Service, Cradle Roll, Sunday School, Youth Groups
- Personnel Files
- Legal documents
- Property – maps, plans, architectural drawings, building specifications, contracts
- Jubilee and centennial celebration records: minutes, correspondence, registration forms, photographs, ephemera, financial records, audio/video recordings,
- Databases and Reports
- Projects
- Published resources
- Photographic images
- Audio
- Scrapbooks, ephemera and artefacts

These records may be created and conserved in a variety of formats. The same information maybe retained in several different formats:

- Hard copy
- Electronic - word processing, database, web page
- Micrographs
- Computer floppies,
- CD's
- Photographic images
- Video and audio tapes

NOTE:

Ownership of records:

Information that is created and retained in hard copy or electronic files produced by congregational courts and organisations and Presbyteries and its associated groups, or ministers and pastors employees/Conveners/Co-Directors in order to carry out their function as employees of the PCANZ is the property of the

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Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Such information is not the property of any of the above groups or people to use, remove, retain personally, or destroy at will.

Members of the congregational courts and organisations, Presbytery personnel and other appointed personnel are the custodians of the documents they retain. Preserving Presbyterian cultural heritage cannot be done without involving its custodians

In 1985 the General Assembly ruled that:
No church records held by any church body, parish, presbytery officer, or official be gifted, disposed of in any manner with the concurrence of the Historical Records Committee [Archivist]

Significant and vital records:

It is important to recognise what records are vital to the on-going life of the parish or presbytery. If a church building burns, destroying the entire record of a congregation, the congregation would undoubtedly find a way to continue. However, it would face overwhelming inconvenience and its understanding of its heritage would be weakened.

Each congregation and presbytery should determine what records would be vital to its continued operation following an emergency. Remember that copies of many types of records will exist elsewhere e.g. with Inland Revenue, Insurance Company, Banks, PCANZ Office.

Really vital parish records, such as baptismal registers, should be photocopied and stored in the PCANZ Archives.

Rule of Thumb: Could you easily re-establish congregational life without the particular record?