Government of South Australia

State Records of South Australia

Adequate Records Management - Implementation Plan

Guideline

October 2012

Version **2.4**

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Introduction

The *State Records Act 1997*, section 16 states that "If the Manager [Director] [of State Records] is of the opinion that the records management practices of an agency are inadequate, the Manager [Director] is required to report the matter to the Minister".

Scope of this guideline

Implementation Plan provides a generic plan for implementing an adequate records management program.

This guideline applies to agencies within as defined in section 3 of the *State Records Act 1997* which includes State Government agencies, Local Government authorities and Universities.

This guideline is issued as a guideline in accordance with section 7(g) of the State Records Act. Agency records management practices need to progressively achieve the identified outcomes.

Resources

Resources supporting the implementation of this Guideline include:

- *Adequate Records Management Standard* – a standard that outlines the outcomes for an adequate records management regime, which agencies need to satisfy if their records management programs are to be considered adequate in accordance with section 16 of the State Records Act.
- *Assessment and Audit Guideline* – a guideline which outlines the program of assessment and audit agencies are required to undergo. The Guideline details the two part assessment and audit program established by State Records; self-monitoring by agencies and formal monitoring of agencies by State Records. The Guideline includes a toolkit to help agencies work through the process.
- Information Sheets – these provide further advice and detail about each of the adequate outcomes.
- Training – State Records of South Australia provides agencies with access to online records management awareness training. In addition to this, State Records has a number of face to face records management training courses available.

Statement of adequate records management

Ultimately, adequate records management is an overarching framework for the South Australian Government. It signifies a records management regime for both state and local government agencies.

Although section 16 of the State Records Act only refers to inadequate records management practices, State Records has defined this as the failure by agencies to meet the following adequate records management outcomes.

Adequate records management outcomes

To address issues both operationally and strategically, State Records has adopted *eleven* Adequate Records Management Outcomes for government, namely:

- official records are created
- official records are captured
- official records are disposed of systematically
- access to official records is managed
- official records can be found
- official records can be relied upon
- the management of official records is planned
- records management training is provided to staff
- records management reporting mechanisms are implemented
- policies, procedures and practices exist for the management of official records
- records management resources are implemented.

These outcomes, which are further defined in the *Adequate Records Management Standard* and the *Assessment and Audit Guideline*, cover the broad spectrum of good records management practices.

Achieving adequate records management

State Records recognises that an assessment program is required to ensure that agencies are achieving the above outcomes. This process is detailed within the *Assessment and Audit Guideline*. A summary of the process is provided below.

The assessment program is made up of two related parts:

1. Self-monitoring by agencies which includes:

    - four yearly completion of an online records management assessment survey;

    - development of action plans establishing incremental improvement, and;

    - reviews of agency practices.

2. Formal monitoring of agencies by State Records which includes:

    - completion of agency audits by State Records, and;

    - formal surveys of agency practices following receipt of a complaint or where an issue has been brought to the attention of the Director, State Records.

Variation to this guideline

State Records may update or alter the *Implementation Plan* from time to time. All such updates and alterations shall be authorised by the Manager [Director] of State Records, in consultation with the State Records Council. All South Australian agencies shall be informed of any such alterations or updates.

Methodology

The proposed methodology below is based on current accepted practice[1] for the implementation of a records management program. Such a methodology is sufficiently flexible and generic to be applied by various government agencies[2]. The methodology consists of *four* main stages—preliminary investigation, design and testing, implementation, and post-implementation review.

For agencies that have existing programs in place this document can be used also as a guide for reviewing and assessing the viability of such programs.

Current issues

- The adequate management of official records is not widespread within the South Australian Government.

- There is a lack of consistent policies and guidelines for the management of official records.

- Staff are not fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to official records.

- There is a need for the strategic management of official records, as well as sufficient corporate planning and resourcing.

- Official records of permanent value are at serious risk.

- Official records are not fully and effectively utilised as part of the Government's corporate knowledge.

Desired outcomes

- The introduction of adequate records management for official records will support accountability, limit risk and encourage compliant business processes across Government.

- Government employees will be aware of their records management responsibilities with regard to official records.

- Official records will be considered an important component of the information asset held by Government.

- An organisational culture will be developed that supports adequate records management practices for official records.

- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of records management practices for official records will be put into effect.

- Executive endorsement of good records management practices for official records will occur.

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[1] The suggested methodology is consistent with and based upon *AS ISO 15489-2002Records Management*; *Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems* [DIRKS] (National Archives of Australia and the State Records Authority of New South Wales).

[2] Agencies as defined in section 3 of the *State Records Act 1997*.

Implementation Plan

Managing the process

To put the proposed implementation plan into effect it is recommended that a team of at least two or three core members be established to coordinate and conduct the project. The team members, as a minimum, should have experience in records management and project management as well as excellent communication and consultation skills.

It is also recommended that either a steering committee or executive sponsor be established to whom the project team can report progress and deliverables on a regular basis.

Throughout the project, the project team should regularly consult with relevant stakeholders and staff in order to receive input into and feedback on the progress and outcomes of the project. Such consultation is vital in ensuring effective participation and ownership across the whole agency.

The 4 stages of implementation

The recommended implementation strategy consists of four main stages:
- preliminary investigation
- design and testing
- implementation
- post-implementation review.

Each stage is divided into a number of tasks and suggested deliverables to demonstrate completion of such tasks are included. The documentation requirements outlined in the plan are consistent with those contained in the *Adequate Records Management Standard* and the *Assessment and Audit Guideline*.

The implementation strategy is based on current accepted practice[3] for the implementation of a records management program. The implementation strategy proposed outlines *minimum* steps that should be taken by agencies in implementing a records management program.

Such an implementation needs to be adequately resourced in terms of funding, time and staff and should be formally recognised within the business planning process.

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[3] The methodology is consistent with and based upon *AS ISO 15489-2002 Records Management*; *Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems* [DIRKS] (National Archives of Australia and the State Records Authority of New South Wales); *Adequate Records Management Standard* (State Records of South Australia).

Stage One: Preliminary Investigation - gathering information

Once gathered the information from the preliminary investigation stage is relevant for various records management purposes on an ongoing basis. The contextual information can also be used for wider information management strategy implementation.

Task 1: Determine context

This requires a review of documentary sources such as annual reports, business plans of both the department as a whole and of individual business units, organisation charts, strategic plans, mission statements, policies and procedures, establishment documentation, service charters and intranet sites.

Interviews with relevant staff and stakeholders may also be required.

In reviewing such sources it needs to be determined:
- What is the legal framework of the agency?
- Who are the stakeholders whose interests the agency needs to take into account?
- For what types of services or products is the agency responsible?
- What is the structure of the agency and what is the business activity of each of its business units?
- What business, social and ethical standards are expected of the agency?
- What is the corporate culture of the agency?
- What factors affect the agency's recordkeeping practices?

Deliverable
- A register of sources consulted, together with notes from each source.
- Documentation of legislative and administrative requirements with records management implications.

Task 2: Conduct business functions and activities analysis

Understanding the business of the agency will help the project team to understand the records that are produced as a result of transactions executed by the agency.

The project team will need to identify:
- the broad functions the agency undertakes to support its goals and strategies
- the activities which comprise the agency's functions
- the groups of recurring transactions or processes that comprise these activities.

Defining a hierarchy that illustrates the relationship between the organisation's functions, activities and transactions is referred to as 'functional analysis' or a 'top-down' approach.

Deliverable

- A flow chart that illustrates, in a hierarchical manner, the broad goals and strategies of the agency, its functions (or main operations), its activities (what is done to carry out the functions) and its transactions (what is done to carry out the activities).

Task 3: Map business processes

Another tool resulting from the analysis of business functions and activities is a map of the organisation's business processes. Such an analysis may have already been conducted as part of a business process re-engineering exercise.

This map shows the points at which records are produced. Having determined *what* the agency does, a process analysis will look at *how* the work is conducted within the agency. It also demonstrates *where* and *when* records are generated or should be generated.

Deliverable

- Flow charts that illustrate the flow of the processes, where records are or should be produced and by whom.

Task 4: Determine recordkeeping requirements

The project team needs to determine what chain of evidence is required, through policies, guidelines, standards, and/or legislation, to substantiate a sequence of decisions or actions. This includes documentation specific to the agency as well as Whole-of-Government requirements set out by State Records or other policy-setting bodies.

Much of this information is likely to have been gathered during Tasks 1 and 2.

Deliverable

- A requirements matrix that documents the recordkeeping requirements of the agency.

Task 5: Assess existing systems

Having identified recordkeeping requirements for the agency these can be applied to existing systems to determine to what degree the current practice satisfies the requirements.

In assessing existing systems it should be determined to what extent they enable the creation, capture and control, access and disclosure, disposal, and storage of official records.

Deliverable

- A report that includes an analysis of how well existing systems meet the agency's recordkeeping requirements and a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing systems with regards to the principles of adequate recordkeeping.

Stage Two: Design & Testing

Task 6: Develop policies, guidelines and procedures

The agency needs to have in place policies, guidelines and/or procedures for the following:

- records creation, capture and disposal (including retention and destruction)
- access to records in the custody of the agency, in the custody of private storage providers and in the custody of State Records
- the disclosure of information within records
- records location control (including on and off site storage)
- the alteration of records
- record version control
- disaster recovery
- identification of vital records
- records security
- the validation of records[4].

Such documents should cover all official records and record formats.

In developing specific policies, guidelines and procedures the agency should refer to relevant State Records' Whole-of-Government records management standards and guidelines.

Deliverable

- Policies, guidelines and procedures endorsed by Senior Executive and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Corporate records management plan.
- Records management component in agency business and strategic plans.

Task 7: Develop support tools

To supplement and enable the practical application of policies and guidelines the agency needs to have in place or develop the following support tools:

- a business classification scheme
- a function-based thesaurus
- operational records disposal schedule/s.

Additional support tools that the agency can implement include:

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[4] Taken from Outcome 10 of the *Adequate Records Management Standard* (State Records of South Australia).

- appropriate records management software
- intranet site.

Deliverable

- A business classification scheme, operational records disposal schedule/s and function-based thesaurus endorsed by Senior Executive and State Records and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Other support tools as appropriate to the agency's specific records management needs.

Task 8: Allocate responsibilities

The project team will need to define authorities, roles and responsibilities for the capture, control, disposal, access and storage of official records. This should include mapping the relationships between management, end users, records managers, and systems administrators.

Deliverable

- A matrix outlining the roles and responsibilities of different groups of personnel within the agency, which is in turn supported by policies and procedures, developed in Task 6.

Task 9: Develop conversion plan – No deliverable

Each agency needs to determine which conversion method is most suitable. The possible methods include a pilot operation, direct changeover, parallel operation or phased changeover. In determining suitability the agency needs to consider manageability, levels of risk, ability to measure performance and effectiveness, availability of time and resources, size and complexity of agency. A conversion is necessary to:

- test the comprehensiveness and useability of the proposed or revised policies, procedures and guidelines
- test support tools
- assess user satisfaction, understanding of new or revised roles and systems, and success rating
- determine degree of compliance and accuracy concerning the new or revised methods for the management of official records.

Task 10: Assess and fine tune the conversion

Undertake any remedial action following on from the trial conversion prior to rollout across the rest of the agency. This includes making any required changes to:

- the system/s
- procedures, guidelines and policy documentation
- support tools
- methods of attaining user awareness, understanding, and compliance.

Stage Three: Implementation

Task 11: Develop and communicate implementation timetable

An implementation timetable for the progressive rollout across business units needs to be developed and communicated to staff. Such communication can take place via an intranet, newsletter, staff meetings or visits by the project team to each business unit. The implementation timetable needs to be endorsed by the Senior Executive and this communicated to staff.

Deliverable

- Implementation timetable.

Task 12: Consult with users

Even though consultation will have taken place on regular occasions throughout Stages 1 and 2, users should be informed of the timetable, and support confirmed before rollout commences. All affected employees need to be advised.

Task 13: Distribute policy statements

Distribute the adopted policy statements developed in Task 6. These should already have been endorsed by Executive. The statements may be distributed via intranet or in hardcopy or both. A formal announcement or launch of the endorsement of the new policy statements should be made.

Deliverable

- Endorsed policy statements circulated and available to staff.

Task 14: Distribute guidelines and procedures

Issue guidelines and procedures developed in Task 6 via identified channels. This should be done as soon as possible after the distribution of the Policy Statements.

Deliverable

- Endorsed guidelines and procedures circulated and available to staff.

Task 15: Train staff and establish support systems

Induction training should be devised and conducted for all relevant staff. This training may be provided internally or by external contractors. The training would be progressively offered to the various business units in accordance with the implementation timetable developed in Task 10. Initially training may be provided as face-to-face groups with each business unit. Online training and self-help may then be provided as ongoing support. Such training is necessary before the new guidelines and procedures can be formally instituted.

Deliverable

- Identification of training needs in corporate records management plan.
- Development of necessary training materials.
- Provision of training appropriate to various staff.

Task 16: Establish performance measures

Establish a regime for performance measurement of systems, for end user awareness and compliance and for effectiveness of new policies, guidelines, procedures and support tools. Actual measurements regarding quality, quantity, timeliness and cost for performance testing would also need to be developed.

Deliverable

- Set of performance measurements that can be used for regular reporting.
- Reporting templates to support reporting regime to senior management.

Task 17: Develop a maintenance plan

This need should be largely fulfilled by the development of specific policy, guidelines and procedures conducted in Task 6 as well as by performance testing using measures developed in Task 16. In addition, a hand over process is needed to identify what staff will be responsible for the various aspects of managing the records management program once the project team is disbanded.

Deliverable

- Maintenance plan.

Task 18: Progressively roll-out

Following the distribution of policies, guidelines and procedures, the training of staff and the development and distribution of the implementation timetable, new or revised recordkeeping system/s, support tools, and practices can progressively 'go live' across the various business units.

Stage Four: Post-Implementation Review

Task 19: Interview management and staff/conduct surveys

Following rollout, conduct interviews with management and staff and/or conduct surveys to determine user satisfaction, compliance and understanding.

Deliverable

- Collation of data from interviews/surveys.

Task 20: Observe and measure effectiveness

Collect and analyse performance data based on performance measures developed in Task 16, assess the performance of systems, review quality of capture and storage of official records, then devise and initiate corrective action.

Deliverable

- Report that provides details of the findings from Tasks 19 and 20.

Task 21: Evaluate the new program

After a defined period from implementation, review policies, guidelines, procedures, support tools and the training program, and continue to document and report on findings.

Deliverable

- Reports of post-implementation review findings and corrective actions.

Glossary

State Records has produced an extensive Glossary of Records Management Terms. This can be accessed and downloaded from the Adequate Records Management, publications section of the State Records website, http://www.archives.sa.gov.au