



Adequate Records Management - Monitoring & Reviewing

Outcome 3: Records management is monitored and reviewed

Agencies must monitor and review their records management performance in order to ensure progressive improvement. Key performance information must be reported to senior management, who must ensure it is reviewed and acted on regularly.

The monitoring of records management performance within agencies is critical to understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of agencies' records management programs. Improvements in performance can be achieved only when an agency is accurately informed about its current performance. It is therefore important that performance information is used to improve, shape and refine the existing records management program.

State Records' records management assessment survey provides the basis for monitoring and review of agencies' records management performance. This survey tool should be supplemented by agency specific benchmarks and key performance indicators, and results of any reviews should be reported to senior management who act promptly to redress any shortcomings.

How can my agency meet the requirements of Outcome 3?

Records management impacts on all business areas of state and local government agencies. A regular reporting regime should be implemented to enable the monitoring and reviewing of records management performance within an agency.

- Records management performance should be monitored and measured against established benchmarks.
- Reporting should take place at regular scheduled intervals (weekly, monthly, annually) using a variety of tools and reports provided to senior management.
- Action plans should be developed using the results of the benchmarking to ensure the agency's records management performance improves.
- Responsibility should be assigned to appropriate individuals or groups for the monitoring and reviewing of records management, and support for these activities should be sought from senior management.

What are the benefits of regular monitoring?

Substantial benefits can be gained through regular monitoring and reporting:

- quality control of the records management program, ensuring it is working accurately and efficiently
- continuous improvement of records management processes
- continued senior management support, sustained by regular updates on developments, processes and other aspects of the records management program
- identification of strengths and weaknesses in the records management program, which when addressed will result in improved management of records and improved delivery of services to the community and government
- identification of policies and practices that need development or revision
- identification of training needs

What process does monitoring and reviewing follow?

Under the *Adequate Records Management Standard*, senior management is required to receive regular updates on the agency's records management performance.

Performance monitoring is usually conducted on routine and established records management functions. However, there may be occasions when special monitoring is required where failures or deficiencies in the records management program are evident.

The monitoring and review of records management performance should adhere to the following six steps.

1. Set performance objectives

Performance objectives, or key performance indicators (KPIs), are set and monitored to understand how successful a records management program is. For example:

- full and accurate official records are created
- official records are captured into recordkeeping systems
- records are stored securely and protected from unauthorised access, alteration, deletion or loss
- both physical and digital records are disposed of in line with authorised procedures
- the records management program is applied to all areas of the agency
- business systems that create and capture records have been identified
- business systems that capture records have been assessed for recordkeeping functionality.

2. Develop performance measures

Performance can be assessed using both quantitative and qualitative measures. However, agencies should ensure that the time and resources are available to collect and analyse the data, and make use of the results. The most effective strategy is to incorporate monitoring into routine operations.

Different types of performance measures are used to measure economy, efficiency and effectiveness. For example:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cost per file created• cost per record managed• cost per record retrieval |
| Efficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• speed of retrieval and delivery of records from storage• enquiries completed within x hours• number of complaints |
| Effectiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• satisfied customers• proportion of new users• recordkeeping system/s and business systems meeting recordkeeping requirements• outsourced service providers meeting performance requirements |

Performance targets should be set that are achievable, measurable and time-limited. For example:

- 95% customer satisfaction
- x boxes of hardcopy records sentenced
- \$x reduction in storage costs due to the disposal of hardcopy records

3. Collect data

Collecting data about performance should be integrated with regular activities of the records management program.

The method of collection should be relevant to the type of information collected, quantitative or qualitative. For example, surveys can provide both qualitative and quantitative data/information, whereas system monitoring provides quantitative data. When using tools such as surveys agencies should make sure that the purpose is clearly defined, well understood, and happens only as often as is necessary. Other methods are:

- focus groups
- enquiries
- observation
- file audits
- interviews
- informal feedback

State Records conducts across government surveys on recordkeeping such as the annual holdings survey and the assessment survey, which occurs every four years. The results of those surveys can prove useful for agency planning.

4. Analyse results

Agencies should analyse the information collected by checking results against current performance targets. Comparisons between current results against the performance in previous years can identify trends in performance.

If agencies are identifying poor performance results, they should analyse the relevant elements of the records management program to determine the cause. Agencies should be aware that sometimes the real causes can be beyond the control of the program.

5. Report and implement performance results

Strategies should be identified to address gaps in the records management program and the causes of problems. These may be 'quick wins' or may need to be factored into the agency's longer term planning.

Agencies should report performance results to management. This information will be useful in securing management support for activities that may require resources for change management activities or upgrading tools. It will also provide the opportunity to link to planning, as objectives for the records management program should be closely aligned to higher level corporate objectives.

6. Review

By reviewing monitoring activities, focus on relevant aspects of recordkeeping and the records management program can be maintained. As an agency changes and the records management program develops, requirements for performance data will change.

Regular reviews of records management programs can serve to establish and enforce approved practices and behaviours. This will result in quick identification of inconsistencies and/or irregularities and corrective measures being instituted.

Reviews will identify short-term and long-term trends that will be useful in demonstrating improvements or causes for concern. This relies on consistently measuring the same activities using the same criteria over a period of time.

Further information

Adequate Records Management Standard, State Records of South Australia

State Records has produced a number of Standards, Guidelines and Recordkeeping Information Sheets relevant to the monitoring and reviewing of official records. Please refer to the State Records website.

State Records acknowledges use of *Guideline 19: Monitoring Recordkeeping Performance* issued by State Records NSW www.records.nsw.gov.au in the development of this advice.

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