



## Adequate Records Management - Introduction to the Standard

State Records of South Australia is responsible for the administration of the *State Records Act 1997* (the Act), which sets the foundation for good records management by agencies in South Australia.

Under section 16 of the Act, State Records is responsible for reporting instances of inadequate records management practices to the Minister. In order to meet this obligation State Records has established the *Adequate Records Management Standard* (ARM Standard), which defines what constitutes adequacy in relation to records management within agencies.

### What are the benefits of Adequate Records Management?

Benefits of adequate records management practices include:

- improved control of valuable information assets
- cost savings
- informed decision making
- increased accountability and transparency
- improved business continuity planning
- improved access to and sharing of information
- better use of resources including staff time, physical and server space.

### How is the *Adequate Records Management Standard* structured?

The ARM Standard is made up of six records management outcomes, set against five levels of achievement and supported by benchmarks which summarise the compliance requirements at each achievement level.

The Standard is supported by the *Adequate Records Management Standard Matrix* (the Matrix). The Matrix breaks each outcome down individually, detailing the specific criteria agencies need to meet to satisfy each level of achievement.

### What are the records management outcomes?

The six records management outcomes are inter-related and combine to form a comprehensive and structured records management program. The outcomes have been designed to provide a practical records management framework for agencies, and are a clear indication of State Records' expectations in regards to adequate records management.

The outcomes are divided in to business outcomes which centre on the supporting framework of a comprehensive records management program; and operational outcomes which have a practical focus and cover the management of records from creation to disposal.

#### Business outcomes

1. Records management is planned. Records management must be governed and planned in a strategic manner, incorporating the development and implementation of plans, policies and procedures.

2. Records management is resourced. Agencies must employ skilled and experienced records management staff, allocate appropriate budgets and ensure that staff are provided with records management training appropriate to their responsibilities.

3. Records management is monitored and reviewed. Agencies must track 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.

### **Operational outcomes**

4. Records are created, captured and controlled. Official records must be created, captured and controlled in accordance with legislative and business requirements.

5. Records are secure and accessible as appropriate. Agencies must ensure that official records are protected from unauthorised or unlawful access, and that measures are in place to prevent loss, damage and destruction. This must be balanced with the need for official records to be readily accessible to authorised persons.

6. Records disposal is managed. Official records must be disposed of in accordance with legislative and business requirements.

### **What are the levels of achievement?**

Each records management outcome is made up of five levels of achievement, which are designed to be progressive. Agencies must demonstrate that they meet the criteria at each level before they can advance to the next. The progressive nature of the model enables agencies to move up through the levels of achievement in a logical manner, putting plans in place to address the criteria at each level as they progress.

For agencies to be regarded as adequate for the purposes of the Act, they must achieve a minimum of level four across each of the six outcomes.

Level 5: Best Practice. The agency manages records as an asset underpinning all business processes. The records management program is regularly monitored, reviewed and amended to ensure continuous improvement.

Level 4: Adequate. The agency has implemented a comprehensive records management program and manages records consistently and corporately. There is evidence of some forward and strategic planning for records management.

Level 3: Defined. Recordkeeping functions and activities are defined and documented. The foundations of a record management program are in place, but further implementation is required.

Level 2: Documented. There is evidence of support for records management at a senior level within the agency; however a records management program has not been defined.

Level 1: Ad hoc. Basic recordkeeping processes are undertaken; however there is no formal or systematic approach to records management.

### **What are the records management benchmarks?**

Records management benchmarks have been developed for every level of achievement within each of the six outcomes. The benchmarks provide summary statements which outline in broad terms what an agency must have in place to satisfy that achievement level. The benchmarks are supported by detailed assessment criteria which appear in *State Records' Assessment and Audit Guideline*.

### **How is performance against the Standard measured?**

Agencies' performance against the Standard is measured through State Records' assessment and audit program, as detailed in the *Assessment and Audit Guideline*. The

assessment and audit program consists of two related parts; self-monitoring by agencies and formal monitoring of agencies by State Records.

## What support is available for agencies?

- State Records has published various Standards, Guidelines and Recordkeeping Information Sheets designed to assist agencies to achieve adequacy in relation to the six records management outcomes.
- State Records' Government Recordkeeping team are available to provide advice regarding the implementation of the *Adequate Records Management Standard*.
- State Records' Government Recordkeeping team provides practical advice, support and consultancy to agencies on a range of recordkeeping matters.
- State Records provides training to agencies on various aspects of recordkeeping.

## Further information

*Adequate Records Management Standard and Matrix*, State Records of South Australia  
Recordkeeping Information Sheets:

- *Adequate Records Management – Planning*
- *Adequate Records Management – Resourcing*
- *Adequate Records Management – Monitoring and Reviewing*
- *Adequate Records Management – Creation, Capture and Control*
- *Adequate Records Management – Security and Accessibility*
- *Adequate Records Management – Disposal*

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

## Version control

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