

Introduction: a state of risk?

This is the first survey of agencies conducted under the State Records Act 1997. It provides a snapshot of records management practices in the State Government. Similar surveys will be conducted annually.

The response rate exceeded 90%, quite remarkable for an exercise of this nature, and in itself an indication that records management is taken seriously by virtually every part of the State Government. However, it is clear from the responses that this attitude is not pervasive throughout departments: good records management has its champions, but they are not yet common at a level to influence executive commitment.

One indicator of this variable commitment is in the extent to which the mandated records management software, RecFind, has penetrated the State Government. This survey reveals that approximately one third of respondents have implemented RecFind, one third are using another records management software product (probably pre-dating the decision to mandate RecFind, late in 1995), and one third do not have any records software at all. Implementing a tool like RecFind requires a substantial investment from the agency - in terms of both hardware and (more importantly) of attention to converting (and upgrading as appropriate) current records management systems, and providing training opportunities for staff.

Another indicator of this variable commitment is the uncertainty about who should participate in this exercise. A whole-of-Government approach to records management is highly dependent on departments having a single, clearly identifiable position of responsibility over corporate records, information and knowledge. As this evolves, the costs of poor records management practice will cease to be a buried overhead, and the benefits of good practice more readily understood and desired.

Who has made this exercise successful? The project team of archivists, Michelle Brown, Simon Froude, Janet Newman and Jennifer Scott led by Samantha Farnsworth, have done well, and Samantha deserves special mention for her overall management; likewise, Rachel Burke for her administrative assistance. The survey benefited from the interest taken in the survey design from Dorit Beck at the Archives Authority of New South Wales, who was generous in sharing that State's experiences over the past two years with similar surveys. Likewise, I appreciate the input into the survey design given by Bernadette Bean (Transport, Department of Transport, Urban Planning & the Arts), Lorraine Van Gemert (South Australian Health Commission, Department of Human Services), Steve Childs (Education, Training & Employment, Department of Education, Training & Employment), Helen Francis (Housing & Corporate Development, Department of Human Services). To get input from agencies is crucial, since it is there that the questionnaire has to make sense. And finally, and most important, I am very grateful to those many people in the agencies who responded.

Michael Hodder
MANAGER OF STATE RECORDS
27 March 1998

Background

The State Records Act was proclaimed on 31 October 1997. Section 15 of the Act enables the Manager of State Records to conduct surveys of the official records and record management practices of agencies as reasonably required for the purposes of the Act, and agencies must afford the Manager reasonable cooperation and assistance in the conduct of such a survey.

In January 1998 a project team of five archivists was established to develop, distribute, and report upon a survey of official records of the ten departments of the South Australian government. The survey adopted the wide-ranging definition of "official records" given in the State Records Act. However, the *scope* of the survey was less than that prescribed in the Act. The Governor and all Ministerial offices were intentionally excluded from this particular survey, but will contribute to later surveys. Local government authorities were also excluded: a separate exercise will be conducted for them later this year.

The main objective of the Survey is to provide key strategic information to assist State Records in discharging its obligations under the State Records Act. The Survey is specifically *not* a formal assessment of specific agencies' records management practices and performance, and responses from individual agencies were treated as confidential.

The timing of the Survey coincides with other State Records initiatives. In particular a strategic facilities plan, a review of the initial (1993) edition of the General Disposal Schedules for State Government Authorities of South Australia, the formulation of policies on electronic records management, as well as a whole-of-government records management strategy being developed. This follows a report prepared in January 1998 by a consultancy group on behalf of the South Australian Government.

Methodology

Design

The 1998 South Australian Government Records Survey draws inspiration from two sources -

- ◆ the New South Wales Government Records Management Survey developed by the Archives Authority of NSW; and
- ◆ an internal records management survey conducted by the Administration Transition Task Group of the Department of Administrative & Information Services in late 1997.

The Survey focuses on three key areas -

- ◆ documenting current electronic records management;
- ◆ understanding how disposal of official records is being managed by agencies; and

- ◆ identifying the volume of records within agencies and the implications of this on costs to Government as a whole (and how these might be reduced) and for State Records' future accommodation needs in housing and managing official records.

Before agency-wide distribution, a draft of the Survey was sent for comment to records management representatives within the South Australian Government, as well as to the Archives Authority of New South Wales. Where possible or relevant, comments on the draft were incorporated into the final version of the Survey.

The final version of the Survey consisted of a written questionnaire of 29 questions, 26 of which were multiple choice and three of which required a prose response. Such questions were divided into three broad sections -

- ◆ general;
- ◆ paper records; and
- ◆ electronic records.

At the end of each section, participants were given the option of providing further details if they wished to elaborate on any of their answers.

In addition, participants had the option of providing responses relative to either their central office area and/or any regional/remote units or offices of their agency.

The final version of the Survey questionnaire also included an introduction, outlining the purposes and scope of the Survey, and a glossary of terms.

Conduct of the Survey

On 3 February 1998, 104 copies of the 1998 South Australian Government Records Survey questionnaire, along with a cover letter and participant list, were distributed to key personnel within state government agencies. Key personnel had previously been identified via telephone contact with each targeted agency.

In addition to the Survey being sent directly to key agency personnel for response, a separate letter, summarising the purpose, scope and importance of the Survey, was forwarded by the Chief Executive of the Department for Administrative and Information Services and to the ten Chief Executives of the other nine departments within the South Australian Government.

Agencies were asked to complete and return the Survey questionnaire by 27 February 1998. With the distribution of the Survey, agencies were provided contact details of the Survey Project Team in the event that they required any assistance interpreting the questionnaire or completing a response.

Half way through the allotted response period, the Survey Project Team contacted by telephone every agency that had been forwarded a Survey to confirm receipt of the questionnaire and inquire whether the respondent perceived any problems or issues. Further telephone calls were made in instances where agencies had not completed all the questions or had failed to return the Survey by the 27 February. A number of agencies negotiated an extension up to a further fortnight.

The internal records management survey units of the Department for Administrative and Information Services in December 1997 closely aligned to this exercise. Accordingly, responses gained in that survey have been factored into the analysis within this report.

Responses to the Survey and all telephone enquiries or follow-ups were tracked and collated using an Excel spreadsheet. Raw data was checked to ensure consistent interpretation of questions. The collation of all responses is included in this report.

Response

104 copies of the 1998 South Australian Government Records Survey were sent to various state government agencies. A breakdown of the number of surveys sent to each department within the South Australian government, including the survey conducted within the Department of Administrative & Information Services, is given below:

Department or Agency	No. of Surveys Distributed	Return Rate
Department of the Premier & Cabinet	6	83%
Department of Industry & Trade	7	100%
Department of Treasury & Finance	2	100%
Department of Justice	22	95%
Department of Human Services	27	89%
Department for Transport, Urban Planning & the Arts	18	67%
Department of Education, Training & Employment	3	100%
Department for Environment, Heritage & Aboriginal Affairs	3	100%
Department of Primary Industries & Resources	5	100%
Department for Administrative & Information Services	11	100%

As at 15 March 1998 the Survey has had an overall rate of return of 93%, with a balanced representation from both larger and smaller agencies.

Certain agencies responded at both the central and regional/remote levels, while others only responded at either the central or regional/remote level.

Details of the agencies participating are given in the attached appendix.

Analysis

This section provides the results of each question from the Survey in tabulated and graph form. Analysis and interpretation of certain responses and trends is also provided.

Figures within this report are reliant on the ability of agencies to provide accurate information and interpretation of the questions.

Percentages included within this report are based on data received from respondents by 15 March 1998. There were three surveys returned after this date that could not be included in this analysis.

Percentages for Q1.1 and Q2.7 have been calculated by number of survey respondents. Percentages for all other questions are based on the number of responses given, to take into account instances where individual participants provided multiple answers.

SECTION 1: GENERAL

Question 1.1

Please provide a copy of your agency's most current organisational chart.

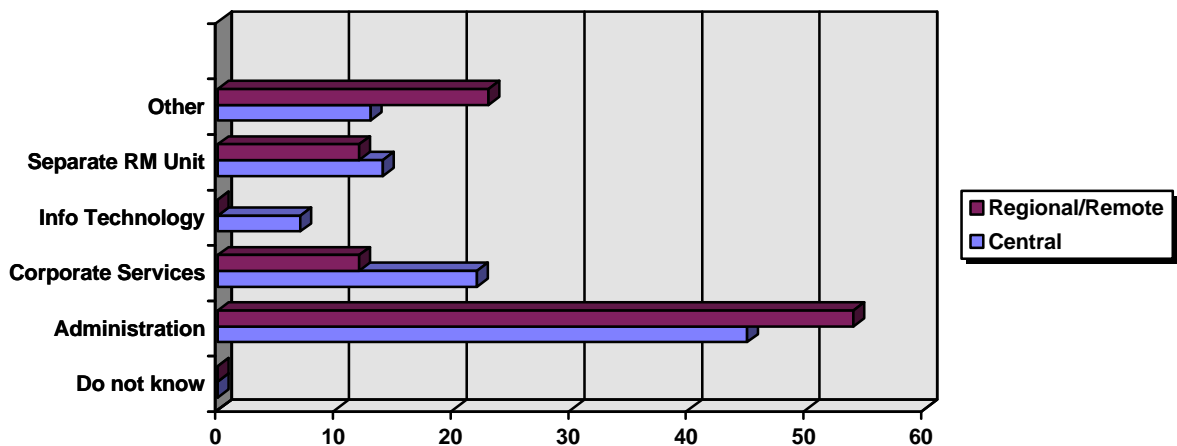
Overall, 75% of participants provided a copy of their agency's current organisational chart. A number of agencies advised that they were unable to provide such information due to major organisational restructuring following the State election in October 1997 and the reorganisation of the public sector under the umbrella of ten super departments. Some respondents provided no indication of why they did not include a chart.

Participants were advised in the Survey that State Records needed this information in order to update its agency database. In addition, to be aware of the current functions and structure of an agency as a whole (as opposed to the functions and structure of the particular unit/s assigned records management responsibilities).

Question 1.2

What area of your agency is primarily responsible for records management?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	Nil	Nil
Administration	45%	54%
Corporate Services	22%	12%
Information Technology	7%	Nil
Separate Records Management Unit	14%	12%
Other	13%	23%



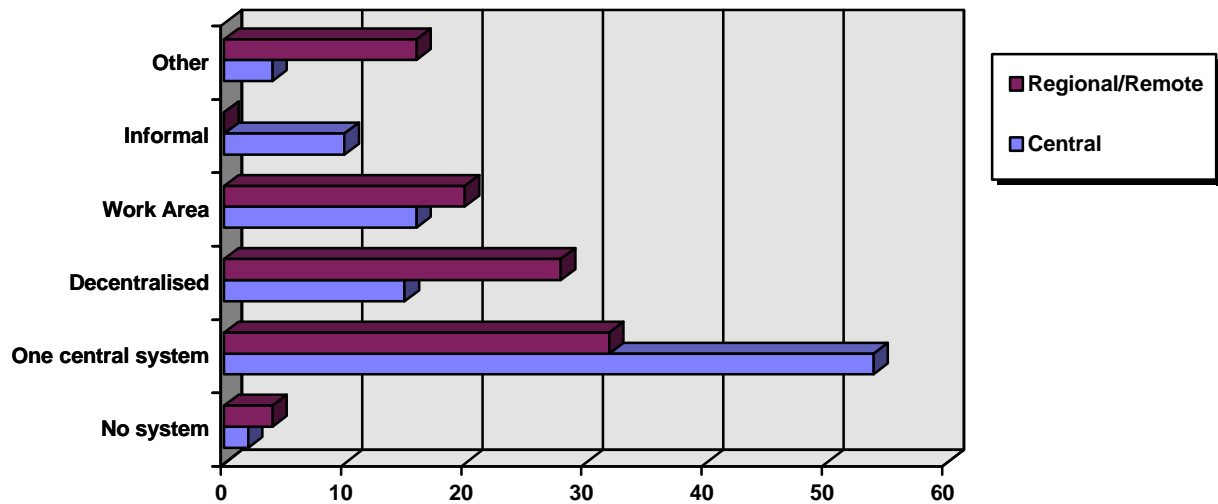
In relation to Q1.2 some participants ticked more than option, indicating that a number of areas within their agency had certain records management responsibilities.

Administration is still overwhelmingly responsible for records management within state government agencies.

Question 1.3

How do you perceive the recordkeeping system/s within your agency?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
No system	2%	4%
One central system	54%	32%
Decentralised	15%	28%
Work Area	16%	20%
Informal	10%	Nil
Other	4%	16%



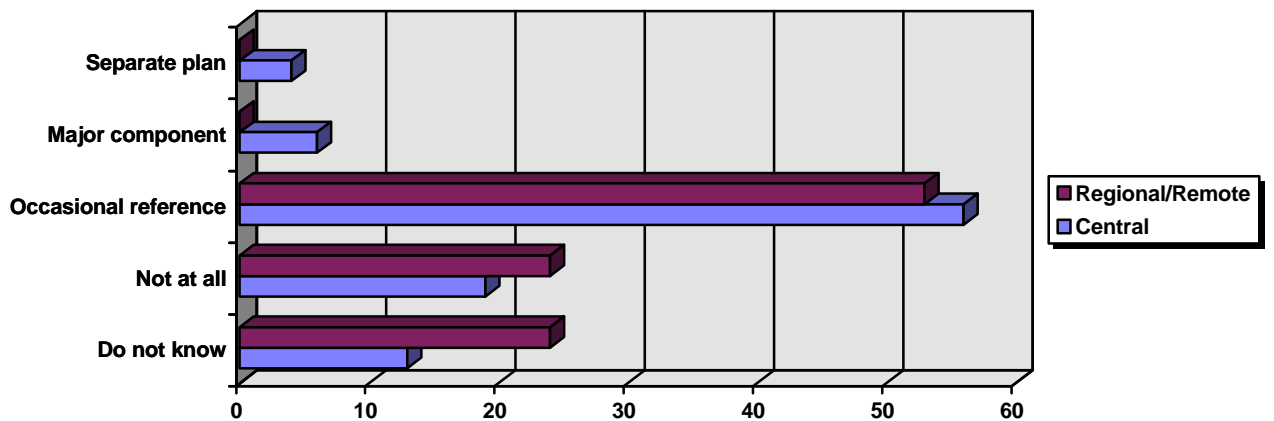
Most participants ticked more than one option for Q1.3, and in many instances ticked both one central system and decentralised. This is likely to be a result of agencies maintaining multiple recordkeeping systems, at personal, workgroup and corporate levels. Regional/remote sites have a lower perception of relating to a central recordkeeping system than central sites

However, the striking result from this question is the low perception *overall* of records management as a central, corporate system. If a similar question were asked about financial or human resources management systems, the percentage of “one central system” responses would certainly be much higher than 54%.

Question 1.4

How does records management relate to your agency's overall strategic and business plans?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	13%	24%
Not at all	19%	24%
Occasional reference	56%	53%
Major component	6%	Nil
Separate plan	4%	Nil



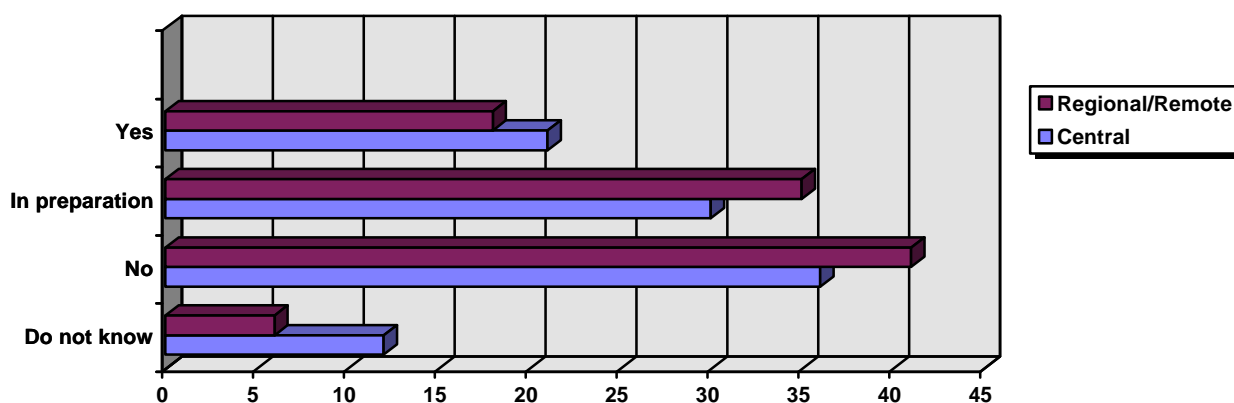
In the case of both central area and regional/remote units, “occasional reference” to records management within agencies’ overall strategic and business plans was the majority response.

However, only 6% of central responses were records management is a “major component” of overall strategic and business plans and only 4% were “separate plan”. For regional/remote offices or units, no agency gave the response of either “major component” or “separate plan”. This, however, may be the result of a general perception that strategic plans are only developed at the corporate or central level.

Question 1.5

Are there documented policy statements for your agency's records management, paper and/or electronic?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	12%	6%
No	36%	41%
In preparation	30%	35%
Yes	21%	18%

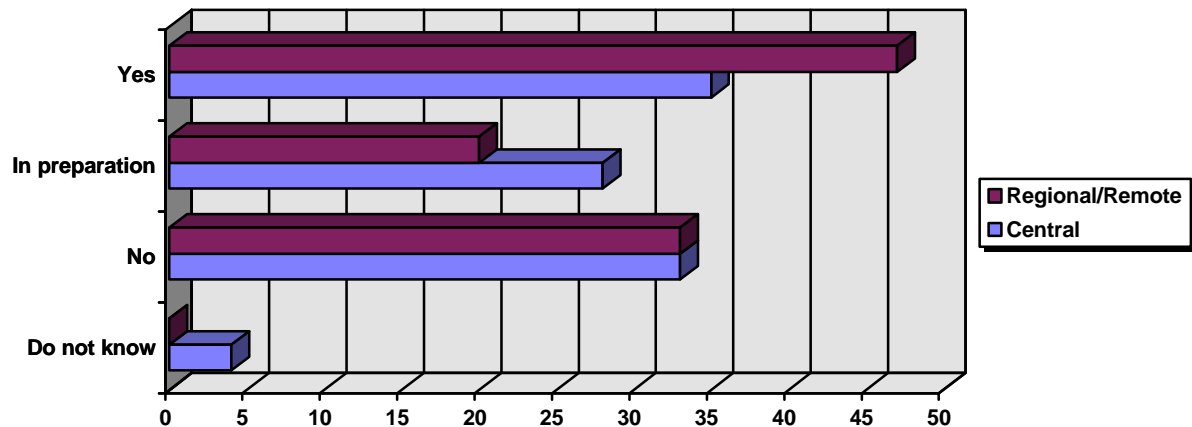


At both the central and regional/remote level, agencies predominantly do not have documented policy statements for either their paper or electronic records management. Policy statements "in preparation", however, was given as a response in a considerable number of instances.

Question 1.6

Are there documented records management user procedures or guidelines for your agency?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	4%	Nil
No	33%	33%
In preparation	28%	20%
Yes	35%	47%



While records management featured less at the strategic/corporate level, the majority of responses given show that agencies either had user procedures and guidelines or were preparing such procedures and guidelines.

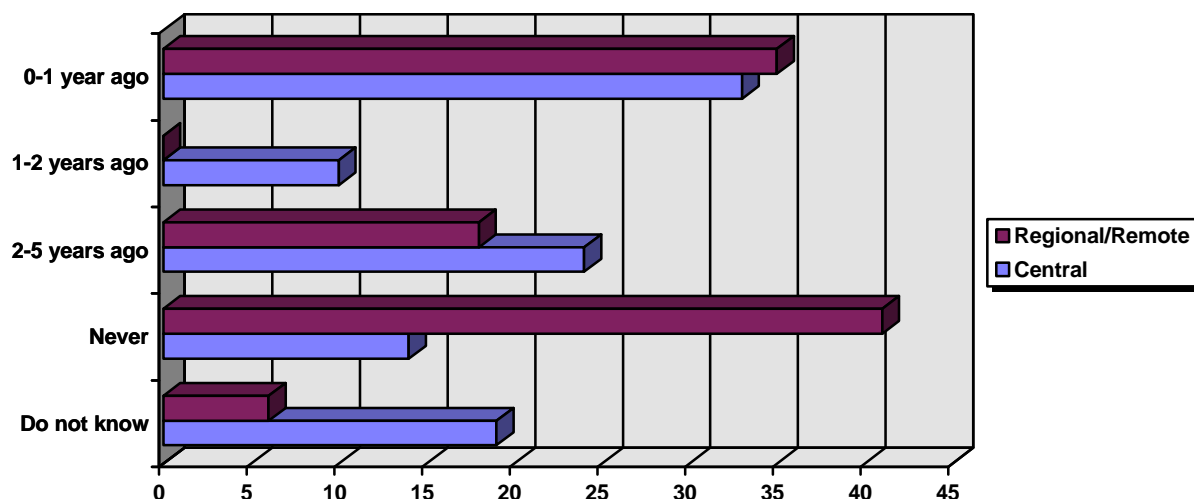
Where participants responded that their agency did have user procedures or guidelines, they were asked to provide copies of such documentation. These procedures and guidelines covered such topics as - mail handling and correspondence procedures, e-mail, movement and tracking of files, maintenance of corporate documents and files, handling of confidential material, access and security, specific responsibilities of records management officers, records and agency accountability, handling of Cabinet submissions, disposal, ownership, and storage.

A number of procedures and handbooks related to specific software packages, eg RecFind, and the different uses of these with regard to specific aspects of records management, eg mail registration, file tracking, indexing, etc.

Question 1.7

When was a review last undertaken to measure your agency's level and performance of records management, either paper and/or electronic?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	19%	6%
Never	14%	41%
2-5 years ago	24%	18%
1-2 years ago	10%	Nil
0-1 year ago	33%	35%



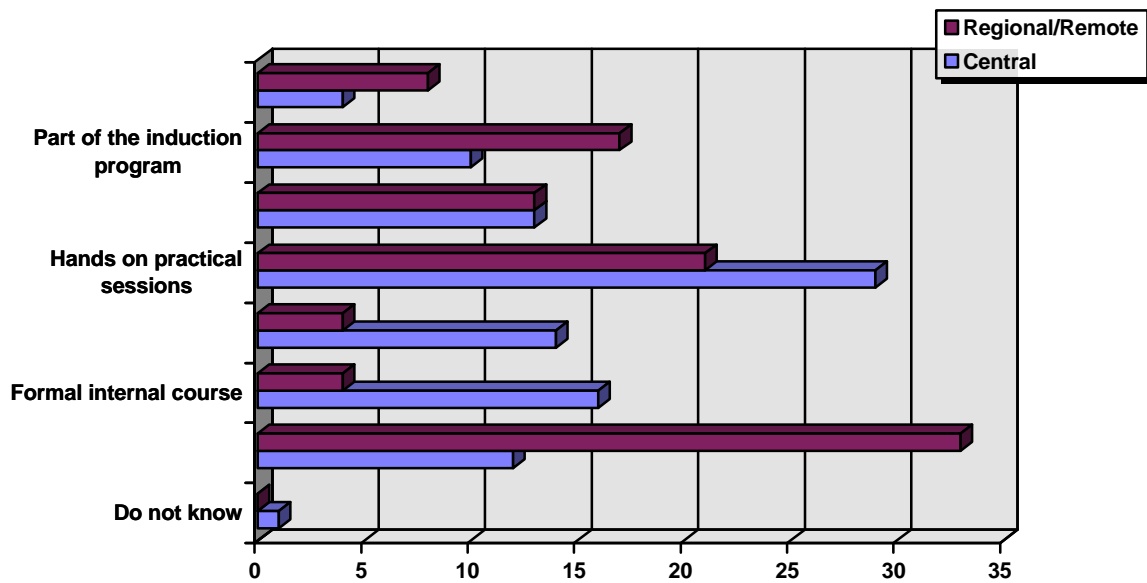
A number of participants that gave the response of '0-1 year ago', elaborated that their agency's records management was currently undergoing a review process.

The above table shows a disparity between central and regional/remote sites with regard to the degree to which reviews have 'never' been conducted.

Question 1.8

What training in recordkeeping practices and procedures is provided to all agency staff?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	1%	Nil
None	12%	33%
Formal internal course	16%	4%
Formal external course	14%	4%
Hands-on practical sessions	29%	21%
Internally produced publications	13%	13%
Part of induction program	10%	17%
Other	4%	8%

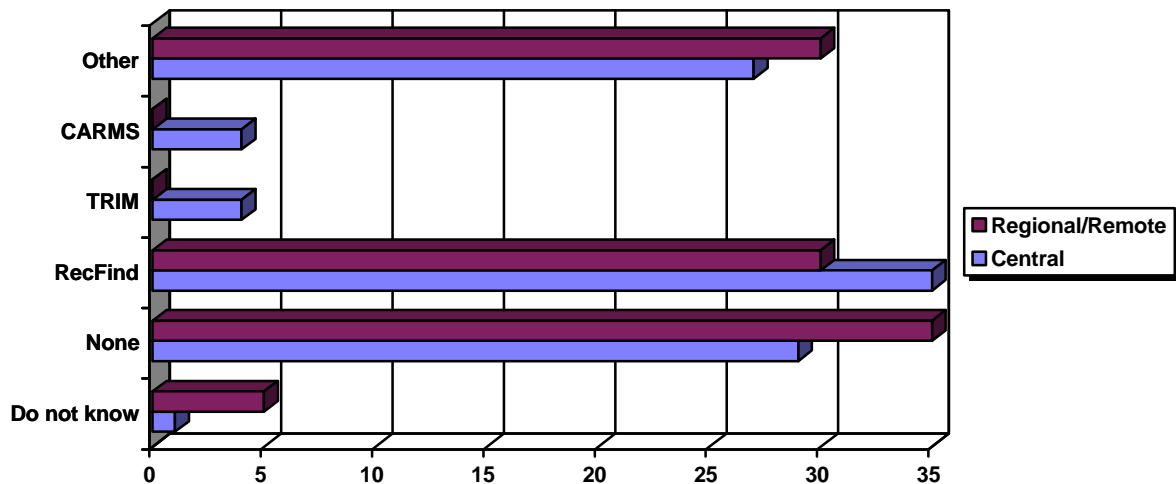


In the case of central areas within agencies, informal training in the form of ‘hands-on practical sessions’ was the predominant response. However, in the case of regional/remote sites, while there is a greater emphasis in including training as part of the induction program, the most common response was ‘none’. Formal training opportunities are rare in regional/remote sites, but they are modest even within central locations. There are a number of possible reasons for this. State Records has not provided much formal training over the last few years; there are few short or long duration courses available through educational or training institutions within South Australia; and limited resources exist within agencies for records management training due to it being considered a low priority.

Question 1.9

What records management product/s does your agency use?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	1%	5%
None	29%	35%
RecFind	35%	30%
TRIM	4%	Nil
CARMS	4%	Nil
Other	27%	30%

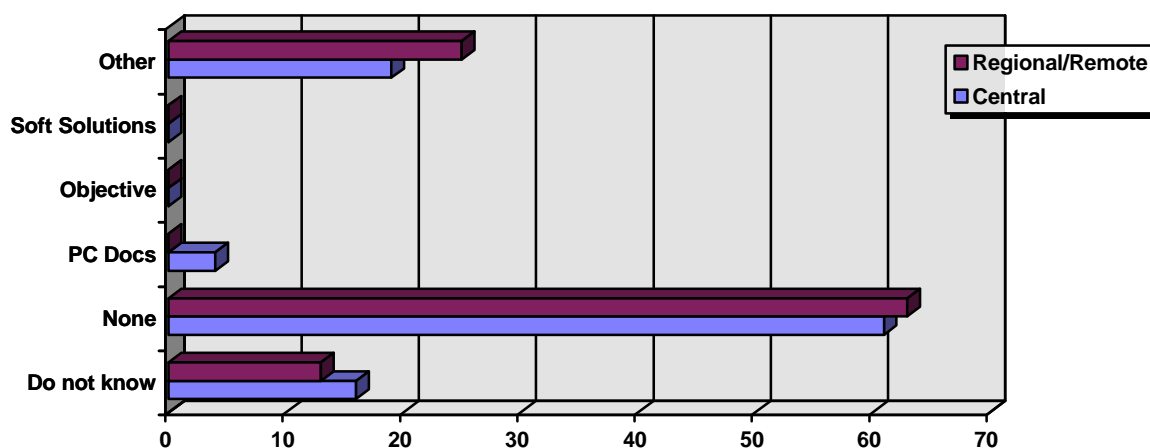


Despite RecFind being a mandated system within the state government, “RecFind” only made up one third of the responses. A similar proportion of responses was ‘no product in place’, although a number of participants commented that they were in the process of implementing a system, and in most of these cases the system was RecFind. A further third of responses indicate that products other than RecFind are being used by agencies. These seem likely to have been purchased prior to the mandating of RecFind in 1995.

Question 1.10

What document management product/s does your agency use?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	16%	13%
None	61%	63%
PC Docs	4%	Nil
Objective	Nil	Nil
Soft Solutions	Nil	Nil
Other	19%	25%



As can be seen from the table and graph, most agencies do not use any kind of document management product.

There is some uncertainty within agencies over the differences between records management products and document management products. This was reflected where participants answered 'Other' and then elaborated that RecFind was the document management product that they used.

SECTION 2: PAPER RECORDS

Question 2.1

Please provide an approximate metreage of all your agency's official paper-based records.

Figures provided by participants equate to approximately **117 437 metres** of records.

This figure is certainly a *considerable* under-estimate: a number of agencies did not return a survey response; some agencies which responded did not answer Q2.1; some agencies did not include record holdings in their regional or remote sites; some respondents included the metreage of their correspondence systems only.

The figure excludes records already housed at State Records.

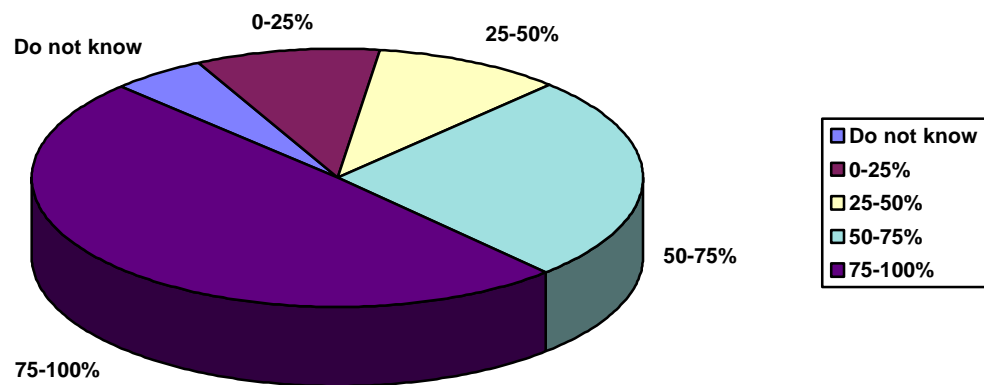
The actual figure is likely to be two to three times more, i.e. 200,000 to 300,000 metres. While the questionnaire did not look for information on non-textual records such as maps and plans or photographs, some agencies did provide detail of plans, microforms, etc in their metreage.

This suggests the costs to Government for housing and servicing paper-based records are even higher than that calculated during the 1994 feasibility study of a whole-of-Government records management project.

Question 2.2

What percentage of all your agency's official paper-based records are stored inhouse/onsite?

Response	Percentage
Do not know	5%
0-25%	10%
25-50%	10%
50-75%	26%
75%-100%	50%



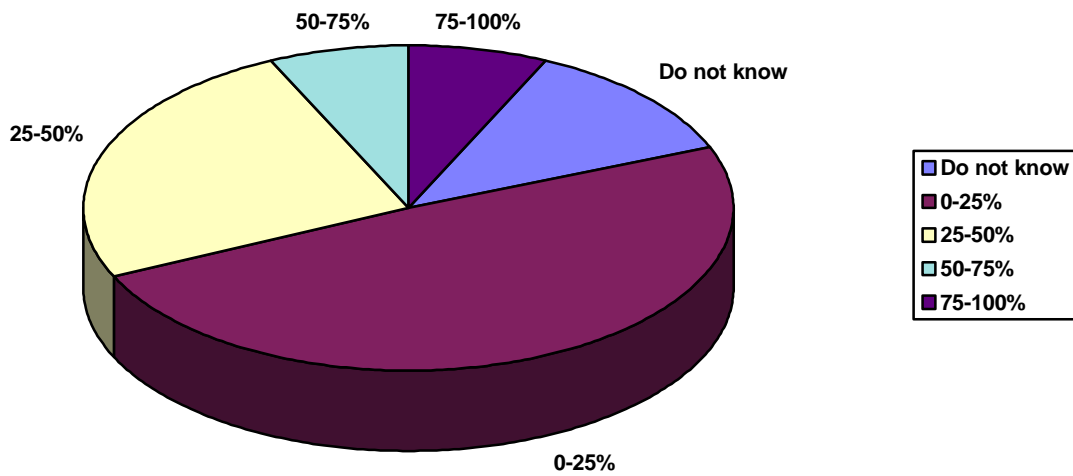
The level of agencies storing all their records inhouse/onsite is high. Inefficiencies in storage will be occurring if agencies are maintaining inactive or over-due for destruction records within office or CBD space.

It also has major implications on State Records accommodation requirements and ability to provide storage, given that it currently houses approximately 70 000 metres of both permanent and temporary records and that its two repositories are near capacity.

Question 2.3

What percentage of all your agency's official paper-based records are stored off-site?

Response	Percentage
Do not know	12%
0-25%	49%
25-50%	25%
50-75%	7%
75%-100%	7%

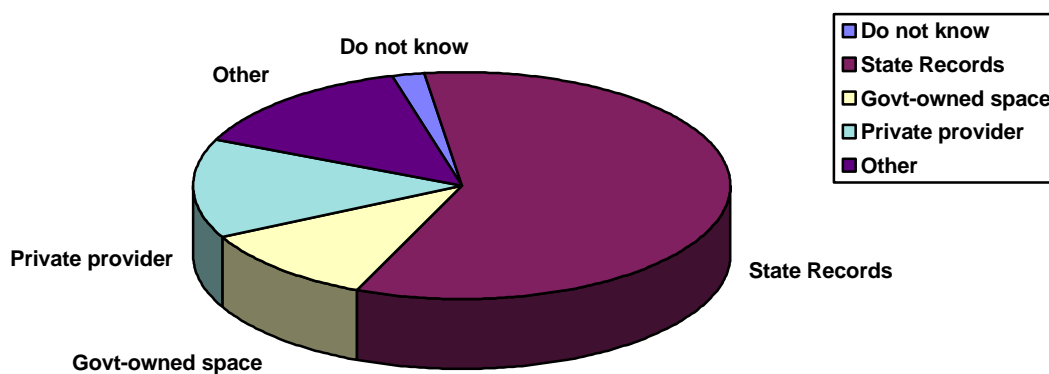


This correlates with the previous question.

Question 2.4

If you store official paper-based records off-site, which of the following do you use?

Response	Percentage
Do not know	2%
State Records	58%
Government-owned space	11%
Private Provider	14%
Other	14%



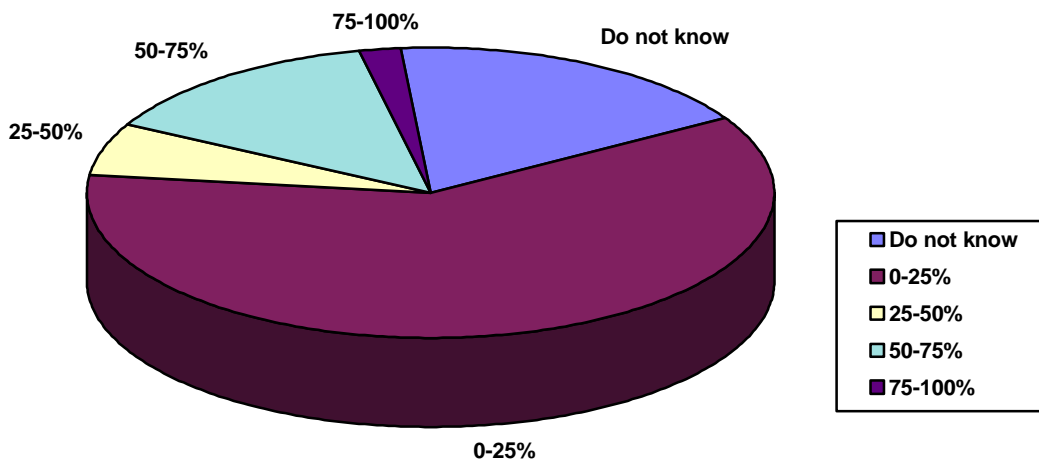
The majority of 'Other' that do not use off-site storage.

State Records has a high utilisation rate among agencies compared with private sector providers.

Question 2.5

What percentage of all your agency's official paper-based records are inactive and/or older than fifteen years?

Response	Percentage
Do not know	18%
0-25%	61%
25-50%	6%
50-75%	14%
75%-100%	2%



The majority of response for '50-75% is inactive or older than 15 years' came from the court-type agencies.

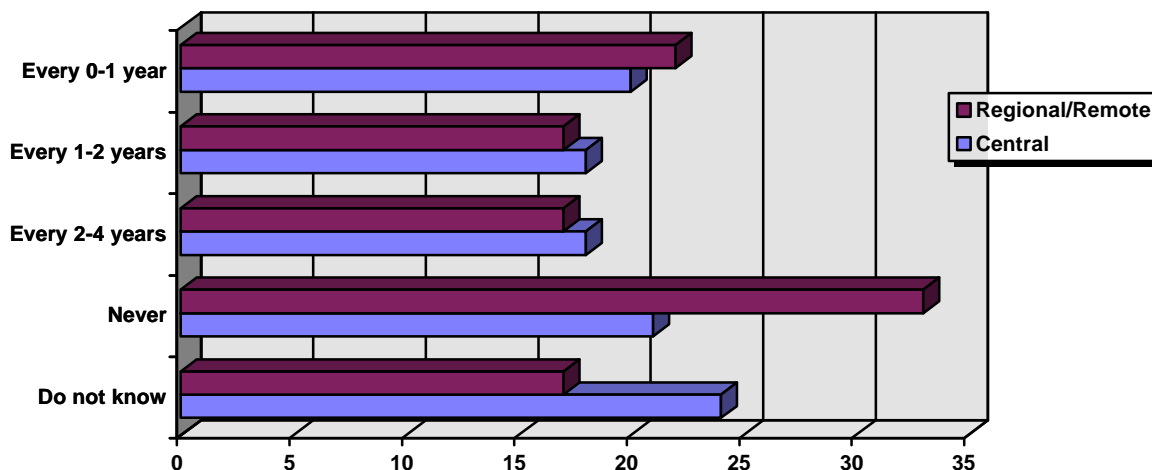
While this question does not directly enable a calculation of the extent of records which are inactive and/or older than fifteen years, the clear impression is that the bulk of records held by agencies are active and/or less than fifteen years old.

Question 2.6

How often are the General Disposal Schedules [GDSs] applied to your agency's housekeeping/common records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	24%	17%
Never	21%	33%
Every 2-4 years	18%	17%

Every 1-2 years	18%	17%
Every 0-1 year	20%	22%



The profile of the GDSs is too low: 45% of central responses and 50% of regional/remote site responses show that either agencies never applied GDSs or it was not known whether or not GDSs were used.

This situation highlights a significant risk. Agencies are either disposing of records illegally or are not disposing at all. The former has serious accountability and liability implications, while the latter is inefficient in terms of both monetary costs and inability to easily access relevant and/or required information. However, changes in departmental organisation, and staff turnover within records management areas in particular, produce a loss of corporate memory. It may be that GDSs were applied soon after they were issued (in 1993), but there is now no recollection of this being done, nor any record made which is now obvious and accessible to inform those currently with responsibilities for records management.

Question 2.7

What Records Disposal Schedules [RDSs] currently exist for your agency? Please provide RDS Number and/or date when RDS was approved by Libraries Board.

Only 26% of respondents provided actual details of RDS numbers and or date/s when an RDS was approved by the Libraries Board.

9% of respondents advised that they were currently in the process of having disposal schedules drafted or having the overall process of disposal reviewed.

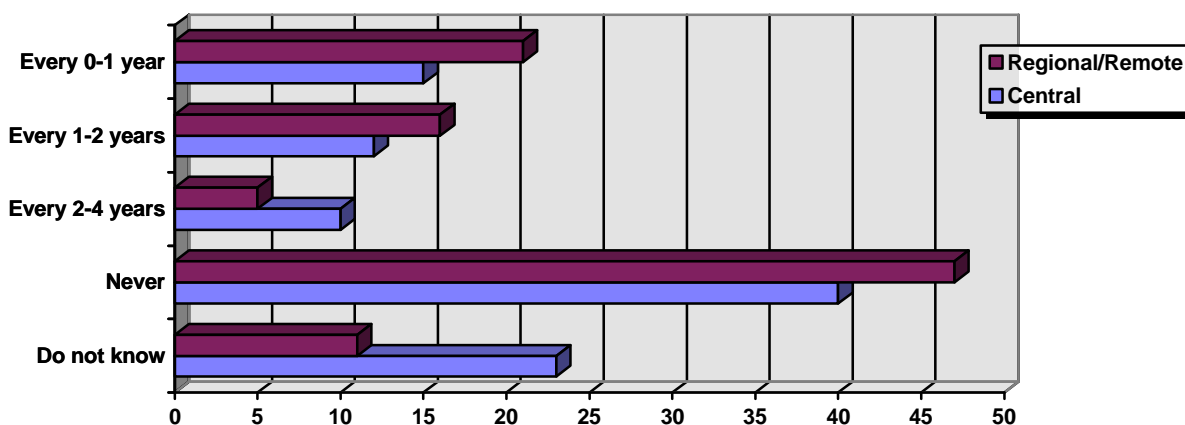
14% of participants answered that no Records Disposal Schedules existed for their particular agency. 16% responded 'not applicable'. 6% of respondents advised that they used the General Disposal Schedules for all their records, indicating either a misapplication of the GDS to functional records or the non-existence of operational records within some agencies.

RDSs represent a considerable investment by agencies and State Records to provide for the disposal of operational records that are agency specific and beyond the scope of the GDSs. The responses show an inadequate coverage of these disposal authorities.

Question 2.8

How often are Records Disposal Schedules [RDSs] applied to your agency's operational/functional records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	23%	11%
Never	40%	47%
Every 2-4 years	10%	5%
Every 1-2 years	12%	16%
Every 0-1 year	15%	21%

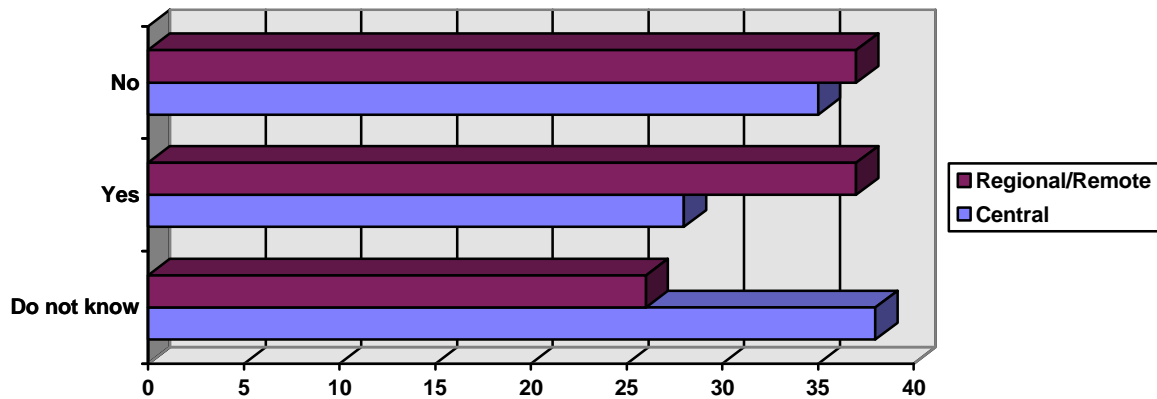


This correlates with Q2.7 that emphasised the lack of awareness of the purpose and/or existence of RDSs demonstrated by a number of respondents.

Question 2.9

Do you think existing GDSs and RDSs fully cover your agency's official records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	38%	26%
Yes	28%	37%
No	35%	37%

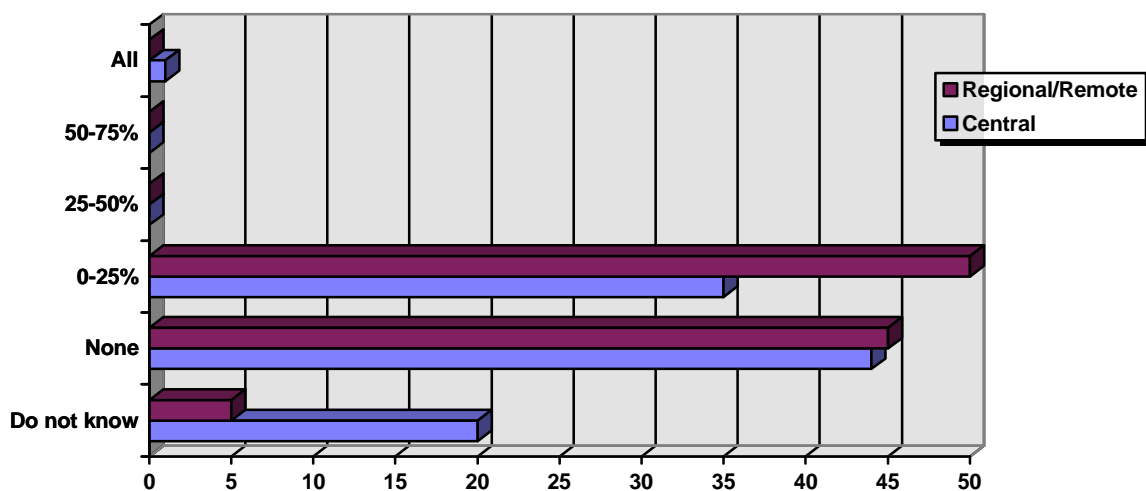


There is a high level of uncertainty in agencies about the adequacy of coverage of official records by GDSs and RDSs.

Question 2.10

How many staff have been provided training, formal or informal, in the use of the GDSs and/or RDSs?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	20%	5%
None	44%	45%
0-25%	35%	50%
25-50%	Nil	Nil
50-75%	Nil	Nil
All	1%	Nil



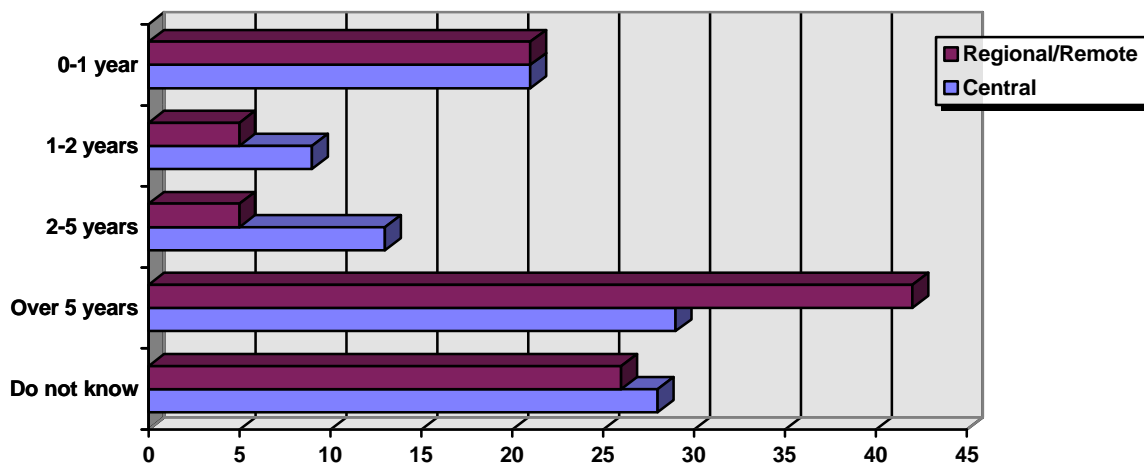
The extent of training in GDS is markedly less than the reported usage. So in a number of agencies GDSs are being applied despite a lack of training, formal or informal and agencies are running the risk of inappropriately sentencing records. The lack of training may be a factor in the 45% of “do not know” or “never” responses to Q2.6.

SECTION 3: ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Question 3.1

How long has your agency been registering or applying records management to official records created electronically?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	28%	26%
Over 5 years	29%	42%
2-5 years	13%	5%
1-2 years	9%	5%
0-1 year	21%	21%



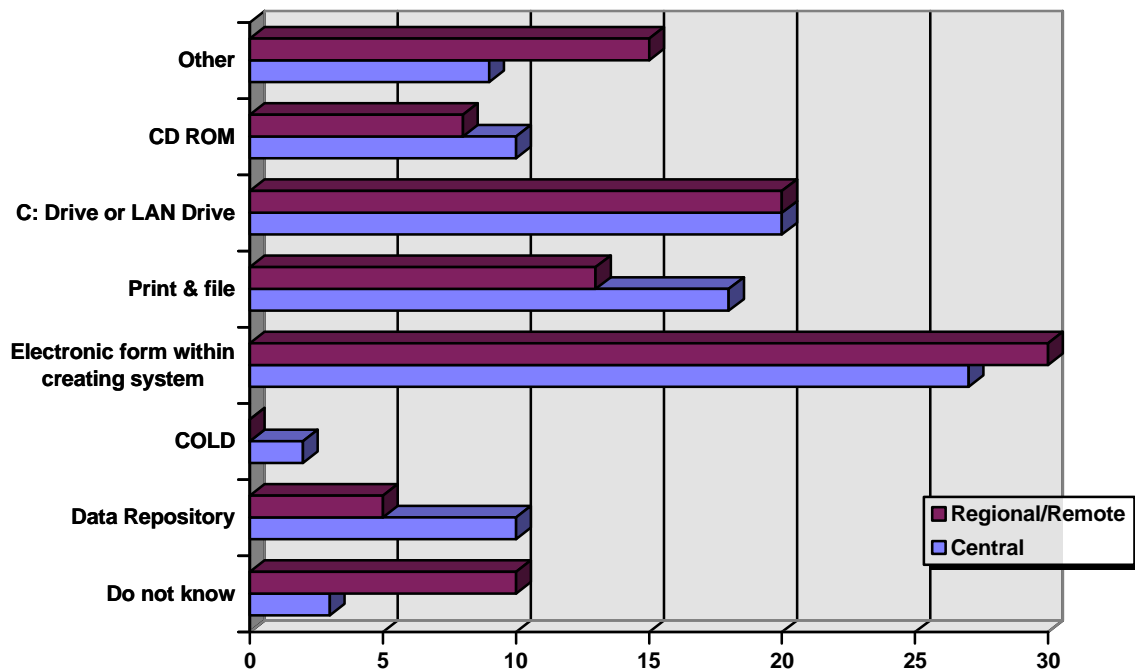
Many respondents that gave '0-1 year' as their answer elaborated that they either do not apply records management to their electronic records at all or do not create records electronically.

There may have been some misinterpretation of Q3.1 with respondents perhaps providing an answer relevant to *how long their agency has been creating electronic records* as opposed to how long they have been applying records management to the electronic records they create. However, despite that qualification, it seems that *at least half* of the state government agencies have consciously seen electronic records as needing to be managed as records and taken steps to effect this.

Question 3.2

How does your agency store its electronic records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	3%	10%
Data repository	10%	5%
COLD [Computer Output Laser Disk]	2%	Nil
Electronic form within creating system	27%	30%
Print and file	18%	13%
C: Drive or LAN Drive	20%	20%
CD ROM	10%	8%
Other	9%	15%

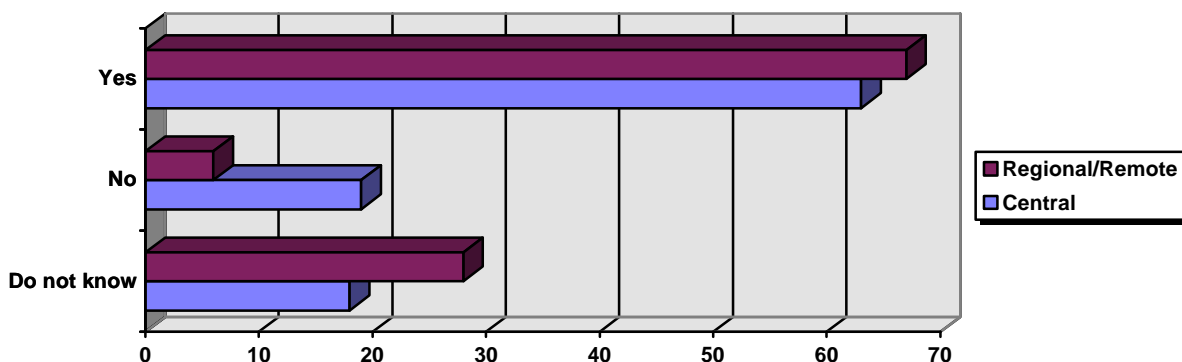


These responses show considerable divergence, and may also reflect ignorance of centralised activity. It seems likely that the considerable percentage of either “electronic form within creating system” or “C: Drive or LAN Drive” responses is reflective of individuals ‘managing’ and storing records, as opposed to the agency managing this responsibility. Ironically, the strongest reflection of corporate ownership of electronic records is the print and file approach.

Question 3.3

Do you consider any of the electronic records created by your agency to be vital records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	18%	28%
No	19%	6%
Yes	63%	67%

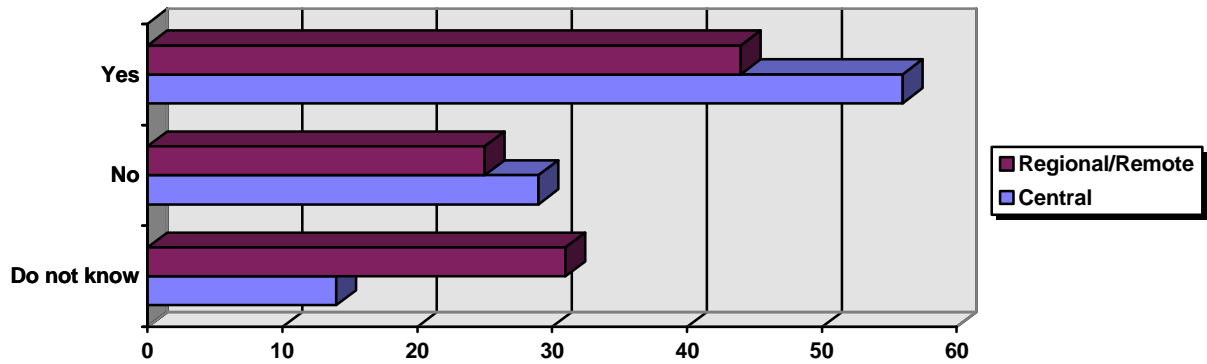


This shows a high awareness of the *current* significance of electronic records in the agency carrying out its functions. In a number of cases, respondents provided examples of electronic records they considered to be 'vital'. Such examples included databases, client information, financial records, and registers.

Question 3.4

Do you consider any of the electronic records created by your agency to be of permanent value?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	14%	31%
No	29%	25%
Yes	56%	44%



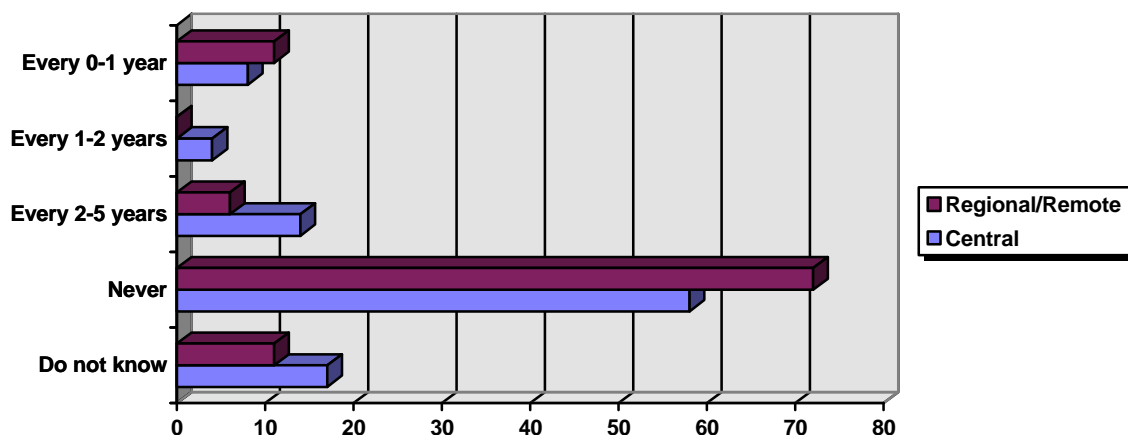
In a number of cases, respondents provided examples of electronic records they considered to be 'permanent'. Such examples included databases, client information, financial records and registers.

From examples given in Q3.3 and Q3.4, it seems that "permanent" and "vital" records are seen to be one and the same thing.

Question 3.5

How often are General Disposal Schedules [GDSs] or Records Disposal Schedules [RDSs] applied to your agency's electronic records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	17%	11%
Never	58%	72%
Every 2-5 years	14%	6%
Every 1-2 years	4%	Nil
Every 0-1 year	8%	11%



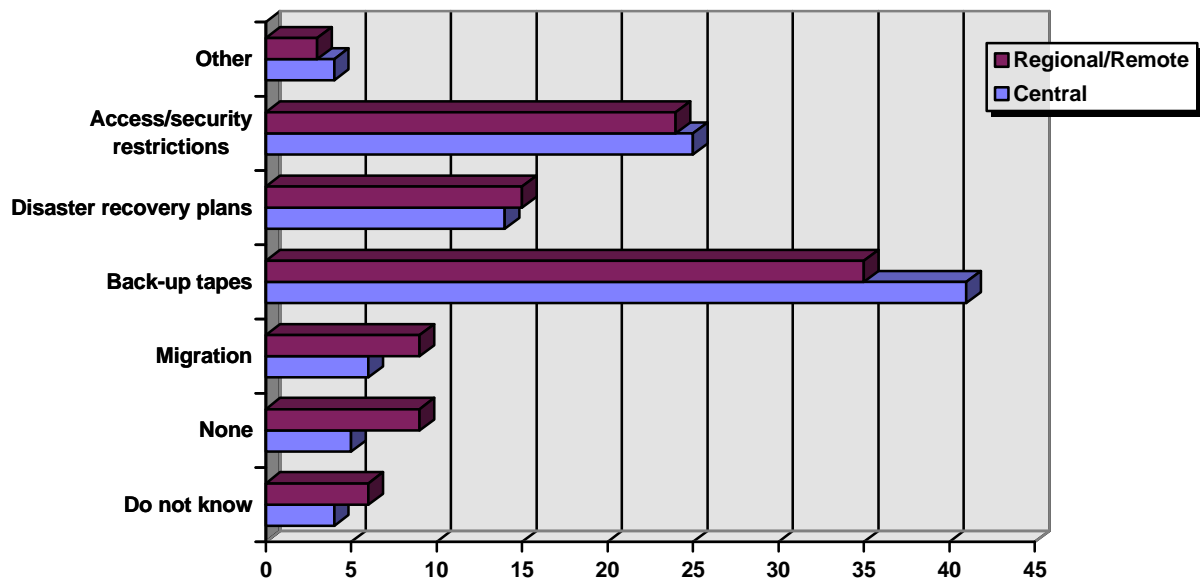
This result contrasts with that evident in the previous question. While over 50% of central responses to Q3.4 was "Yes", only a quarter of responses to this question show that formal disposal authorities are applied to electronic records. There are a number of possible reasons contributing to this low use of formal disposal authorities. The current

format of disposal schedules may be considered difficult to apply; such disposal schedules need to be applied manually; a general lack of awareness that official records created electronically are as subject to the State Records Act 1997 as are paper records. The greatest worry from considering the responses to this question is that records created electronically may in fact not be seen as records at all.

Question 3.6

What measures are taken by your agency to protect and maintain its electronic records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	4%	6%
None	5%	9%
Migration	6%	9%
Back-up tapes	41%	35%
Disaster recovery plans	14%	15%
Access/security restrictions	25%	24%
Other	4%	3%

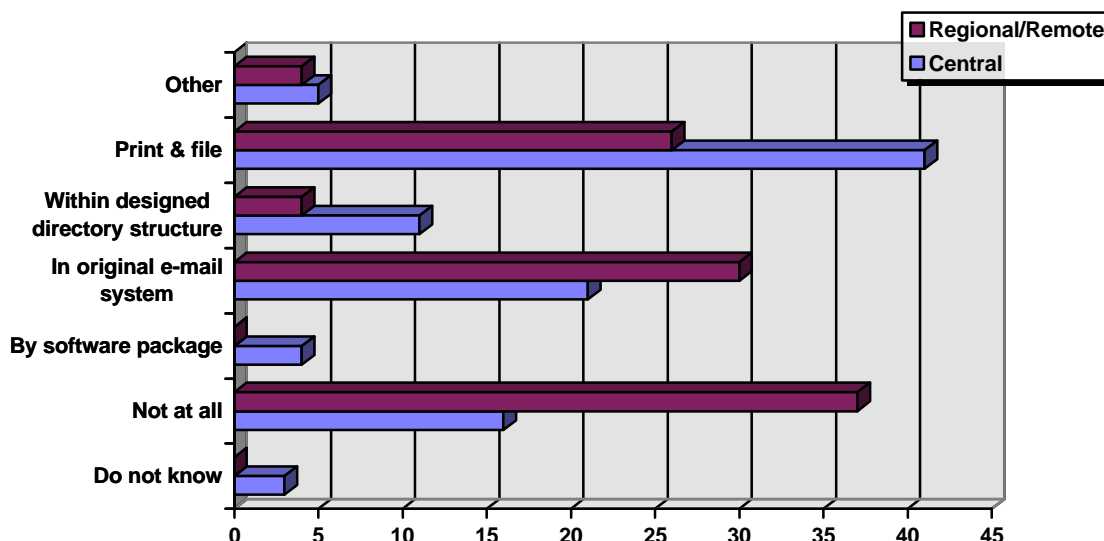


While the majority of participants gave the response that their agency creates and maintains back-up tapes, a multiple response of “migration”, “back-up tapes”, “disaster recovery plans” and “access/security restrictions” was only given in three instances. This is considered an insufficient level of adequate protection and maintenance of electronic records, particularly when a considerable proportion of respondents felt that such records are vital and/or permanent.

Question 3.7

How do you manage your e-mail as records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	3%	Nil
Not at all	16%	37%
By software package	4%	Nil
In original e-mail system	21%	30%
Within designed directory structure	11%	4%
Print and file	41%	26%
Other	5%	4%



The responses to this question show the marked difference between how central offices and regional/remote sites manage their e-mail.

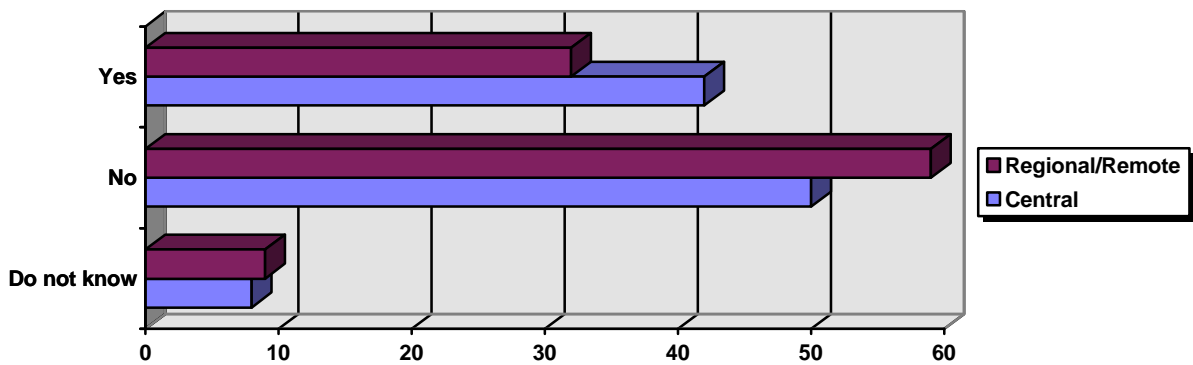
Central areas predominantly manage their e-mail by print and file. It is contended that this is the case because the main corporate recordkeeping system within central offices is still correspondence files. This notion is reinforced by the procedures and guidelines received from agencies which focused on mail registration and the handling of correspondence.

Regional/remote sites either do not manage their e-mail at all or retain it within the original e-mail system. A number of respondents who answered 'not at all' elaborated that this was because they did not have e-mail in the first place. Concerning the retention of e-mail within its original system, it is argued that e-mail in the regional/remote units is treated more as personal rather than official or corporate records.

Question 3.8

Has training been provided to staff in the creation and maintenance of official electronic records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	8%	9%
No	50%	59%
Yes	42%	32%

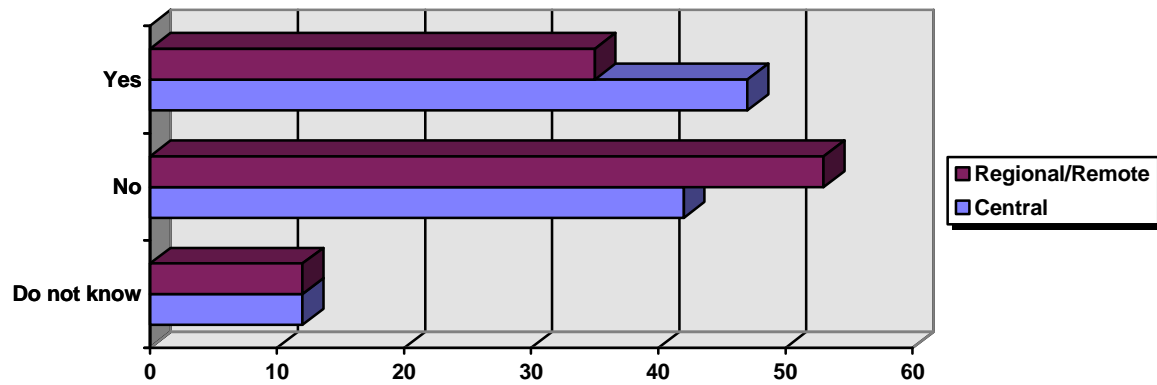


This result can be compared with Question 1.8, and reflects the overall lack of training provided or pursued in the area of records management within state government agencies. Remote/regional sites look particularly disadvantaged.

Question 3.9

Have joint arrangements been made with your agency's IT area regarding the management and maintenance of electronic records?

Response	Central	Regional/Remote
Do not know	12%	12%
No	42%	53%
Yes	47%	35%



Given the almost universal use of electronic records within state government agencies, it is surprising to find that less than half the responses to this question were "Yes". This may account, in part, for the low performance by agencies in protecting and maintaining their electronic records (Question 3.6). There is some divergence between central areas and regional/remote sites.

Conclusion

In relation to the three key areas on which the survey was intended to focus, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- ◆ Electronic records are at significant risk and will continue to be so unless agencies develop and implement full protection and maintenance programs, conduct routine and appropriate disposal, interact and collaborate more closely with the IT unit within their agency, and more effectively manage e-mail.
- ◆ Section 19 of the State Records Act 1997 relating to the mandatory transfer of records, which are inactive or older than 15 years has serious implications. Given both the degree to which agencies store the majority of their records inhouse/onsite and the actual volume of records existing outside of State Records.
- ◆ There is a general lack of understanding of what disposal schedules are. In addition, agencies are generally unaware of their legal obligations and responsibilities as creators of public or official records.
- ◆ Given the low percentage of agencies using disposal schedules either at all or routinely indicates that illegal disposal is taking place and consequently records of enduring value are at considerable risk or there has already been a loss of corporate memory. Alternatively, temporary records are being retained long after they are due for destruction resulting in inefficiencies and unnecessary costs.

In addition to the above, the 1998 South Australian Government Records Survey also highlights the following:

- ◆ A significant need for more comprehensive and continual training of not only staff with specific records management responsibilities but of all personnel, particularly in light of such trends as working within groups and project teams, the consequent move to greater self-management, and the ever-increasing use of the PC.
- ◆ Records management is essentially seen as an informal activity reflected by lack of training, policies and strategic plans, personnel and units with specific records management responsibilities and functions.
- ◆ There is a disparity between the standard of records management employed within central areas and regional/remote sites. Given that regional/remote areas are often an agency's point of public interface, this leaves agencies at risk of unaccountability and inefficient customer service.

APPENDIX 1: AGENCY DISTRIBUTION LIST

[Note: In some instances a number of agencies provided a single consolidated return]

1. Department of Premier & Cabinet

- Asian Business, Office of (incorporating International Business Division) (formerly EDA)
- Cabinet Office
- Intergovernment Relations
- **Multicultural and International Affairs, Office of***
- State Development Policy (formerly part of EDA)
- Strategic & Executive Services, Human Resource Management [Premier & Cabinet]

2. Department of Industry & Trade

- Business Centre, The
- Local Government, Office of
- Racing Industry Development Authority
- Recreation & Sport, Office of
- South Australian Manufacturing, Centre for
- South Australian Tourism Commission
- Terrace Towers

3. Department of Treasury & Finance

- South Australian Asset Management Corporation
- Treasury & Finance

4. Department of Justice

- Attorney General's Department
- Correctional Services
- Court of Disputed Returns [Courts Administration Authority]
- Court Reporting Division [Courts Administration Authority]
- District Court Division - Civil Registry [Courts Administration Authority]
- District Court Division - Environment Resources & Development Court [Courts Administration Authority]
- Justice Information System Services
- Legal Services Commission of South Australia
- Magistrates Court [Courts Administration Authority]
- South Australian Police
- Resource Management Division [Courts Administration Authority]
- Sheriff's Office [Courts Administration Authority]
- **South Australian Ambulance Service***
- South Australian County Fire Service
- South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service
- State Coroner's Office [Courts Administration Authority]
- State Electoral Office

- State Emergency Service
- District Court Division - Supreme Court - Civil [Courts Administration Authority]
- District Court Division - Supreme Court - Criminal [Courts Administration Authority]
- Warden's Court [Courts Administration Authority]
- Youth Court [Courts Administration Authority]

5. Department of Human Services

- Aboriginal Health Council
- Adelaide Central Community Health Service
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (Northern)
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (Southern)
- Child & Youth Health
- Disability Services Office
- Drug & Alcohol Services Council
- Family & Community Services
- Flinders Medical Centre - Administrative
- Flinders Medical Centre - Medical
- Housing & Corporate Development (formerly DHUD)
- ***Institute of Medical & Veterinary Science****
- ***Lyell McEwin Hospital****
- Migrant Health Service
- Mount Barker DSM Hospital
- Mount Gambier & District Health Service Inc.
- Noarlunga Health Services
- Nurses Board of SA
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital [North Western Adelaide Health Service]
- Royal Adelaide Hospital - Medical Records
- South Australian Community Housing Authority
- South Australian Dental Service
- South Australian Health Commission
- South Australian Housing Trust
- Whyalla Hospital & Health Services****
- Women's & Children's Hospital - Administration Records
- Women's & Children's Hospital - Medical Records

6. Department for Transport, Urban Planning & the Arts

- Adelaide Festival Centre Trust
- Art Gallery**
- ***Artlab Australia****
- Arts SA**
- ***Carrick Hill****
- History Trust of SA
- ***Passenger Transport Board, Office of the****
- PLAIN Central Services**
- ***Planning Division (formerly part of DHUD)****
- South Australian Country Arts Trust
- South Australian Film Corporation
- ***South Australian Museum****

- State Library of South Australia**
- **State Opera of South Australia***
- State Theatre Company of South Australia
- Status of Women, Office of & Women's Information Service
- Trans Adelaide
- Transport

7. Department of Education, Training & Employment

- Education & Children's Services
- Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
- Tertiary & Further Education

8. Department for Environment, Heritage & Aboriginal Affairs

- State Aboriginal Affairs, Division of
- Environment Protection Authority
- Environment, Heritage & Aboriginal Affairs

9. Department of Primary Industries & Resources

- Energy Policy, Office of
- Mines & Energy Resources SA
- Primary Industries SA
- South Australian Rural Communities Office
- South Australian Research & Development Institute (SARDI)

10. Department for Administrative & Information Services

- Auditor General's Department
- Electricity Trust of South Australia
- Forestry SA
- Land Services Group***
- Ports Corporation of South Australia
- SAGRIC International Pty Ltd
- Lotteries Commission
- Services SA [including, in the one return, Resources Management, Forensic Science, Real Estate Management, Building Management, Corporate Initiatives, Building Asset Policy, Supply SA, Records Management Project Team (State Records)]***
- South Australian Totalizator Agency Board
- South Australian Water Corporation
- Workcover

* Survey not returned

** Survey returned but not before 15 March 1998

*** Answers from internal DAIS survey factored into report of 1998 State Government Records Survey

**** Survey returned but not received