State Records
of South Australia

Adequate Records Management

Standard

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Introduction

Records are critical to the delivery of agency functions. They support and provide evidence of actions and decisions, allow agencies to demonstrate accountability and transparency, and protect the interests of stakeholders. Agencies must manage their records in accordance with their value as assets underpinning their business.

The *State Records Act 1997* (the SR Act) sets the foundation for good records management by agencies in South Australia. Section 5 of the SR Act outlines the following objectives in support of the proper management of records:

- Ensuring that official records of enduring evidential or informational value are preserved for future reference.

- Promoting the observance of best practices by agencies in their management of official records.

- Ensuring that each agency is afforded prompt and efficient access to official records in the custody of State Records for which the agency is responsible.

- Ensuring that members of the public have ready access to official records in the custody of State Records subject only to legal exceptions or restrictions.

The SR Act also establishes State Records as the principal repository for official records of permanent value, and as the office responsible for administering the SR Act.

State Records' approach to fulfilling its responsibilities under the SR Act is set out in the *South Australian Government Records Management Strategy* (the Strategy), which applies to all South Australian government agencies. One of the Strategy's goals is to formalise the governance of official records, through the establishment of policies which underpin recordkeeping practices.

The Adequate Records Management Framework

The Adequate Records Management Framework (the Framework) is a systematic approach to the management of official records based on defined expectations and progressive improvement. The Framework consists of standards, disposal determinations, guidelines, policies and toolkits which establish the requirements for adequate records management. The Framework includes the provision by State Records of training, awareness and advice to enable compliance, and the assessment and auditing of agencies against the requirements. This Standard is the key standard within the Framework, in that it sets down the overarching records management outcomes and benchmarks on which all other policies, training and advice is based.

Purpose

The purpose of this Standard is to enable agencies and State Records to satisfy their responsibilities under the SR Act. Section 16 of the SR Act states:

> If the Manager (Director) (of State Records) is of the opinion that the records management practices of an agency are inadequate, the Manager (Director) must report the matter to the Minister.

This Standard assists State Records to meet this requirement, by setting down five progressive levels of achievement against which agencies' records management performance, and therefore their adequacy, can be measured.

Section 13 of the SR Act states:

> Subject to this Act, every agency must ensure that the official records in its custody are maintained in good order and condition.

This Standard supports agencies to satisfy this obligation, by defining the essential components of an adequate records management program.

The broader purpose of this Standard is to enable the many positive effects of good records management including:

- 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.

Scope

This Standard is issued in accordance with sections 7(h) and 14 of the SR Act. As stated in section 14(2) of the SR Act, this Standard is binding for administrative units of the public service and agencies or instrumentalities of the Crown.

Although other agencies, including local government authorities, are not bound by State Records standards, they are strongly encouraged to apply this Standard to ensure adequate records management practices.

Implementation

Agencies' implementation of this Standard will be verified through State Records' assessment and audit program, as detailed in the *Assessment and Audit Guideline*. The audit and assessment program is based on the six records management outcomes defined in this Standard, and consists of two related parts; self-monitoring by agencies and formal monitoring of agencies by State Records.

Structure

This Standard is made up of six records management outcomes, set against five levels of achievement. A benchmark at each level summarises the key requirements agencies must meet. The interaction between the outcomes, levels of achievement and benchmarks is shown at appendix one.

This 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.

Related documents

This Standard supersedes the *Adequate Records Management Standard* (July 2008 v2.5). This Standard is complemented by State Records' *Assessment and Audit Guideline* and the *Adequate Records Management Standard Matrix.*

Variation to this Standard

State Records may update or alter this Standard with the authorisation of 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.

Responsibilities

State Records

State Records' responsibilities under the SR Act include:

- Reporting inadequate records management practices to the Minister (S16); and

- Issuing standards relating to records management and assisting in ensuring that agencies observe best management practices (S3(7)(h)).

This Standard forms a vital part of State Records' approach to fulfilling its obligations under these sections of the SR Act.

State Records also has a responsibility under S15 of the SR Act to conduct surveys of the official records and records management practices of agencies. State Records carries out those surveys based on the requirements of this Standard. Further detail on the survey process can be found in State Records' *Assessment and Audit Guideline*.

Agencies

Agencies are responsible for familiarising themselves with this Standard, and ensuring that its requirements are understood.

Ultimately agencies are responsible for implementing records management programs which enable them to achieve adequacy, in relation to the records management outcomes outlined in this Standard.

Records management outcomes

The records management outcomes described in this section 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.

There are six records management outcomes, and each is supported by a requirements statement, explanation and criteria. The outcomes have been divided in to two categories:

- **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

Outcome 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.
Outcome 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.
Outcome 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

Outcome 4	**Records are created, captured and controlled**
	Official records must be created, captured and controlled in accordance with legislative and business requirements.
Outcome 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.
Outcome 6	**Records disposal is managed**
	Official records must be disposed of in accordance with legislative and business requirements.

Levels of achievement

Each 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 achievement 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 SR Act, they must achieve a minimum of level four across each of the six outcomes.

The five levels of achievement are:

Progressive improvement			
↑	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.
	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.
	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.
	2	**Limited**	There is evidence of support for records management at a senior level within the agency; however a records management program has not been defined.
↑	1	**Ad hoc**	Basic recordkeeping processes are undertaken; however there is no formal or systematic approach to records management.

Business Outcomes

Outcome 1: Records management is planned

Requirements statement

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

Explanation

A records management plan is one of the central elements of an agency's records management program. Developed in line with the agency's broader strategic and corporate plans, the records management plan provides high level direction and is consistent with legislative and business requirements.

Planning includes the formalisation of good records management practices within policies and procedures. This documentation enables agencies to respond to recordkeeping issues in a consistent manner, ensures responsibility for records management tasks is allocated and supports business continuity.

Achievement levels	Benchmarks
5 - **Best Practice**	The records management program is developed in line with the government's recordkeeping strategy and has been defined for the long term. Regular review and update of the records management program including plans, policies and procedures, enables continuous improvement.
4 - Adequate	Records management forms part of business planning for the immediate planning period. Disaster planning and risk management for official records is in place. Documented records management plans, policies and procedures have been implemented.
3 - Defined	There is evidence that records management is considered at business planning stages and responsibility has been assigned. The agency has planned for the implementation of a system/s which manages both electronic and hardcopy records in line with government standards. Records management plans, policies and procedures have been documented.
2 - Limited	There is evidence that senior management recognise that a strategic approach to records management is necessary. Some planning for records management occurs.
1 - Ad hoc	Planning for records management activities is ad-hoc or non-existent with only basic awareness of the need for documentation required to support the records management function.

Outcome 2: Records management is resourced

Requirements statement

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

Explanation

Sufficient allocation of resources is a vital component of a comprehensive records management program. Resources include budgets and infrastructure as well as appropriately skilled records management practitioners and staff, who have been provided with training at a level commensurate with their responsibilities.

Agencies must begin with an understanding of the resources required to support their records management programs. Documenting those requirements and gaining buy-in from senior management are the next logical steps to achieving adequacy in relation to this outcome. Agencies achieving best practice in this area will be anticipating future resourcing requirements and planning for them accordingly.

Achievement levels	Benchmarks
5 - Best Practice	Succession planning for records management practitioners is in place. The records management program is sufficiently resourced in line with government policies, legislative and business requirements.
4 - Adequate	Staff undertake records management training appropriate to their responsibilities and the agency employs records management staff who are suitably skilled and experienced. The management of records in line with government requirements extends to contractors providing services on the agency's behalf. Provision has been made for ongoing resources dedicated to the records management program.
3 - Defined	Records management resourcing and training requirements have been assessed and documented, with plans in place to improve inadequate resourcing and skills levels. Responsibility for records management resourcing has been assigned.
2 - Limited	Senior management view adequate records management resourcing as a necessary business requirement. There is however limited evidence of resources dedicated to records management.
1 - Ad hoc	Some records management resourcing may be evident; however the resources required to adequately support records management across the agency have not been identified.

Outcome 3: Records management is monitored and reviewed

Requirements statement

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.

Explanation

The monitoring of records management performance within agencies is critical to understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of agencies' records management programs. Measurable 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.

Achievement levels	Benchmarks
5 - **Best Practice**	The agency uses a variety of tools to carry out comprehensive monitoring and review of its records management program. The program has been benchmarked to the government's records management framework to ensure continuous improvement.
4 - Adequate	Regular monitoring and review of records management activities takes place and the outcomes of reviews are regularly reported to senior management who take appropriate action. The agency measures its records management performance against established benchmarks.
3 - Defined	Benchmarks, reporting requirements and mechanisms for records management activities are in place. Responsibility for the monitoring and reviewing of records management has been assigned.
2 - Limited	There is support at a senior level for the monitoring and review of records management activities; however benchmarks and reporting requirements have not been documented or implemented.
1 - Ad hoc	No formal reporting for records management activities exists, and only events that cause significant concern are reported. Any actions are undertaken in an unplanned manner.

Operational Outcomes

Outcome 4: Records are created, captured and controlled

Requirements statement

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

Explanation

Good records management begins before records are created, with an understanding of the records agencies need to create in order to satisfy legislative and business obligations. Documentation of these requirements within a Business Classification Scheme or thesaurus, which is then incorporated into recordkeeping/business systems is a key component of an adequate records management program.

Capture and control of records in line with documented requirements allows an agency to protect its legal interests and deliver mandated services. Review and update of creation, capture and control requirements is essential in times of administrative or legislative change, to ensure that agencies maintain compliance.

Achievement levels	Benchmarks
5 - **Best Practice**	The agency's records creation, capture and control requirements are regularly reviewed and updated accordingly. Application of the Business Classification Scheme (BCS)/thesaurus is monitored and reviewed and it is updated as required.
4 - Adequate	Technologies which manage electronic and hardcopy records in line with government standards are in place. Business processes have been reviewed to map creation and capture requirements and a Business Classification Scheme (BCS)/thesaurus has been implemented across the agency.
3 - Defined	Record creation and capture requirements are defined and documented, and the agency has documented a Business Classification Scheme (BCS)/thesaurus. Recordkeeping/business systems are in place and are used to capture official records. Responsibility for records creation, capture and control has been assigned.
2 - Limited	There is support at a senior level for creation, capture and control of records in line with legislative and business needs, however requirements have not been documented and systems may not be in place.
1 - Ad hoc	The agency may create some of the records it requires to support continued business delivery. Some of those records are captured and controlled.

Outcome 5: Records are secure and accessible as appropriate

Requirements statement

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.

Explanation

The security of records is essential to ensuring their reliability, integrity and evidential value. It is important that agencies understand the sensitivity of the records they hold, as this is key to correctly identifying the security classifications and measures which should be applied to systems, physical locations and staff members.

The efficient delivery of services is reliant on timely access to records. It is therefore important that agencies balance security requirements against the need for easy and appropriate access to records for business and legislative purposes. Achieving this balance should be the result of a process which defines and documents security and access requirements across the entire agency.

Achievement levels	Benchmarks
5 - Best Practice	Records accessibility is managed to enable collaborative working and workflow. Audit trails are managed to ensure security of official records. The agency has processes in place to enable the proactive release of information where appropriate.
4 - Adequate	Appropriate security arrangements are in place for electronic and hardcopy records and security classifications have been applied to records and staff. Access to official records is managed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account privacy requirements. Public Access Determinations are applied to records that are transferred to State Records SA.
3 - Defined	Access requirements and processes have been defined and documented. The agency has documented its records security requirements, and some security measures are in place to protect official records from unauthorised access, loss or damage.
2 - Limited	There is support at a senior level for security of official records and compliance with access requirements, including Freedom of Information and Privacy; however requirements have not been defined or implemented.
1 - Ad hoc	The agency may have some physical and electronic measures in place to protect official records. The agency may be aware of the records required to support continued business delivery, and associated security requirements.

Outcome 6: Records disposal is managed

Requirements statement

Official records must be disposed of in accordance with legislative and business requirements.

Explanation

Records disposal encompasses the storage and eventual destruction of temporary value records as well as the storage and transfer to State Records of permanent value records. The basis of an agency's records disposal program is found in the application of General Disposal Schedules (GDS) and Records Disposal Schedules (RDS) which specify retention periods for official records.

The benefits of a well-managed disposal program are many. Knowing how long they are required to keep particular records allows agencies to manage storage costs. Being able to explain why records are no longer held enables agencies to demonstrate compliance with legislation such as the *Freedom of Information Act 1991.* Critically, disposal programs allow agencies to identify those records which are of long term value and form part of the corporate memory of the government and the collective memory of society.

Achievement levels	Benchmarks
5 - Best Practice	Business processes and legislation are regularly reviewed to assess disposal requirements, Records Disposal Schedules (RDS) are developed and updated as required and the disposal program covers all official records.
4 - Adequate	A comprehensive archival and disposal program is in place. Disposal is facilitated by the agency's recordkeeping and/or business system/s. Temporary value records are transferred to Approved Service Provider (ASPs) and permanent value records are transferred to State Records as appropriate.
3 - Defined	The foundations of a disposal program are present, including appraisal of records in line with government policy, Records Disposal Schedules (RDS) and identification of records not covered by current disposal schedules.
2 - Limited	Official records are sentenced in line with General Disposal Schedules (GDS). Senior management support records disposal, evidenced through budgeting and infrastructure, however a disposal program is not in place.
1 - Ad hoc	There may be minimal awareness across the agency of records disposal requirements. The agency may sentence some records according to legislative requirements; however records disposal is carried out in an unplanned manner.

Appendix 1

Records management outcomes, levels of achievement and benchmarks

			RECORDS MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES					
			Business outcomes			**Operational outcomes**		
			1	2	3	4	5	6
			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*	**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*	**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*	**Records are created, captured and controlled** *Official records must be created, captured and controlled in accordance with legislative and business requirements*	**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*	**Records disposal is managed** *Official records must be disposed of in accordance with legislative and business requirements*
Levels of Achievement	**Progressive Improvement**	**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 a sustained commitment to best practice.*	The records management program is developed in line with the government's recordkeeping strategy and has been defined for the long term. Regular review and update of the records management program including plans, policies and procedures enables continuous improvement.	Succession planning for records management practitioners is in place. The records management program is sufficiently resourced in line with government policies, legislative and business requirements.	The agency uses a variety of tools to carry out comprehensive monitoring and review of its records management program. The program has been benchmarked to the government's records management framework to ensure continuous improvement.	The agency's records creation, capture and control requirements are regularly reviewed and updated accordingly. Application of the Business Classification Scheme (BCS)/thesaurus is monitored and reviewed and it is updated as required.	Records accessibility is managed to enable collaborative working and workflow. Audit trails are managed to ensure security of official records. The agency has processes in place to enable the proactive release of information where appropriate.	Business processes and legislation are regularly reviewed to assess disposal requirements, Records Disposal Schedules (RDS) are developed and updated as required and the disposal program covers all official records.
		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.*	Records management forms part of business planning for the immediate planning period. Disaster planning and risk management for official records is in place. Documented records management plans, policies and procedures have been implemented.	Staff undertake records management training appropriate to their responsibilities and the agency employs records management staff who are suitably skilled and experienced. The management of records in line with government requirements extends to contractors providing services on the agency's behalf. Provision has been made for ongoing resources dedicated to the records management program.	Regular monitoring and review of records management activities takes place, and the outcomes of reviews are regularly reported to senior management who take appropriate action. The agency measures its records management performance against established benchmarks.	Technologies which manage electronic and hardcopy records in line with government standards are in place. Business processes have been reviewed to map creation and capture requirements, and a Business Classification Scheme (BCS)/thesaurus has been implemented across the agency.	Appropriate security arrangements are in place for electronic and hardcopy records and security classifications have been applied to records and staff. Access to official records is managed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account privacy requirements. Public Access Determinations are applied to records that are transferred to State Records SA.	A comprehensive archival and disposal program is in place. Disposal is facilitated by the agency's recordkeeping and/or business system/s. Temporary value records are transferred to Approved Service Provider (ASPs) and permanent value records are transferred to State Records as appropriate.
		3 **Defined -** *Recordkeeping functions, activities and responsibilities are defined and documented. The foundations of a record management program are in place, but further implementation is required.*	There is evidence that records management is considered at business planning stages and responsibility has been assigned. The agency has documented plans to implement a system/s which manages both electronic and hardcopy records in line with government standards. Records management plans, policies and procedures have been documented.	Records management resourcing and training requirements have been assessed and documented, with plans in place to improve inadequate resourcing and training levels. Responsibility for records management resourcing has been assigned.	Benchmarks, reporting requirements and mechanisms for records management activities are in place. Responsibility for the monitoring and reviewing of records management has been assigned.	Record creation and capture requirements are defined and documented, and the agency has documented a Business Classification Scheme (BCS)/thesaurus. Recordkeeping/business systems are in place and are used to capture official records. Responsibility for records creation, capture and control has been assigned.	Access requirements and processes have been defined and documented. The agency has documented its records security requirements, and some security measures are in place to protect official records from unauthorised access, loss or damage.	The foundations of a disposal program are present, including appraisal of records in line with government policy, Records Disposal Schedules (RDS) and identification of records not covered by current disposal schedules.
		2 **Limited -** *There is evidence of support for records management at a senior level within the agency, however a records management program has not been defined.*	There is evidence that senior management recognise that a strategic approach to records management is necessary. Some planning for records management occurs.	Senior management view adequate records management resourcing as a necessary business requirement. There is however limited evidence of resources dedicated to records management.	There is support for the monitoring and review of records management activities at a senior level, however benchmarks and reporting requirements have not been documented or implemented.	There is support at a senior level for creation, capture and control of records in line with legislative and business needs, however requirements have not been documented and systems may not be in place.	There is support at a senior level for security of official records and compliance with access requirements, including Freedom of Information and Privacy, however requirements have not been defined or implemented.	Official records are sentenced in line with General Disposal Schedules (GDS). Senior management support records disposal, evidenced through budgeting and infrastructure, however a disposal program is not in place.
		1 **Ad hoc -** *Basic recordkeeping processes are undertaken, however there is no formal or systematic approach to records management.*	Planning for records management activities is ad-hoc or non-existent with only basic awareness of the need for the documentation required to support the records management function.	Some records management resourcing may be evident, however the resources required to adequately support records management across the agency have not been identified.	No formal reporting for records management activities exists, and only events that cause significant concern are reported. Any actions are undertaken in an unplanned manner.	The agency may create some of the records it requires to support continued business delivery. Some of those records are captured.	The agency may have some physical and electronic measures in place to protect official records. The agency may be aware of the records required to support continued business delivery, and associated security requirements.	There may be minimal awareness across the agency of records disposal requirements. The agency may sentence some records according to legislative requirements; however records disposal is carried out in an unplanned manner.