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Part 1 – Strategy

Section 1 – Information and records management framework, strategy and information architecture

Your agency should have:

• an information and records management framework;
• an information and records management strategy; and
• an information architecture.

These may be in dedicated documents or used in combination with other high-level statements.

Framework

An information and records management framework is a high-level statement outlining an organisation’s vision for its information and records management and should:

• include information principles;
• include objectives and directives;
• include high-level implementation strategies;
• identify the current information needs of the agency;
• anticipate future needs; and
• enable your agency to identify areas of high risk and priorities.

When answering the framework questions, look for whole-of-agency coordination, planning and leadership.

Strategy

An information and records management strategy is a high-level statement outlining an organisation’s systematic approach to the management of information and records.

Your agency should create and maintain a strategy that focuses on information and records as evidence of actions that:

• document business transactions;
• support accountability and effective business;
• map your agency’s information assets;
• help to understand and manage the purpose and relationships between information and systems that use the information; and
• provide detail about standards adopted in your agency such as records management functionality, metadata, and security and access controls.

When answering the information and records management strategy questions, assess the effectiveness of your records control and accessibility
and whether records are transferred or destroyed appropriately (as approved by the National Archives).

Information architecture
An information architecture is a high-level statement outlining how whole-of-agency information and records can be used, described and organised.

An information architecture should:

- identify business processes;
- identify which business systems store records;
- provide a whole-of-client or whole-of-process view across platforms and systems by combining information such as case records that are kept in a number of different systems;
- show the relationships between different business systems, including the duplication or reuse of data;
- cover both published and unpublished information and records in all formats, including electronic, paper, film and photographic records;
- specify and manage the design, labelling, navigation and indexing of information systems; and
- set standards for metadata and terminology for use in all agency systems.

When answering information architecture questions, look for evidence of coordinated strategic planning for use of business information and records across the agency.

Question 1.1

| Minimum requirement for basic information and records management |

How comprehensive is your agency’s information and records management framework?

An information and records management framework outlines a long-term vision and strategy for managing your agency’s information assets. Records are an important subset of your information. They provide evidence of your agency’s business. Your framework should guide the creation, management and use of information and records.

To ensure that it is implemented, your framework should be endorsed and supported by a senior officer and actively promoted.

Source of authority
Question 1.2

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How comprehensive is your agency’s information and records management strategy?

For an information and records management strategy to be fully comprehensive, it should:

- be endorsed by senior management;
- identify the importance of records to agency business;
- identify who in your agency is responsible for information and records management;
- document any information risks to agency business;
- reflect all applicable legislation, standards, business plans and other strategic requirements for your agency; and
- acknowledge records in all formats and locations.

Source of authority


Question 1.3

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How comprehensive is your agency’s information architecture?

The information architecture should:

- be enterprise-wide in its intended scope;
- have high level endorsement for its intent, application and evolution;
- promote flexible, standards-based information sharing and re-use; and
- be intrinsic to governance decisions for new system initiatives and business process change management.

Source of authority


Question 1.4

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How well does your information and records management strategy identify who is responsible for information and records management?

Responsibilities for information and records management include the:

- identification of a senior manager responsible for information and records management;
- provision of information and records management advice within your agency;
- development of information and records management policies;
- design of information and records management systems;
- monitoring and maintaining compliance of information and records management systems;
- management of information assets (both electronic and paper-based); and
- development and management of a classification schema used for classifying information and records

Source of authority


Question 1.5

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How well is your agency’s information and records management supported and promoted by senior and middle managers?

You should consider the following issues:

- does senior management actively support information and records management policies and practices?
- do middle managers actively encourage staff to comply with information and records management policies and practices?
- has a robust information and records management culture been instilled into your agency?
• have sufficient funding and other resources been allocated for information and records management?

Source of authority

Question 1.6
Additional recommendation for information and records management

To what extent does your information and records management framework include principles for managing your agency’s information and records?

Principles for the effective management of information could include:

• the creation of a single, authoritative source of information (although it is not necessary for information to be stored in a single repository if it is managed effectively); and

• that information is readily available and accessible for as long as it is required.

Source of authority


Question 1.7
Additional recommendation for information and records management

How up-to-date are your agency's information and records management framework and strategy and information architecture?

Your information management framework and strategy and information architecture should be reviewed when necessary (eg following administrative changes) and or regularly (eg bi-annually).

Your review should include reporting mechanisms to advise senior management about the results.

Source of authority
Question 1.8

Additional recommendation for information and records management

How well does your agency’s information and records management strategy identify all relevant legislative requirements and standards?

Legislation specific to your agency or its business will need to be reflected in your information and records management strategy.

Your agency’s information and records management strategy should also comply with the following laws:

- *Archives Act 1983*;
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*; and
- *Privacy Act 1988*.

There is other relevant legislation that your agency may be subject to, such as:

- *Evidence Act 1995*;
- *Electronic Transactions Act 1999*;
- *Crimes Act 1914*;
- *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*;
- *Public Service Act 1999*; and

Also take into account any standards, codes of practice or guidelines that your agency has adopted, for example:

- *Australian Standard Records Management, AS ISO 15489–2002*;
- *Australian Government Recordkeeping Metadata Standard*; and
- *APS Code of Conduct*.

Source of authority
Question 1.9

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

How comprehensively does your information architecture specify records management requirements for all business information systems?

In order to capture and keep records, business information systems need appropriate functionality to ensure that your agency’s records and controls are fit for purpose. Within the context of the business risks to be managed, records should be:

- authentic;
- accurate and trustworthy;
- complete and unaltered;
- secure from unauthorised access, alteration and deletion; and
- findable and readable.

**Source of authority**


Question 1.10

**Requirement for records of high risk business**

To what extent does your agency’s information architecture identify the business information systems used for creating and managing records of high risk business?

Your agency’s information architecture should:

- identify what records are important or vital to support high risk business activities;
- identify what attributes of the records are necessary for the records to continue to support those activities; and
- identify which systems are used to create and manage records for those activities.
Source of authority


Section 2 – Policies and procedures

Your agency should develop and promote policies and procedures on creating and managing authentic, reliable and usable information assets and records for business and accountability purposes.

Policies should:

- be endorsed by the head of the agency and/or senior management; and
- support your information and records management framework and strategy.

Policies and procedures should:

- define responsibilities for information and records management staff;
- define responsibilities for all other agency staff;
- be easily understood;
- be detailed, comprehensive and up-to-date; and
- be communicated, implemented and made accessible across the agency.

Look for evidence that staff fulfil their information and records management obligations in their work.

Question 2.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How comprehensive are your agency’s information and records management policies and procedures?

Your agency’s information and records management policies and procedures should:

- include the information and records management principles to be followed;
- express a commitment to effective information management;
- explain and allocate responsibilities for information and records management;
- provide principles for developing and implementing more detailed practices and processes;
- be compliant with legislative requirements;
- cover records of all formats (for example, paper, email, websites, online transactions and other systems);
- be endorsed and promoted by a senior officer who has authority to ensure that your agency complies with the policies; and
- be accessible to all employees.
Question 2.2

How effectively does your agency manage Cabinet documents in accordance with the provisions of the Cabinet Handbook?

The Cabinet Handbook gives guidance on the management of Cabinet records including their preparation, handling, copying, access and transfer or destruction.

Source of authority

Question 2.3

How effectively do your information and records management policies define the responsibilities of information and records management staff?

Information and records management staff should:

- design and implement information and records management programs;
- carry out or assist with analyses of work processes for information and records management purposes;
- assist with the design of business information systems that make and keep records;
- be the business owner for information and records management systems;
- manage legal destruction and transfer of records;
- promote information and records management in the agency; and
- monitor, audit, review and report on information and records management.

Source of authority

**Question 2.4**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

How effectively do your information and records management policies define the responsibilities of managers and supervisors?

Your agency’s information and records management policies should outline the information and records management responsibilities of managers and supervisors. They should:

- ensure staff understand their responsibilities and follow information and records management policies and procedures in their work;
- ensure that information and records management requirements are included in business and administrative processes; and
- support and foster a culture of information and records management within their workgroups.

**Source of authority**


**Question 2.5**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

How effectively do your information and records management policies define responsibilities of information and communications technology staff?

Your agency’s information and records management policies should define the responsibilities of information and communications technology (ICT) staff. They should:

- ensure that business information systems that capture and manage records have records management functionality and that the required system management procedures are in place to support records management;
- integrate business information requirements (including requirements for records and data) into the design, specification, testing and implementation of agency systems;
- manage data sets and business information systems in accordance with the information and records management policies;
- enable the transfer of electronic records identified as ‘Retain as National Archives’ to the National Archives;
• develop procedures to support preservation requirements, such as media replenishment; and
• set data storage strategies.

Source of authority


Question 2.6
Additional recommendation for information and records management

How well do your agency’s managers and supervisors monitor compliance with information and records management policies and procedures?

Your agency’s managers and supervisors should ensure that all staff understand information and records management policies and procedures and apply these when performing their duties.

Source of authority


Question 2.7
Additional recommendation for information and records management

How up-to-date are your agency’s information and records management policies and procedures?

The policies and procedures should be reviewed when necessary (eg following administrative changes) and/or regularly (eg biannually). This review should be used to:

• evaluate the policies and procedures for clarity and relevance;
• measure the impact of the policies and procedures against initial objectives;
• look for unforeseen effects; and
• survey staff awareness.
**Question 2.8**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

How effectively do your agency’s business and administrative policies and procedures include information and records management requirements?

To be fully effective, your agency’s business and administrative policies and procedures should incorporate information and records management requirements where appropriate. Policies and procedures could include directions on:

- when to create a record;
- when to capture a record;
- record content;
- record format;
- which system to capture the records into;
- what metadata should be created for these records; and
- who should have access to these records.

**Source of authority**


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**Question 2.9**

**Requirement for records of high risk business**

How effectively do your agency’s policies and procedures for high risk business include information and records management requirements?

To be fully effective, the policies and procedures for your agency’s high risk business should incorporate information and records management requirements. They should include detailed and precise directions on:

- when to create a record;
• when to capture a record;
• record content;
• record format;
• which system to capture the records into;
• what metadata should be created for these records; and
• who should have access to these records.

Source of authority

Section 3 – Compliance

Your agency should monitor compliance with information and records management policies and procedures to ensure that appropriate records are created and effectively managed.

Regular audits can identify gaps or problems and help to develop strategies to address these issues.

To assess your agency’s compliance look for:

- established monitoring and compliance programs;
- benchmarks for quantitative and qualitative measurement;
- reporting arrangements; and
- evidence of follow-up action.

Question 3.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How comprehensively does your agency perform audits of its information and records management functions and the information and records management aspects of other business activities?

Information and records management audits should be performed when necessary (eg following administrative changes) and/or regularly (eg biannually).

Information and records management audits should check that records are being created and captured into systems that have appropriate records management functionality. The audit should also ensure the records and controls are fit for purpose and:

- accurate;
- detailed enough to support business needs and be understood by others;
- authentic;
- secure from unauthorised access, alteration and deletion;
- findable and readable; and
- related to other relevant records.

Source of authority


Question 3.2

Additional recommendation for information and records management

To what extent has your agency implemented recommendations from audit reports and/or from Ombudsman’s reports in which information and records management issues have been raised?

Your agency should act upon recommendations by the Australian National Audit Office, internal audit groups and the Ombudsman’s Office that affect aspects of your agency's information and records management.

Audit reports may be specific to your agency or relate to other agencies.

Source of authority


Section 4 – High risk business

Your agency should take a more rigorous approach to the management of the information and records for high risk business areas.

High risk businesses include those that:

- receive a high level of public and media scrutiny;
- instigate or are subject to litigation;
- allocate or spend large amounts of money;
- relate to issues of national security;
- are outsourced;
- relate to the health, welfare, rights and entitlements of citizens or staff; and
- relate to employment conditions of staff.

The Check-up 2.0 Requirements for high risk business assessment should be undertaken for each area of high risk business.

Question 4.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How comprehensively is your agency managing the information and records of its high risk business?

Your agency should identify its high risk business activities and provide a greater focus for the management of relevant information and records.

The Archives recommends that agencies undertake the Requirements for high risk business assessment for each area of high risk business.

In your agency, at a minimum, the following should be addressed:

- your agency’s information management framework and strategy and information architecture should identify the information and business systems that manage high risk business information;
- your agency’s policies and procedures for high risk business information should include information and records management requirements;
- additional information and records management training should be provided for staff involved in high risk business and processes;
- your agency should undertake a detailed analysis of high risk business to determine which records need to be created and captured;
- assess what additional metadata is required for records of high risk business; and
- apply additional quality assurance processes to the sentencing of records of high risk business.
Source of authority
Section 5 – Training

Your agency should ensure all staff are trained to understand their information and records management responsibilities.

This includes:

- senior management;
- ongoing and non-ongoing staff;
- full-time and part-time staff; and
- contract and volunteer staff.

Training should:

- outline general information and records management responsibilities;
- be tailored to work areas; and
- be tailored to business information systems.

Look for evidence that the training is regular, ongoing, up-to-date and relevant.

Question 5.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency provide information and records management training to its employees, contractors and consultants?

To be fully effective, staff at all levels, including contractors and consultants, should attend information and records management training.

Your agency’s training program should:

- support the information and records management policies and be up-to-date;
- discuss detailed procedures for information and records management and business information systems;
- be tailored to suit the needs of certain work areas and roles, or as a refresher program; and
- be delivered as soon as possible after staff commence.

Source of authority

Question 5.2

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**How up-to-date is your agency's information and records management training program?**

To be fully effective, your agency should ensure its information and records management training program is reviewed and updated when necessary (eg following administrative changes) and or regularly (eg biannually). The review should take into account:

- changes in the technological environment;
- skill levels of staff;
- changes in work area policies and procedures;
- identified information and records management problems; and
- feedback received on the training program.

**Source of authority**

Question 5.3

**Requirement for records of high risk business**

**How effectively does your agency ensure additional information and records management training is provided to staff involved in high risk business and processes?**

To be fully effective, your agency should prioritise tailored training for staff involved in high risk business and processes.

The training program should cover:

- specific work area requirements;
- what records staff need to create;
- how to use business information systems; and
- how and when records should be captured into a system with records management functionality.

**Source of authority**
Section 6 – Business continuity

Your agency should ensure that its business continuity and disaster management plans cover its vital information and records. Vital records could include:

- contracts;
- research data;
- strategic plans;
- policy advice; and
- customer records, payments and receipts.

Look for business continuity plans that identify vital records and how to manage these records to ensure business continuity.

Look for disaster management plans that address records in all formats and in all business information systems.

Question 6.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How effective are your agency’s business continuity and/or disaster management plans?

To be fully effective, your agency’s business continuity and disaster management plans should:

- identify your agency’s vital records;
- cover records in all formats; and
- be regularly reviewed and updated.

Source of authority


Standards Australia, Australian Standard Records Management, AS ISO 15489.2, 2002, ‘4.3.7.1: Record storage decisions’
Section 7 – Outsourcing

Your agency should ensure that all contractors providing outsourced services comply with your information and records management policies and procedures.

Look for evidence that:

- outsourcing contracts outline the responsibilities for information and records management;
- outsourcing contracts outline appropriate standards and quality of service; and
- your agency regularly monitors and reviews the quality and quantity of records being created and managed by the contractor.

Question 7.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent do contracts for outsourced services specify that appropriate records are maintained and returned to your agency after the contract finishes?

Contracts for outsourced services should stipulate the information and records management requirements needed to protect the Australian Government’s interest. Ensure that such contracts:

- ascribe ownership of records, either to the Government or the contractor;
- establish information and records management requirements;
- prohibit the destruction of records without permission from your agency;
- specify what happens to the records at the end of the contract;
- prescribe requirements for use and disclosure of records;
- protect the security of the records;
- specify who can access the records, eg your agency or the public;
- specify what access the provider will have to records kept in agency custody; and
- specify any subcontractors who should also comply with these requirements.

Source of authority

**Question 7.2**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**To what extent does your agency ensure that contracted service providers accurately create, manage and maintain records?**

Your agency maintains responsibility for ensuring that the contractor is fulfilling their responsibilities and providing value for money. You need to ensure, by monitoring and through audits, that the contractor is meeting its information and records management responsibilities.

**Source of authority**


Part 2 – Practice

Section 8 – Creating and capturing records

Your agency should determine what records it needs to create to meet accountability, legislative and business requirements.

Knowing what records to create involves:

- understanding the requirements of legislation;
- understanding the agency’s business, including its policies, procedures and directives;
- identifying what records are needed to document business or work processes; and
- assessing risks associated with not creating records.

As well as creating records, your agency should capture or save them into an approved records management system. This will ensure the records:

- can be proven to be genuine;
- are accurate and can be trusted;
- are complete and unaltered;
- are secure from unauthorised access, alteration and deletion;
- can be found when needed; and
- are related to other relevant records.

Look for evidence that records are created and captured consistently and are complete and accurate.

Question 8.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How comprehensively has your agency identified what records need to be created and captured?

To comprehensively identify the records that need to be created and captured, your agency will need to:

- know the requirements of legislation;
- know your agency’s business including its policies, procedures and directives;
- incorporate the needs of internal and external stakeholders; and
- assess the risks associated with not creating records.
**Source of authority**


**Question 8.2**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**To what extent does your agency have controls in place to ensure that required records are being created and captured?**

It is important to ensure the required and appropriate records are being created and captured.

Ways to achieve this include:

- spot checks;
- surveys;
- checking audit reports; and
- interviewing key staff.

**Source authority**


**Question 8.3**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**To what degree has your agency integrated the requirement to create and capture records into its procedures?**

If records creation and capture are integrated fully into business information systems then records are more likely to be managed appropriately. The requirement to create and capture records can be integrated into:

- business information systems, so records are created automatically when staff carry out their work; and
- work procedures that specify what, when and how to create records and where to capture them.
Question 8.4

Requirement for records of high risk business

How comprehensively has your agency undertaken a detailed analysis of its high risk business to determine which records it needs to create and capture?

A comprehensive analysis of your agency’s high risk business needs to:

- identify what records need to be created;
- specify content and format;
- identify descriptive standards;
- identify what procedures and training are needed to guide record creation;
- ensure that required records are being created and captured; and
- assist with developing new systems.

Your analysis should also assess:

- legislative requirements;
- policies and procedures;
- needs of internal and external stakeholders; and
- risks to your agency if records are not created and captured.

Source of authority


Section 9 – Describing records

Your agency should ensure that records are described and managed appropriately so they can be found, used and understood over time.

Describing records involves collecting information about them, such as who created them, how they were used, and how long they need to be kept.

This information is known as ‘metadata’.

Metadata is generated at two levels, in the:

- content and structure of the record – examples include the ‘From’ and ‘Sent’ fields in email headers; and
- business information system managing the record – examples include, the audit trail of changes to a document and a paper file index.

Look for a standard set of metadata that is used across your agency and for tools to control the terminology used to describe records.

Question 9.1

**Minimum requirement for basic information and records management**

To what extent has your agency specified a minimum metadata set for records?

Metadata will help your agency:

- know when and who created a record;
- know when a record was captured into a system;
- find a record;
- manage access and use of a record;
- understand the meaning of records;
- manage record retention and destruction; and
- manage relationships between related records.

When establishing a minimum metadata set, take into account the requirements for managing records in the *Australian Government Recordkeeping Metadata Standard*.

**Source of authority**


Question 9.2

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How well does your agency manage metadata as a record?

Metadata is a control record. It can be:

- embedded in a record (e.g., the date on a letter);
- attached to a record (e.g., a registration number applied to a document in a business system); or
- associated with the record it is controlling but managed separately (e.g., an electronic records management system can manage a paper file).

Well-managed metadata:

- is accurate and can be trusted;
- is secure from unauthorised access, alteration and deletion;
- can be found and understood; and
- is kept for as long as required.

Source of authority


Question 9.3

Additional recommendation for information and records management

To what extent does your agency use classification tools to assist with records management?

Classification tools identify agreed terms for describing records in a consistent and meaningful way. Records that are well described are easier to find, manage, use and understand.

Classification tools used by your agency could include:

- metadata dictionaries;
- a thesaurus;
- controlled terminology;
- a common business language; and
- a records classification scheme.

Source of authority


**Question 9.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Additional recommendation for information and records management</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**To what extent does your agency have procedures in place to ensure metadata is accurate and consistent?**

Metadata can be applied automatically by a business information system, manually by a user, or by a combination of these.

The application of metadata can be supported by:

- good system design;
- procedures and training, eg to ensure metadata fields are used as intended; and
- quality assurance, eg checking record titles to ensure they reflect the content of the record.

**Source of authority**


**Question 9.5**

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<th>R</th>
<th>Requirement for records of high risk business</th>
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**To what extent have you identified whether any additional metadata is required for records of your agency’s high risk business?**

Additional metadata will allow for the better management of high risk business records.

**Source of authority**


Section 10 – Keep, destroy or transfer

Your agency should ensure that records are kept for as long as they are required and that any destruction, transfer of ownership or alteration complies with the Archives Act 1983.

Under section 24 of the Archives Act, Commonwealth records may not be destroyed without the permission of the National Archives unless:

- there is a law directing a particular action; or
- the destruction takes place in accordance with a normal administrative practice (NAP).

The National Archives gives permission for the destruction of records through ‘records authorities’.

Records authorities are legal instruments that outline how long records need to be kept and allow for the destruction or transfer of records after that time has passed.

Agency-specific or general legislation may direct a particular action be taken with your records.

An agency can use the NAP provision in the Archives Act by developing a NAP policy to destroy records that are duplicates, unimportant or of a short-term, facilitative nature.

Look for records authorities that apply to your agency’s records, and check whether they are being used correctly.

Question 10.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency comply with the Archives Act 1983 in relation to retention and destruction of its records?

Your agency’s retention and destruction activities are legally compliant if:

- records are not destroyed before the minimum time specified in a records authority;
- destruction or transfer is specified by law;
- destruction is done as a normal administrative practice (NAP) that the National Archives does not disapprove of;
- records are not transferred to a non-Commonwealth organisation without authorisation from the National Archives;
- records more than 15 years old are not changed, added to, or have parts removed without authorisation from the National Archives;
- records are not destroyed when needed for legal purposes;
records are not destroyed while covered by a disposal freeze (that is, a ban on disposal action that applies to certain groups of records as designated by the National Archives from time to time); and

- records identified as ‘Retain as National Archives’ are transferred to the care of the National Archives.

Source of authority


**Question 10.2**

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

**How comprehensive are your agency’s normal administrative practice (NAP) policy and procedures?**

To be fully comprehensive, your agency’s normal administrative practice (NAP) policy and procedures should:

- be endorsed by your agency’s senior managers;
- be consistent with the *Archives Act 1983*;
- be consistent with National Archives guidelines on NAP;
- clearly identify what records can be destroyed;
- include relevant examples; and
- cover records in all formats including paper and electronic.

Source of authority


**Question 10.3**

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

**When records are authorised for destruction, how appropriate are your agency’s destruction methods?**

Once a record has been sentenced for destruction, it should be destroyed in such a way that it cannot be re-created. This is particularly important for electronic records, where ‘deletion’ is not the same as destruction.
The *Protective Security Policy Framework* (PSPF) outlines appropriate methods of records destruction. The method of destruction will depend on the records' security classifications and formats.

**Source of authority**

**Question 10.4**

Additional recommendation for information and records management

**To what extent is your agency’s core business covered by a records authority?**

The National Archives issues records authorities to cover your agency’s core business. When records are no longer required for business purposes they are usually either destroyed or transferred to the National Archives. To be accepted for transfer to the Archives, records must be sentenced under a class nominated as ‘Retain as National Archives’ in an authority issued by the National Archives since 2000.

A records authority issued before 2000 can be used to sentence records for destruction but not to transfer records to the National Archives.

**Source of authority**


**Question 10.5**

Additional recommendation for information and records management

**To what extent does your agency have a regular sentencing program?**

By implementing a regular sentencing program, the task of destroying and/or transferring your agency’s records will not become overwhelming. A planned program will also reduce storage costs, safeguard records that need to be retained as national archives and make it easier for your agency to find the records it needs.

**Source of authority**

**Question 10.6**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**How effectively does your agency ensure that records are not destroyed if they are required for legal purposes, or covered by a disposal freeze?**

Even where the destruction of records is permitted under a records authority, they cannot be destroyed if they are likely to be needed for legal purposes. To protect records assessed as being needed by the Commonwealth, the National Archives sometimes places a ‘disposal freeze’ on groups of records. Agencies must not destroy records that are subject to a freeze until the Archives either lifts the freeze or issues new instructions to indicate when it is safe to destroy the records.

**Source of authority**


**Question 10.7**

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**To what extent are information and records managed by your business information systems managed appropriately for as long as they need to be kept?**

Consider the following factors when managing information in your agency’s business information systems:

- the information in business information systems should be kept for at least as long as the period specified in a records authority;
- the information should continue to be accessible and readable for as long as required – information that is not accessible and readable is effectively destroyed; and
- integrating records destruction and transfer triggers and mechanisms into business information systems;

Your agency may choose to keep and manage the information in business information systems through a variety of strategies, including maintaining the original business information system, records migration, conversion, encapsulation and/or emulation.
**Source of authority**


**Question 10.8**

**To what extent has your agency complied with the General Disposal Authority for Source Records that have been Copied, Converted or Migrated when destroying applicable source records?**

Your agency is likely to copy records in one form or another, eg by migrating data from obsolete business information systems to new business information systems and scanning paper records to electronic form. *The General Disposal Authority for Source Records that have been Copied, Converted or Migrated* permits the destruction of a range of copied source records, provided the reproductions are kept and there are no special requirements to retain the source records.

**Source of authority**


**Question 10.9**

**Requirement for records of high risk business**

**To what extent does your agency apply additional quality assurance processes to the sentencing of records of high risk business?**

To be fully effective at ensuring records of high risk business are not destroyed inappropriately, your agency should:

- provide additional training for sentencing staff;
- perform additional checks of the sentences applied to records;
- require additional internal consultation and/or approval mechanisms;
- require additional verification of destruction or transfer (eg staff could be required to witness destruction or to travel with transferred records); and
• undertake additional checks to ensure that the correct disposal metadata has been added to the control records.

**Source of authority**


Section 11 – Access to records

Your agency should ensure its records remain accessible for as long as they are required to meet accountability, legislative and business requirements.

To make it easier and more efficient to access records in your agency:

- records should have meaningful metadata including descriptive titles;
- records management systems should not be cluttered by records that can be destroyed or transferred;
- procedures should be developed to ensure records are captured into the right systems;
- the records content, along with the media, should be preserved; and
- records which should not be available to everybody should be properly secured.

Look for the application of strategies to ensure records will remain accessible for the long term.

**Question 11.1**

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How easily can staff in your agency access the records they need to do their job?

To be compliant with this requirement, agency staff need to be able to quickly and efficiently:

- identify and locate all relevant records;
- retrieve the records; and
- access all relevant records regardless of their location or format.

**Source of authority**


**Question 11.2**

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency control, log or track staff access to electronic and paper records?

Controlling the use of records will help your agency to:

- prevent the loss of records;
- establish the history of records; and
- find records.
Controls include:

- recording the name of the person who has a paper file;
- conducting a regular census of paper records and following up on missing items;
- including classified and unclassified files in the census and following up on missing classified files or other important files as a priority;
- keeping metadata about who has accessed or tried to access electronic records;
- retaining audit trails of changes to electronic records;
- reporting on staff access; and
- implementing consequences for inappropriate use.

**Source of authority**


### Question 11.3

**Minimum requirement for basic information and records management**

**To what extent does your agency meet the requirements of the Senate Procedural Order of Continuing Effect No. 10: Indexed Lists of Departmental and Agency Files?**

To be compliant with this requirement, agency staff need to place an indexed list of the titles of all relevant files, including new parts of existing files, on their website every six months.

**Source of authority**


### Question 11.4

**Additional recommendation for information and records management**

**How comprehensive are your agency’s procedures to ensure there is continued access to records after staff leave?**

To be fully comprehensive, your agency’s procedures for departing staff should include:

- capturing all records in the staff members’ possession into systems with records management functionality;
- returning paper records or allocating them to another staff member;
• following up any missing records; and
• removal of any access controls or encryption on electronic records or reassignment to other staff.

**Source of authority**

Section 12 – Storage

Your agency should ensure that records are protected and managed in a cost-effective manner for as long as they are needed.

Where and how your records are stored will depend on:

- their format, for example, whether they are paper, electronic, film, or photographs;
- how long the records need to be kept;
- their value; and
- how often they will be accessed.

Look for evidence of appropriate storage conditions for all records irrespective of format.

Question 12.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent has your agency identified its requirements for storage of electronic records?

Your agency should document its requirements in a records storage policy or procedure to ensure that electronic records are protected, accessible and managed in a cost-effective manner for as long as they are needed.

In developing a policy for storing electronic records, you should cover these elements:

- location;
- environmental control;
- maintenance and security;
- protection from disaster;
- accessibility;
- internal and external storage locations; and
- backup arrangements.

Source of authority


Question 12.2

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent has your agency identified its requirements for storage of paper and other non-electronic records?

Your agency should document its requirements in a records storage policy or procedure to ensure that paper and other non-electronic records are protected, accessible and managed in a cost-effective manner for as long as they are needed.

In developing a policy for storing paper and other non-electronic records, you should cover these elements:

- location;
- environmental control;
- shelving and packaging;
- maintenance and security;
- protection from disaster;
- careful handling;
- physical access; and
- internal and external storage locations.

Source of authority


Question 12.3

Additional recommendation for information and records management

To what extent have storage requirements for records been circulated and promoted in your agency?

Information on the storage requirements will be important to a range of staff and service providers. They should be aware of the requirements and be able to find them easily.

Source of authority

Question 12.4

Additional recommendation for information and records management

To what extent does your agency identify storage areas that are not to be used for keeping electronic records?

Records should not be stored in locations such as personal drives or email accounts where the records are not accessible to others who need them and they cannot be managed.

Staff should not store the master copies of electronic records in removable storage devices such as BlackBerry devices, USB memory devices, laptops, and personal digital assistants (PDAs). Security and privacy issues need to be considered.

Source of authority


Question 12.5

Additional recommendation for information and records management

If your agency outsources records storage, to what extent does the contract specify storage standards?

Agencies should stipulate storage requirements in contracts with service providers consistent with the:

- Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records and the associated guidelines;
- Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF); and

Source of authority


**Section 13 – Preservation**

Your agency should ensure records and their metadata are preserved to ensure they remain accessible, reliable, complete, authentic and usable for as long as required.

Your level of preservation action will depend on:

- how long the records needs to be kept;
- what facilities are available for preserving your short-term and long-term temporary records; and
- how quickly you need to access the records.

It is important to consider the preservation requirements of electronic records as they are more vulnerable in the short term due to equipment and software obsolescence.

Look for a preservation strategy that protects the integrity of the records and their metadata, in all formats, to guarantee their ongoing accessibility and functionality.

**Question 13.1**

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

**To what extent does your agency have a strategy to manage electronic records for as long as they are required?**

Records may be needed for longer than the life of their storage media. If your agency needs to retain electronic records for the long term, say more than five years, avoid technological obsolescence by ensuring that records can be copied, reformatted, converted or migrated across successive technologies.

Your agency’s preservation strategies should be:

- planned and documented;
- tested before application (to ensure there is no loss of functionality, format, structure and metadata);
- applied to file formats and storage media;
- applied as soon as possible, while the records are still accessible (preservation is harder and more expensive when the file format or media is outmoded and inaccessible); and
- inclusive of hardware, software, operating systems and storage devices.

**Source of authority**


Question 13.2

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How effectively does your agency ensure that paper and other non-electronic records are preserved for as long as they are required?

Your agency will need to ensure that paper and other non-electronic records are preserved so they can be accessed for as long as they are needed.

If you allow any record to become inaccessible before the minimum retention period specified in a record authority has expired, you are potentially in breach of the Archives Act.

Source of authority

Section 14 – Security

Your agency should ensure it has guidelines on who is permitted to access records and in what circumstances.

In addition, to prevent unauthorised access, your agency needs secure storage that is appropriate to the format, security and classification of the records.

This means that once records are captured, they cannot be:

- accessed by unauthorised people;
- tampered with or altered without authorisation; or
- disposed of without authorisation, or misplaced.

Look for evidence that the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) and the Australian Government Information Security Manual (ISM) have been applied to all agency information and records.

Question 14.1

<table>
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<th>Minimum requirement for basic information and records management</th>
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How well are records in your agency managed to prevent unauthorised access?

To be fully compliant with the prevention of unauthorised access, records in all formats should be managed in accordance with the requirements of:

- the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF); and

The security of records is managed through security classifications and access controls. Controls to prevent unauthorised access to records in systems may be applied either through systems design or manually as records are captured.

Source of authority


Question 14.2

Additional recommendation for information and records management

How well does your agency specify security and access controls for information and records?

You should address:

- the identification of security-classified information that can only be accessed by staff with appropriate authority;
- the identification of sensitive information that can only be accessed by staff with a need to know; and
- the protection of information from unauthorised changes or deletion.

Source of authority


Question 14.3

Additional recommendation for information and records management

To what extent do your business information systems log or track changes made to the records?

Systems that manage records should be able to track all changes made to the records and provide information on who has made the changes. These details are important for proving the authenticity and reliability of the records.

Source of authority


Section 15 – Business information systems

Your agency should identify the information and records management requirements for its current and future business information systems.

A business information system is any system that assists an agency to perform its business and manage information – examples include case management systems, staff management, pay systems, and finance systems.

In supporting your agency's business, systems that manage information need to work so that records:

- can be proven to be genuine;
- are accurate and can be trusted;
- are complete and unaltered;
- are secure from unauthorised access, alteration and deletion;
- are findable and readable; and
- are related to other relevant records.

Look for a systematic and consistent approach by business information systems designers, owners and managers to identifying information and records management requirements for their current and future systems.

Question 15.1

**Requirement for a business information system**

**How effectively has your agency mapped the business processes which are supported by the business information system?**

A business process analysis will allow you to discover the points at which information is created. Business process analysis needs to include:

- legislative, regulatory and business requirements;
- specific activities which produce information; and
- system dependencies and linkages.

**Source of authority**


**Question 15.2**

To what extent does your business information system have an information management plan?

The business information system should have an information management plan which is fit for purpose. Information management plans should:

- provide an overview of information managed by the business information system;
- describe its value and importance;
- outline retention requirements;
- provide details about how the information is to be managed over time;
- outline access and security controls; and
- assess information and system risks and document controls.

If the business information system is large, complex, critical or maintains records of high risk business, the information management plan will need to be more detailed.

**Source of authority**


Question 15.3

Requirement for a business information system

How well has your agency identified where and when business information should be created and captured by the system?

There may be multiple points where records or aggregations of data must be captured.

User roles, procedures, and business rules need to be established to capture the necessary information.

This may include records that lie outside of the system that created them. For example, emails are often created within one system yet captured in another.

Source of authority


Question 15.4

Requirement for a business information system

How well has your agency identified the risks of not capturing or managing information appropriately by the system?

A risk assessment will involve comparing business information requirements with the actual capability of your business information system. You will need to:

- assign a risk rating to significant groups of information that describe the potential impact on your agency in the case of inappropriate disclosure, accidental or fraudulent alteration or loss of these records. Extra consideration should be given to high risk information;
- explore how the system currently manages its information throughout its life; and
- identify gaps between the requirements and the capability of the system to manage information. This gap analysis will be the basis for the risk rating.
Source of authority


Question 15.5

| Requirement for a business information system |

**To what extent has sufficient metadata about business activity been captured?**

Descriptive information about information or records (metadata) allows the information to be understood and retrieved. Metadata in the system will need to cover system, business and regulatory requirements and describe what was done to information, who did it and when.

Source of authority


Question 15.6

Requirement for a business information system

How well is information used by the business information system managed throughout its active business use?

Information needs to be managed so that:

- minimum retention periods are met;
- information and metadata are accessible and usable;
- security and privacy are maintained; and
- records are not inappropriately altered or deleted.

Source of authority


Question 15.7

Requirement for a business information system

How well is the integrity of the information managed by the business information system preserved throughout its life?

Decision or action points identified by business process analysis will indicate where information should be fixed so that further updates are either audited or not enabled. You may need to create:

- quality control procedures to ensure the completeness and trustworthiness of the records; and
- system controls over access and security to ensure information can be relied upon as trustworthy evidence of business.

Source of authority


Standards Australia, Australian Standard Records Management, AS ISO 15489.1, 2002 ‘8.2: Records systems characteristics’


**Question 15.8**

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<th>Requirement for a business information system</th>
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**To what extent does the business information system have features that manage the retention and destruction of information?**

The system could:

- indicate which records authority or authorities are applicable to its information;
- apply minimum retention periods to particular information; and
- retain information for as long as necessary.

**Source of authority**


**Question 15.9**

<table>
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<th>Requirement for a business information system</th>
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**How well have the responsibilities for the business information system been allocated in your agency?**

The following roles may be allocated to specific people:

- a ‘system manager’ should be responsible for the accessibility, integrity and authenticity of the information captured within the system and be accountable for the reliability of the information; and
- a ‘system owner’ should be responsible for the strategic direction of the system, be accountable for the alignment of the system with business needs and ensure the system receives sufficient resources to adequately manage risk.
Question 15.10

To what extent does your agency’s audit, risk and business improvement plans review the business information system?

Audit, risk and business improvement plans should review the business information system so that it can be maintained and updated as part of regular agency operations. This ensures information is kept authentic, reliable and useable for business activity.

Source of authority


Section 16 – Digital records management

This section focuses on the management of digital records, ie electronic records created and maintained by digital computer technology.

Responses to questions in this section will help you to assess and track how well your agency is managing its digital records and help to plan for improvements.

Your agency should be adopting digital management of its information and records. Digital management means that where possible, records are created, kept and managed in digital form. It also means that where possible, digital processes replace paper, and the creation of paper files is discouraged.

Adopting digital records management practices requires an agency-wide commitment.

Digital records management in your agency includes:

- knowing where digital records are being created in your agency’s many systems;
- implementing scanning processes and procedures where appropriate;
- developing and implementing digital records policies; and
- controlling the creation of paper files to limited circumstances.

Question 16.1

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency identify where digital records are created?

Agencies employ many types of systems in their day-to-day business. These systems may range from human resources and finance systems to custom-built systems that support the agency’s function. All these systems create records. Identifying the systems used in your agency and understanding what records are being created will help your agency maintain evidence of all business activities.

To identify where digital records are being created, your agency needs to know:

- what systems are used in the agency;
- what records are produced by business systems; and
- what business, regulatory and community requirements underpin the creation and capture of your agency’s digital records.
Question 16.2

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

What proportion of your agency’s records are managed and stored in a digital records management environment?

Storing and managing records in a digital records management environment means, that wherever possible records are created, stored and managed digitally, including scanning incoming paper records so new paper files are not created.

When digital records are printed and a paper copy is kept as the ‘official’ record, the records can lose data and context and may possibly become incomplete.

The creation of paper records should be controlled and limited to rare cases when paper format is required, for example for security or legislative requirements.

To answer this question, please choose the rating below that best describes the situation in your agency:

- U (unable to rate) cannot answer
- 1 (poor) no records are managed and stored in a digital records management environment
- 2 (inadequate) occasionally records are managed and stored in a digital records management environment
- 3 (limited) some records are managed and stored in a digital records management environment
- 4 (adequate) a high proportion of records are managed and stored in a digital records management environment
- 5 (very good) most records are managed and stored in a digital records management environment
- 6 (excellent) all records, other than those with an identified requirement to be in paper format, are managed and stored in a digital records management environment

Source of authority
Question 16.3

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

What percentage of your agency’s digital records is currently also managed and stored in physical format?

It is not uncommon practice for agencies to print digital records and manage and store both the digital and the paper copy. This means there are two versions of the same record.

To answer this question, please estimate what percentage of digital records is also managed and stored in paper format (ie both the digital record and the paper copies are managed and stored):

U (unable to rate) cannot answer
1 (poor) my agency maintains paper copies of more than half of all digital records and manages and stores both versions
2 (inadequate) my agency duplicates 20% - 30% of its digital records in paper form and manages and stores both versions
3 (limited) my agency duplicates 10% - 20% of its digital records in paper form and manages and stores both versions
4 (adequate) my agency duplicates 5% - 10% of its digital records in paper form and manages and stores both versions
5 (very good) my agency duplicates 1% – 5 % of its digital records in paper form and manages and stores both versions
6 (excellent) my agency does not maintain and store paper copies of any digital records

Source of authority


Question 16.4

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

How soon are you planning to transition to a more comprehensive digital records management environment?

Provide an estimate of when your agency will be working in a more comprehensive digital records management environment. This means that the majority of your agency’s records will be created, stored and managed in a...
digital records management environment, with incoming paper records scanned so new paper files are not created.

Please use the rating scale as follows:

U (unable to rate) do not know if plans exist to move to a digital records management environment

1 (poor) my agency has no plans in the immediate future to move to a digital records management environment

2 (inadequate) my agency will move to a digital records management environment in the future but has not yet commenced planning the move

3 (limited) my agency will be working in a more comprehensive digital records management environment in 3 years

4 (adequate) my agency will be working in a more comprehensive digital records management environment in 2 years

5 (very good) my agency will be working in a more comprehensive digital records management environment in 1 year

6 (excellent) my agency is already working in a digital records management environment

Source of authority


Question 16.5

Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency scan incoming paper records?

Scanning incoming paper records reduces the accumulation of paper records and makes information more accessible and findable. Agencies may scan incoming paper themselves or engage a third party. Scanning procedures include:

- identification of what to scan;
- defined scanning specifications (eg format, compression);
- quality control processes;
• storage processes; and
• processes for authorised disposal of the original source record

Source of authority

National Archives of Australia, General Records Authority (31): source (including original) records after they have been copied, converted or migrated, 2011, http://www.naa.gov.au/Images/GRA%2031%20-%20Source%20(including%20original)%20records%20that%20have%20been%20copied%20-%20September%202011_tcm16-49593.PDF, accessed 12 June 2012.

Question 16.6
Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency identify which records must remain in paper format?

Commonly, a small number of records need to be kept and managed in paper format. Agencies need to determine which records are required to be created and managed in paper format. Identification of requirements includes an analysis of:

• laws and regulations;
• operational requirements; and
• security requirements

Source of authority


Question 16.7
Minimum requirement for basic information and records management

To what extent does your agency discourage the creation and use of paper records?

Reducing the use and creation of paper records is an agency-wide commitment. To discourage the creation of paper records, agencies should ensure:

• any existing print-to-paper policy is removed;
• digital records are the preferred format;
• records management policies set out the limited circumstances in which paper records need to be maintained;
• senior management understand the benefits of digital records management practices and support agency-wide compliance; and
• staff are trained in digital records awareness.

Source of authority
Appendix 1

Rating scale for questions (except for questions 16.2, 16.3 and 16.4)

The rating scale is based on a continuous improvement model so progress can be tracked over time. The following explanations of each level are indicative only and illustrate some aspects to be considered when deciding on a rating. Not all aspects of the following explanations need to be fully met in order to assign a particular rating.

6. Excellent
For example:
- records management fully supports all of your agency’s functions, objectives, business processes, governance and accountability;
- advanced systems and networks are used for the creation and sharing of records and allow for communication and collaboration within and outside the organisation; or
- records management strategies and policies are proactively reviewed and improved regularly.

5. Very good
For example:
- records management is well integrated with business processes and supports organisational governance and accountability; or
- strategies and policies are reviewed and updated as needed.

4. Adequate
For example:
- records management is managed well in most areas of your agency, is linked to business processes and supports your organisational management goals; or
- there are some gaps in information and records management strategies and policies.

3. Limited
For example:
- your agency demonstrates limited capability, capacity and experience in the requirements of information and records management; or
- your agency recognises the need to link records management and business processes but has not yet achieved this.

2. Inadequate
For example:
- there is little awareness of records management and the importance of good records management policies and practices;
- there is little or no connection between records management and business processes; or
- your agency has an elementary knowledge of information and records management.
1. Poor
For example:
• there is no awareness of records management policies and practices;
• records management is non-existent, informal or ad hoc; or
• your agency is unable to offer any evidence of capability in the area.

Unable to rate
Choose this response if you are unable to assign a rating for a question. Ensure you also include a reason when selecting this response.