

## Conducting a Records Management Maturity Self-assessment

### Introduction

This Records Management Maturity Self-assessment is for use by agencies with strategic Records Management programs in place to measure their current state of maturity, to set performance targets and develop action plans. Agency staff involved in records management, auditors and consultants may use this Advice, and the results will inform the agency's Records Management Program, including the development of strategic plans.

This self-assessment is based around Information Management Guideline No 1 - Records Management Principles. The maturity levels have been developed to provide a baseline measurement of recordkeeping across Tasmanian Government, in order to assist agencies to meet recordkeeping requirements under the Archives Act 1983, and to improve records management practices.

### The Self-assessment Model

This model is designed to assist agencies to use the Evidence Checklist from Guideline 1 - Records Management Principles to develop a self-assessment and continuous improvement tool. Regular self-assessment and review of agency-wide records management practices should form part of your strategic Records Management Program. It will assist your agency to meet compliance requirements, drive continuous improvement activities, improve agency-wide practices and support optimised performance.

The Evidence Checklist in Guideline 1 is organised under five guiding principles. These are the essential elements that all agencies should have in place to manage their agency records from creation to disposal, and are defined in Guideline 1 - Records Management Principles as:

- 1) Create and Capture Records
- 2) Govern Records
- 3) Store Records
- 4) Access Records
- 5) Dispose of Records

This document is intended to assist agencies to use Guideline 1 as an assessment and planning tool. However, it will not tell you how to manage particular records or record formats in any detail. Agencies seeking further advice on these topics should refer to specific TAHO guidelines and advice.

### Assessment methodology

A suggested methodology for undertaking the self-assessment involves five phases:

- 1) Plan project
- 2) Collect data
- 3) Analyse data
- 4) Set targets and build support
- 5) Improve and review



This suggested methodology is not intended to be proscriptive. If your agency has standard project management processes, we recommend you follow those. A detailed project management methodology is also available in the Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines available on the eGovernment website<sup>1</sup>.

### **Application and scalability**

The process is designed to measure the maturity of agency-wide recordkeeping practices rather than simply measure the performance of your agency's Records Department. It is intended to be applied holistically, but you will need to consider your agency's size and capabilities when setting priorities for improvement actions.

- In a small agency, the amount of research required to complete the self-assessment will be significantly less, and may be undertaken by one person.
- A large agency with a centralised Record Management function may undertake assessments within individual business units as part of internal audit or continuous improvement programs.
- If your agency's Records Management functions are distributed or decentralised, stakeholders from each location could meet together to complete this self-assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.egovernment.tas.gov.au/project\\_management/tasmanian\\_government\\_project\\_management\\_guidelines](http://www.egovernment.tas.gov.au/project_management/tasmanian_government_project_management_guidelines)

## I. Plan project



We recommend that your agency treats this level of self-assessment as a defined project. Having agency-wide support, formal endorsement and senior management approval makes it easier to implement agency-wide improvement actions arising from the assessment.

### **Determine the project scope, timelines and resourcing requirements**

Historically, records were managed separately by staff working in the mail room or records registry. Today, information management practices encompass a wide spectrum of activities and stakeholders. Contemporary Records and Information Managers are involved in strategic planning, managing information in business systems, conducting risk analysis and continuous improvement activities. This maturity self-assessment would form part of those activities.

Undertaking this self-assessment may require input from other parts of the agency, such as IT, corporate services and other business units. Depending on the size of your agency, consider identifying a project sponsor or champion, and a project manager who will be responsible for day-to-day coordination of the project. This will be especially important if the project will be outsourced to contractors. The formation of a project steering committee is another option.

### **Skills required**

While this self-assessment could be undertaken as a small project managed by one person, your agency should plan for additional expertise when necessary.

At a minimum, the project manager will need access to these skills and/or knowledge areas:

- Project management
- Records and information management
- Information technology
- Risk management
- Corporate governance

As part of the project planning, identify stakeholders and devise an appropriate communication strategy. The assessor(s) will need to seek specific (and sometimes detailed) information from a range of sources, which means that stakeholder support will be essential to complete the assessment.

## 2. Collect data



This phase requires the collection of the evidence needed to underpin the maturity determinations. Input from stakeholders is required during this phase. NOTE: This collection phase can overlap with Phase 3.

### Background knowledge

It is important that the person conducting assessments is familiar with the methodology which underpins the recordkeeping maturity model and the Records Management Principles defined in Guideline 1. It is also desirable to have knowledge of other Guidelines and Advice issued by TAHO.

### Gather documentary evidence

Use the Evidence Checklist from Guideline 1 - Records Management Principles to assist. You may need to source specific documentation around procedures for example, so ensure that there is sufficient time to gather and review all the evidence from each of your business areas.

### Prepare for consultations

You may need to seek input from stakeholders across the agency to complete the assessment and to ensure that sufficient coverage is obtained. It is important to prepare appropriately, so that you ask the right questions, and so that questions are not missed. Any information gathered through consultations may require verification and follow-up (for example, checking that a procedure referred to in a document actually exists in practice), so you should ensure that stakeholders are engaged and committed to the process and prepared to participate in follow-up consultations.

Surveys may be another way to gauge input, but may be less useful than face-to-face consultations for identifying specific requirements or gaps.

NOTE: During this phase, stakeholders may provide evidence that appears contradictory. Review and verify your evidence during Phase 3 - Analyse Data. Then you can be assured that your findings and recommended actions will be based on sound evidence.

**Preparing for consultation**

You are about to have a meeting with the business unit responsible for procurement and contract management. Prior to the meeting, review any policies, procedures or related documentation that is available (your agency intranet can be a good source) to gain an understanding of their internal processes and systems. Based on this research, and your maturity model, prepare your questions to relate to specific indicators in the maturity model around outsourcing and contractors.

The example questions below are drawn from indicators in the maturity model that relate to outsourcing:

Question	Maturity Model Principle & Key Requirement
Are you aware of your agency’s recordkeeping policies and procedures?	Principle 2 - Govern Records:  “All staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of recordkeeping responsibilities.”
What information or training have you received on your recordkeeping responsibilities? What would you like to see improved?	
Are you aware that contractors also have recordkeeping responsibilities?	
When significant changes to processes and procedures relating to records and information are introduced, do you inform contractors?	
Do you have a standard contract clause for recordkeeping provisions for outsourced business?	Principle 2 - Govern Records:  “Outsourcing government business addresses recordkeeping requirements, in accordance with Guideline 10 - Outsourcing of government business: recordkeeping issues”
Do you conduct risks assessments before outsourcing agency business? Does the risk assessment cover information and records?	
Are you aware of any formal procurement procedures for using cloud-based applications used in the agency? If so, is access to information considered?	Principle 4 - Access Records  “Access provisions MUST be included in outsourcing documentation.”
Are you aware of any agency records stored off-site in commercial storage? Are you aware that only TAHO approved providers can store agency records?	Principle 3 - Store Records  “Where storage is outsourced, only approved secondary storage providers MUST be used by the agency.”

During the consultation process, encourage participants to identify what they see as priorities for improvement. This will assist in developing your action plan.

### 3. Analyse data



Analyse the data gathered at Phase 2 to determine the current state of recordkeeping maturity. You may wish to map the results to a maturity assessment matrix at this point. This baseline will provide you with a sound platform for developing the recommended actions and improvements. For an example matrix, contact Government Recordkeeping staff (see contact details at the end of this Advice).

### Applying the maturity model

We suggest that you group your questions under the five Principles and map evidence indicators on a matrix against levels of maturity.

**Figure 1: Suggested maturity definitions**

<b>UNMANAGED</b>	No systematic or formal approach exists in relation to recordkeeping activity. Any pockets of maturity that the organisation has are based on the experience and initiatives of individuals. Where processes and practices exist, they are applied in an ad-hoc manner.
<b>LIMITED</b>	Processes and practices are defined to varying degrees but are not applied consistently. Basic management controls and disciplines are in place.
<b>OPERATIONAL</b>	Processes and practices are defined, documented, well understood and used consistently across the organization.
<b>STRATEGIC</b>	Organisation manages records and recordkeeping processes consistently and comprehensively across the organisation. Processes and practices are planned, actively managed and routinely measured to ensure delivery of desired results.
<b>OPTIMISED</b>	Processes and practices are continuously improved through pro-active innovation and organisational learning; based on industry standards, best practice, ongoing monitoring and review. Organisation considers records and recordkeeping as an asset that underpins all business processes. Processes and practices are regularly measured and monitored, and results analysed and used for continuous improvement.

**Figure 2: Scoring Matrix**

<b>PRINCIPLE</b>					
	<b>Unmanaged</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Operational</b>	<b>Strategic</b>	<b>Optimised</b>
<b>Requirement</b>	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators
<b>Requirement</b>	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators

**Figure 3: Example Indicators**

<b>Principle I: Create and Capture Records</b>					
	<b>Unmanaged</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Operational</b>	<b>Strategic</b>	<b>Optimised</b>
<b>Records must meet legislative, regulatory and administrative requirements</b>	No awareness of legislative framework.	Legislation list in Records Management policy.	Legislative, regulatory and administrative requirements identified. Legislative mapping has been completed and documented.	Comprehensive analysis has been undertaken and documented. This is used to support consistent, agency-wide recordkeeping practices.	Changes to the legislative, regulatory and administrative environment are monitored, recordkeeping requirements are updated and changes implemented across agency whenever they occur.
<b>Records must be captured regardless of format</b>	No procedures exist for capture of records into recordkeeping system.	Procedures for records capture exist but are ad-hoc.  Not consistent across all units or work-sites.  Do not cover all records formats.	Agency has procedures that cover capture of records in all formats.  Agency has commenced development of an Information Asset Register for all records, datasets and systems across all sites.	Records in all formats are captured in recordkeeping system.  Agency has a current, complete Information Asset Register for all records, datasets and systems across all sites.	Records in all formats are captured in recordkeeping system.  Agency information is captured and consistently managed agency-wide as a key business asset.

Determine, from the evidence that you have gathered, where on the matrix your agency sits.

NOTE: The examples requirements are drawn from Guideline I - Records Management Principles. Some requirements from Guideline I may not be applicable to your agency. For example, the requirement for an agency-specific Retention and Disposal Schedule will not apply to local government, which is covered by a sector-wide schedule.

## Assess the baseline maturity level

If all the evidential requirements for a particular level are in place, then you can be confident that you meet that maturity level. To rate at a higher level, you must be satisfied that all requirements for the lower levels have been met *and* exceeded. If only some of the requirements have been met, lower your maturity level rating.

So for example, if your agency has a Records Management Policy but it is overdue for review, this would lower the maturity level to LIMITED under Principle 2 - Govern Records.

**Figure 3: Example assessment levels mapped to matrix**

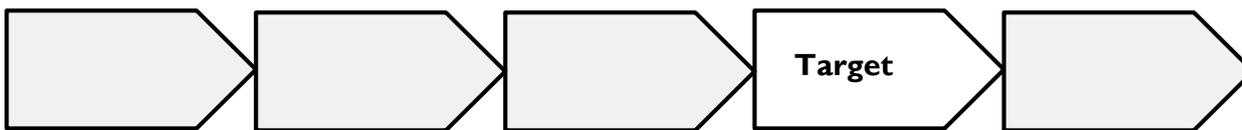
Level	Unmanaged	Limited	Operational	Strategic	Optimised
Principle 1 - Create and Capture Records		CURRENT			
Principle 2 - Govern Records		CURRENT			
Principle 3 - Store Records			CURRENT		
Principle 4 - Access Records			CURRENT		
Principle 5 - Dispose of Records		CURRENT			

## Consolidate findings

While establishing an agency-wide maturity level baseline is important, it may be useful to break-down the findings further by business unit.

Specific units may have reached a higher maturity level and developed good recordkeeping practices worth sharing, while others may need extra support to assist with meeting requirements. A Summary Report of Findings could document specific strengths and weaknesses in each unit, to justify the identified maturity level and note specific areas for improvement.

## 4. Set targets and build support



During the consultation process you will have gathered extensive information on the agency’s current recordkeeping performance. In this phase, you will use the identified maturity levels as a basis for setting improvement priorities.

### Set targets for improvement

Setting targets to improve records management practices in specific business units which did not meet the base maturity level of OPERATIONAL may be a priority action out of the self-assessment. Targeted priority actions such as this will help to achieve agency-wide consistency in recordkeeping practices. Setting targets can be quite complex, so gaining senior management approval and stakeholder support to reach those targets is a necessity.

Another approach may be that the agency decides where the information risks are greatest, and sets higher targets for those high-risk business activities.

#### Before setting target levels, consider these issues:

RISK EXPOSURE	Some agencies, or specific business units, may conduct high risk business. These areas will need to achieve the highest levels of recordkeeping maturity to ensure business decisions are appropriately documented.
COMPLEXITY OF THE WORK	Agencies that handle high risk and complex workflows may need especially rigorous documentation to ensure accountability requirements are met. These areas may need to achieve higher levels of recordkeeping maturity.
SIZE OF THE ORGANISATION	A small agency may find that, with less sophisticated systems and processes in place, they are operating at the baseline level of maturity (Level 3 Operational). This may be the appropriate level, given your budget and resource capabilities.

### Map targets against current levels

It may be useful to map the agency’s current levels against the desired state, based on the targets set. In the example below, the agency has set target levels for Principle 1 and 2 at STRATEGIC for a five year action plan in its earliest phase, leaving the target levels for Principles 5 at OPERATIONAL because they plan to implement actions to address this in a later phase.

This example graph below clearly shows that the agency will have to undertake more actions to move to STRATEGIC under Principle 2 - Govern Records from the current maturity level. This sets a priority for action in this agency around information governance.

**Figure 4: Example mapped targets**

Level	Unmanaged	Limited	Operational	Strategic	Optimised
Principle 1 - Create and Capture Records		CURRENT	FUTURE		
Principle 2 - Govern Records		CURRENT		FUTURE	
Principle 3 - Store Records			CURRENT		
Principle 4 - Access Records			CURRENT		
Principle 5 - Dispose of Records		CURRENT	FUTURE		

### Identify priorities for action

Once you have set target levels, you will need to determine what strategies will assist your agency to achieve the next compliance level. In most cases, clear requirements for each Principle are described in the Evidence Checklist. If not already in place, prioritise the development of these requirements.

To be most effective, do not apply recordkeeping improvement actions as a ‘one size fits all’ remedy. To prioritise areas for improvement, try using decision making tools such as effort/impact analysis, or identify the areas of most risk.

**Figure 5: Effort/Impact Grid**

<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>High</b>	Quick Win	Major Project
	<b>Low</b>	Low priority	Lowest Priority
		<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
		<b>EFFORT</b>	

You may choose low effort and high impact actions in order to gain some ‘quick wins’ early, or you may decide to undertake a major recordkeeping project, particularly if maturity levels were assessed at OPERATIONAL or even lower.

Remember to analyse and document the links and relationships between your proposed actions in order to develop an action plan which is appropriately targeted to your agency's highest risks and most urgent operational needs.

### **Test the findings**

Test your findings before final delivery of your report. Ideally, this will be a consultative process involving key stakeholders. Present your findings to the steering committee or to your senior executive. This will ensure that they have an opportunity to provide input and feedback. The presentation may include:

- Brief project overview
- Agency recordkeeping strengths and weaknesses
- Proposed improvement strategy
- Opportunity for feedback and input

Undertaking this process will increase the likelihood of endorsement for improvements.

### **Finalise the report for endorsement**

A formal report will ensure that your processes, data and results are well-documented, and can be further used as a tool for recommendations. The report should incorporate any feedback or decisions made after findings were tested.

During drafting, you may find gaps or discover outstanding questions that need to be addressed. This is a good opportunity to revisit stakeholders, and to seek additional evidence. Formal endorsement of the report by senior executives provides a sound platform for continual improvement activities, and will ensure that the report is endorsed agency-wide as a baseline recordkeeping measurement.

### **Communicate your results**

Once senior executive endorsement of the findings and the Action Plan has been achieved, communicate this to your stakeholders. Their involvement and support will be required to implement actions, so it is important that they feel ownership of the results.

## 5. Improve and review



Implementing the actions should be managed using your agency's standard project management processes. Maintaining the steering committee or any other governance arrangements put in place for the assessment process will ensure that momentum is not lost.

Confirm, amend or update the project plan as required to address priority actions and to assign project resources. If it is maintained as a 'living' roadmap or blueprint for action, the agency will see recordkeeping as an ongoing practice of continual improvement rather than as a one-off project.

Schedule the next maturity assessment. Consider what interval is best between assessments, or choose a period which allows for improvement actions to take effect. Before setting the review cycle, consider agency-wide strategic planning processes. It may be appropriate for recordkeeping performance indicators to be routinely monitored and reported against in the year between each maturity assessment cycle (e.g. allowing a year's gap between maturity assessments, to accommodate strategic reporting processes).

### **Do we need to submit our findings to TAHO?**

This is a self-assessment tool. Agencies are not required to report on any results to TAHO. Formal compliance monitoring and measurement will be undertaken through the recordkeeping audits.

However, agencies are encouraged to report on results of recordkeeping maturity self-assessments through channels such as internal corporate governance meetings and in their annual report.

### **Recommended Reading**

- Guideline 1 - Records Management Principles
- Office of eGovernment, Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines Version 7, (July 2011)

## Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit  
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office  
91 Murray Street  
HOBART TASMANIA 7000  
Telephone: 03 6165 5581  
Email: [gisu@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:gisu@education.tas.gov.au)

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- NAA, Check-up 2.0 (2012)
- Queensland State Archives Recordkeeping maturity model and roadmap (2010)
- Standards Australia International, HB278-2009 Recordkeeping Compliance (2009)

## Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

## Document Development History

### Build Status

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