

Queensland Government Information Management Skills Action Plan

July 2009 – June 2014

An initiative of the Information Management Sub-Committee
of the Strategic Information and ICT Council Executive

Queensland State Archives
July 2009

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- Mr Alan Chapman, A/Executive Director, Queensland Government Chief Information Office, Department of Public Works
- Dr Peter Crossman, Queensland Government Statistician, Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury
- Mr Steve Jacoby, General Manager, Spatial Information, Department of Environment and Resource Management

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1. The Need for Action

1.1 Government priorities

The Queensland Government is increasingly reliant on sound Information Management practices to deliver on key service challenges. Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland (Q2) articulates new priorities and sets out key challenges for the State in the areas of:

- building a strong and diverse economy
- protecting lifestyles and environment
- delivering world-class education and training
- ensuring the health of all Queenslanders, and
- supporting a safe and caring community.

Q2 is leading towards an era of 'joined-up government' where advances in technology enable governments to transform service delivery and meet community demand for increased accessibility to Government services, products and information. The Q2 targets require the participation of industry and the community, and will require collaboration across the existing structures and agencies of Government.

There are also growing community expectations for increased transparency and accountability, reflected in demands for greater access to Government information. The 2008 Right to Information review recognised that an application to access information under legislation should be the last resort, shifting the emphasis from a 'pull' to a 'push' model where information is proactively released.

The review also recognised that improved whole-of-Government approaches to Information Management are required to enable this shift, addressing not only the lifecycle management of information but also the attitudes and behaviours of information creators, users and managers.

Information Management can be defined as:

'The means by which an organisation plans, collects, organises, governs, secures, uses, controls, disseminates, exchanges, maintains and disposes of its information; as well as any means through which the organisation ensures that the value of that information is identified and exploited to its fullest.'¹

To be able to manage effectively its information Queensland Government requires a range of skills and expertise. The 'Information Management Strategic Framework', developed by the Queensland Government Chief Information Office, aims to set out a strategic approach to Information Management within Queensland Government and acknowledges the necessity of planning for and building information management capability across the Queensland Government.

The success of Q2, the Right to Information reforms and other key Government priorities will depend in part on the Queensland public sector having the necessary capability to collect, manage, store, share and analyse ever-increasing volumes of information. However, this changing environment also means that managing information is becoming increasingly complex, giving rise to a need for new and diverse skills. Success will also require cultural change within Government to foster an 'information culture,' where information is seen as the lifeblood of service delivery and Government decision-making.

1.2 Community expectations

These new initiatives respond to the increased community expectations to be able to engage with Government through electronic means. As shown in Figure 1, access to the Internet at home has increased steadily across all age groups, with approximately 77% of the Queensland population having home access to the Internet or email in 2007.

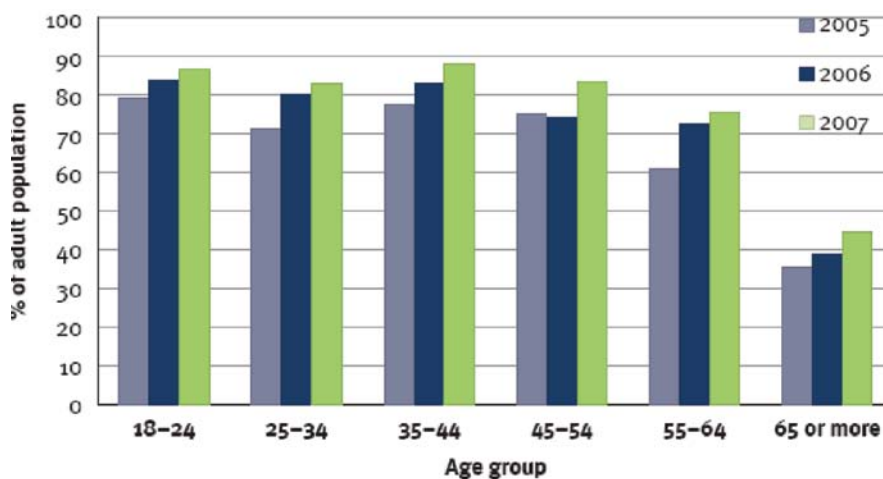


Figure 1: Access to the Internet or email at home by age - 2005-2007²

Reflecting this, the Internet is now the preferred method for accessing Government services and this preference has become stronger over recent years. As shown in Figure 2, in 2008, over two in five Australians (44%) nominated online as their preferred service delivery channel.

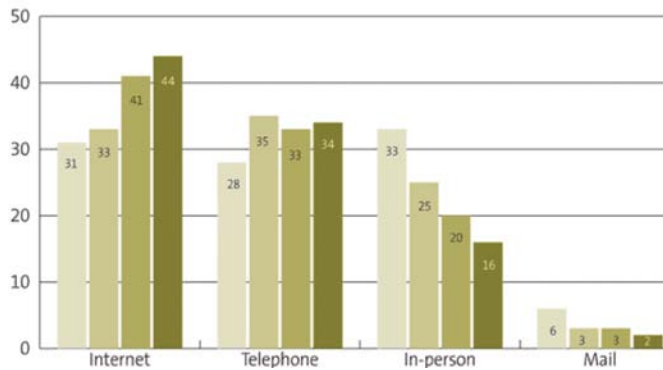


Figure 2: Preferred service delivery channel ³

As highlighted in the context of the Right to Information review, community expectations also extend beyond online forms of traditional services, to increased access to Government information. This supports accountability, transparency and an informed community. Government priorities, such as Q2 and the Right to Information reforms, and changing client preferences, present opportunities to create a dynamic public sector that effectively engages with the community. The effective management, use and access to information underpin these changes.

1.3 Social benefits

Improved management of and access to Government information can provide the community with greater opportunities to engage with and examine areas of Government responsibility. Putting in place a consistent Information Management framework in Queensland will allow the public to contribute to new Government initiatives and approaches, and to participate in the democratic process in an informed manner. Considerable educational and historical benefits can be realised through improved access to Government information.

1.4 Economic benefits

In addition to providing better service for clients, improving the management of and access to Government information pays real economic dividends, both from direct licence revenue and through creating opportunities for innovation. For example, a study found that the United Kingdom Ordnance Survey underpins £100 billion per year of economic activity.⁴ In 2006, the UK Office of Fair Trading estimated revenues from the public sector information market to be £590 million per year.⁵

In Australia, the spatial information industry generated revenue of \$1.37 billion in 2006-2007 and contributed between \$6.4 billion and \$12.6 billion to the Gross Domestic Product. Research also points to the value of cost-avoidance: for example, spatial information underpins effective biosecurity procedures, helping to prevent or minimise the impact of disease or pests.⁶

While harder to quantify, improved Information Management also offers economic benefits through supporting greater efficiencies and effectiveness in decision-making and service delivery. Ensuring agency staff can easily access relevant information enables timely and better-quality decisions and policy development, and helps ensure that services are appropriate for the client, and as seamless as possible. In summary, the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the Queensland Government depend on how well agencies can collect, create, use and store information to make decisions and act in pursuit of their business objectives.

2. Current State of Play

It is well known that the historically low levels of unemployment have resulted in skills shortages across many sectors. Queensland in particular has experienced record low unemployment levels. While this has been positive in many ways, it has made it more difficult for employers to identify, attract and retain skilled staff. Employment growth in Queensland has averaged 3.8% per annum over the five years to April 2008. One of the strongest growth categories has been the skilled occupations of Managers and Administrators (at 6.3%), which includes the broad range of Information Management professionals.⁷

The effects of the recent economic downturn on the skills environment are not yet clear, although it is not expected to have a positive impact on the IM skills shortage in the short- to medium-term. This is a result of both increasing demand due to changing Government priorities and a shortage of recent graduates in this area having a 'knock-on effect' in the immediate future.

The Queensland Government's Information Management Sub-Committee of the Strategic Information and ICT Executive Council has been increasingly aware that there is a shortage in both the number of skilled information professionals and the mix of IM skills available to support current and emerging Government priorities.

2.1 Information Management Skills Survey

While at the national and state levels investigation has occurred into the extent and causes of ICT skills shortages, and responsive strategies developed, there is currently less information available on the related Information Management skills. To remedy this gap, in mid-2008, Queensland State Archives and the Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury, jointly commissioned a survey to examine Information Management capabilities in the Queensland public sector.

Specifically, the survey aimed to assess:

- the extent of the Information Management skills shortage
- the effects of the Information Management skills shortage, and
- the level of understanding of Information Management skills.

Based on data provided by the public authorities that responded to the survey, 90% are experiencing an Information Management skills shortage.⁸ Figure 3 highlights some of the operational and strategic impacts the shortage is having on responding organisations.

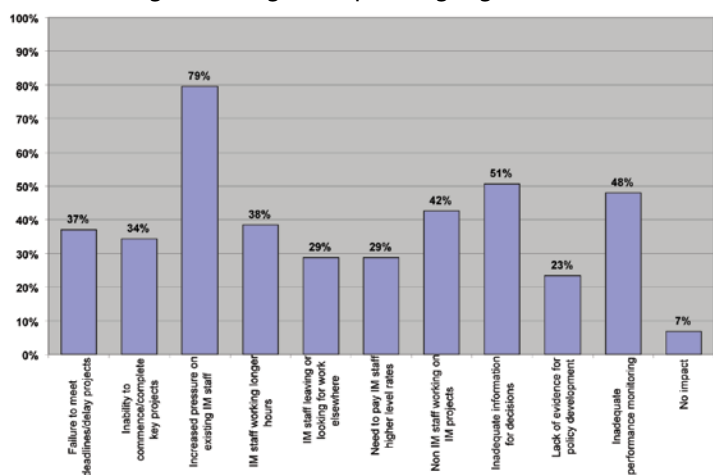


Figure 3: Impacts of IM Skills Shortage

Reinforcing the extent of impacts on organisations is the finding that 88% of respondents saw Information Management as important or very important to their business. All responding public authorities also regarded Information Management as a priority in the future. Particular recruitment or retention challenges were identified in the specialist areas of records management, data management, metadata management and information security roles.

A more qualitative analysis of the survey data, including open-ended comment sections, also revealed some uncertainty as to the scope of Information Management: a challenge that must be overcome if actions to address the skills shortage are to be successful.

2.2 Future trends

While the survey examined current shortages, the situation is not predicted to improve in coming years despite the recent economic downturn. Skills shortages across all sectors are expected to worsen as a result of demographic change, with nearly half of all current public servants planning to retire in the next 15 years.⁹ Demographic changes also mean that the number of employees entering the workforce over the same period is also expected to decline. While recent years have seen increases in the proportion of Queenslanders with tertiary qualifications, low unemployment levels have also resulted in a drop in the proportion of school leavers applying for university-level courses in every year since 1996, which may exacerbate the skills shortage in the future.¹⁰

At the same time, the demand for Government services is increasing. This is a result of population growth in Queensland and the aging of this population, bringing greater demand for certain Government services, such as health, infrastructure and community services. In addition to population-driven demand, there are technology-driven expectations for more seamless and integrated services.¹¹ These increased demands, in the context of a tight labour market, point to the need to reform service delivery rather than simply growing 'business as usual'. As a result, there will be increased reliance on a range of information, including statistical and research data and spatial information systems, to drive service improvements and enable seamless service delivery.¹²

3. Achieving Change

This Action Plan aims to build a shared understanding of the challenges the Queensland Government faces in meeting its Information Management demands. Over the next five years, a program of action will be undertaken to ensure that the Queensland Government has the necessary Information Management capability to meet client needs and support service delivery now and into the future.

3.1 Background to the Plan

This Plan has been developed as an outcome of the National Information Management Skills Summit, hosted by the Information Management Sub-Committee of the Strategic Information and ICT Council Executive and held on 15 October 2008. The Summit involved over 160 participants, including a range of national and international Information Management experts who gathered to discuss best practice in the management of Government information and to tackle the issue of Information Management skills shortages. Delegates included Chief Executive Officers, Chief Information Officers, Human Resources and Information Management Directors, Information Management educators and industry representatives.

The Summit included breakout sessions on:

- Information Management education and careers,
- Recruiting and retaining Information Management specialists, and
- Identifying future Information Management needs.

These sessions focused on identifying future opportunities, barriers to success and practical options for overcoming them.

Following the Summit, a separate session was held with Information Management educators, hosted by Queensland University of Technology, to focus on the role of the tertiary sector in addressing these challenges.

The key themes and suggestions raised during the Summit presentations, in the three interactive sessions and during the University forum, have been distilled to form the four focus areas and actions contained in this Plan.

The Plan is also a key element of the 'Information Management Strategic Framework' which sets the context and plan for the development of Information Management policy and practice within the Queensland Government.

3.2 Goal of the Action Plan

The goal of this Plan is to 'kick start' the development of a range of initiatives to achieve:

- increased recognition of the benefits and value of Information Management, both from a economic and social perspective
- increased visibility of Information Management professionals as a valued resource within Government, and
- increased availability of appropriate Information Management skills.

In order to achieve this goal, a collective, multi-strand approach is necessary. Actions must address the underlying causes for the lack of recognition of the value of Information Management and improve both the supply of skilled staff, and upskilling and retention of existing staff. The actions will be focused on fostering innovative solutions, including identifying new ways of managing information effectively and making Information Management a core skill of all public sector employees.

To ensure alignment between selected actions and the overall goal, each action has been mapped to a specific objective that supports this goal.

3.3 Scope

The scope of the Plan is a selected range of actions designed to improve the availability of appropriately skilled Information Management professionals in the Queensland public sector.

Information Management professionals occupy a diverse range of positions and classifications across the Queensland Government. They cover a broad range of discipline areas, including records and archives management, data management, librarianship, statistics, and spatial information management among others. It is also acknowledged that Information Management skills continue to evolve in response to new technologies and workplace challenges.

While national Information Management skills shortages are out of scope, opportunities to leverage or contribute to national initiatives will be investigated as they arise.

The consideration of ICT skills falls beyond the scope of this plan. However, it is acknowledged that there is overlap between Information Management and ICT skills, and that managing technology effectively is an important aspect of attracting skilled staff to Government. As such, this Plan has been developed to align with the Queensland ICT Workforce Capability Plan for Government Employees, led by the Queensland Government Chief Information Office.

3.4 Focus Areas

Planned actions are grouped under four key focus areas:

- Focus Area 1 – Developing a unified approach to defining, valuing and measuring information and Information Management and Information Management skills
- Focus Area 2 – Fostering whole-of-Government leadership and collaboration in Information Management
- Focus Area 3 – Driving an Information Management culture across the public sector
- Focus Area 4 – Committing to education and training

The final section of this Plan outlines implementation issues, including governance and status reporting.

Focus Area 1 – Developing a unified approach to defining, valuing and measuring information and Information Management and Information Management skills

Without authoritative information, government cannot effectively deliver services, develop appropriate policies, manage risk or fully achieve transparency and accountability. However, intangible assets such as information are frequently undervalued and the contribution information makes to both the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector, and its wider contribution to the economy, is not clearly known.

In addition to this challenge, research conducted in the lead up to the National Information Management Skills Summit, and discussions at the Summit itself, also revealed that the scope of Information Management skills are currently poorly defined, with a number of different specialist areas coming under the broader Information Management umbrella. It is also recognised that the boundaries between Information Management and ICT are not clear-cut, with a number of skill areas, such as business analysis, being common to both Information Management and the non-technical side of ICT. Similarly, it is also essential for Information Management professionals to have sound knowledge of the technology that increasingly underpins effective Information Management.

Little robust data is available on the profile of information professionals in the Queensland public sector, due in part to the definitional challenges outlined above. While some groups are clearly identified in the human resource statistical data, such as librarians and economists, others are classified in the category 'other business and

information professionals.' As this category also includes general policy analysts, the data is not relevant for measuring the scope of the Information Management profession. Similarly, spatial information professionals are grouped within the 'cartographers and surveyors' category.¹³ The Information Management Skills Survey, while only a partial study, identified more than 2300 permanent, temporary and contract staff employed in Information Management roles across 20 Government departments.

Despite these challenges, accurate and timely information about the Information Management capability of the workforce is essential to allow Government to anticipate challenges and plan accordingly. Therefore, action is needed to better define and understand Information Management and Information Management skills within Government, and to measure its value.

When information itself is not valued, there is a real risk of under-investment in Information Management. Robust data on the value of information and Information Management will assist it being prioritised by Government. Areas which may be investigated include:

- the types of information that are likely to be of greatest benefit to the Government both now and into the future;
- the current information requirements of the Queensland Government, particularly in relation to information that the Government does not currently have or cannot readily access and disseminate;
- how information can be best made available across Government; and
- the duplication of information across agencies.

Action	Purpose	Lead Agency
1.1 Develop a unified approach to defining, valuing and measuring information, Information Management and IM skills consistent with the Queensland Government Information Management Strategic Framework*	Gain clarity and consensus on the scope of Information Management within Government	Queensland Government Chief Information Office
1.2 Commission a study on specific aspects of the value of information to the Queensland Government via in-depth consultation with Government stakeholders**	Gather evidence to support ongoing investment in IM skills development Support awareness of the value of information for Government	Queensland Government Chief Information Office
1.3 Further map current IM skills and skills gaps; identify and articulate future skills requirements; and consider the feasibility of a 'pool' of IM experts with in-demand skills that can be accessed by all agencies	Identify priority areas for the development of capacity to respond to current and future IM needs	Information Management Sub-Committee

* This may be achieved through the development of the IM Policy Framework by the Queensland Government Chief Information Office and the associated maturity models.

** This may be achieved through the IM Action Plan's strategy – 'Improve guidance on costing information assets'.

Focus Area 2 – Fostering whole-of-Government leadership and collaboration in Information Management

Solutions to the key challenges facing Government require collaborative approaches across agencies. Strong whole-of-Government leadership in the Information Management area is essential to ensure Information Management practices effectively support collaboration and sharing, and to achieve the outcomes of this Action Plan.

Reflecting the diverse nature of Information Management, leadership in the field is currently shared across a number of agencies, including Queensland State Archives and Queensland Government Chief Information Office (Department of Public Works), Office of Economic and Statistical Research (Queensland Treasury), and Department of Environment and Resource Management, whose members currently form the Queensland Government Information Management Sub-Committee. A number of other agencies have advanced Information Management practices as a result of the demands of their business, including the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Public Service Commission, who have provided their support for this initiative.

As the context for Information Management in Government evolves, and client expectations for e-Government grow, effective mechanisms for collaboration are of increased importance. Whole-of-Government Information Management leadership supports the expansion of Information Management from supporting agency business to underpinning ‘joined-up’ and cross-agency initiatives. It also ensures that activities to address skills shortages are aligned to the areas of greatest need.

In particular, leadership ensures that emerging best practice in agencies is identified and re-used across the sector and fed into the review and development of existing and new standards, structures and processes, to provide the framework for collaboration and whole-of-Government information sharing and to ensure alignment with other Government priorities. For example, with the explosion of opportunities presented by new technologies, Information Management considerations can be incorporated into ICT project planning and governance processes.

Effective leadership will raise the profile of Information Management in Government and contribute to an integrated and holistic approach to Information Management across the Queensland Government.

Action	Objectives	Lead Agency
2.1 Identify any gaps in the governance of Information Management at whole-of-Government level*	Support uptake and coordination of whole-of-Government IM Strategic Framework Support visibility and awareness of IM	Queensland Government Chief Information Office (lead agency) working with the IM Sub-Committee and the Department of the Premier & Cabinet
2.2 Develop whole-of-Government Information Management Strategic Framework, and identify and prioritise requirements for additional IM standards, policies and tools, adopting a whole-of-lifecycle approach to IM**	Ensure Information Management is relevant to emerging Government priorities	Queensland Government Chief Information Office, in partnership with Queensland State Archives on key elements
2.3 Investigate inclusion of Information Management in ICT project and planning methodologies and/or project approval processes***	Support awareness of IM Embed IM in relevant business processes	Queensland Government Chief Information Office
2.4 Develop IM skills workforce planning methodology	Assist agencies to identify and develop necessary IM skills	Information Management Sub-Committee

* This may be achieved through the IM Action Plan’s strategies – ‘Establish formal information management governance arrangements in all agencies’ and ‘Develop guidance on information management governance best practice, and on our information management legal, regulatory and ethical responsibilities’.

** This may be achieved through finalisation of the Queensland Government Information Management Strategic Framework and the IM Action Plan’s strategy – ‘Identify information management policy gaps and establish a program of work to fill these gaps’.

*** This may be achieved through the IM Action Plan’s strategy – ‘Investigate options to integrate information management planning processes into the Queensland Government ICT Planning methodology’.

Focus Area 3 – Driving an Information Management culture across the public sector

Strong leadership at the whole-of-Government level must be complemented by the development of an Information Management culture across Queensland’s public sector. This requires leadership at the agency level, support and recognition of information specialists, and increasing the awareness of all public sector staff.

Strategies to build awareness of the value of Information Management among Chief Executives will be implemented, leveraging the outcomes of actions in Focus Area 1. Key messages may include the business value of Information Management and clear steps that can be taken to assess and improve existing practice.

To address the challenges of skills shortages, both in terms of numbers of staff and the types of skills in place, it is necessary to support the retention and development of existing staff. The results of the Information Management skills survey highlighted that re-training existing staff is a preferred option by 42% of respondents. The demographic challenges outlined in the introduction to this Action Plan

mean that a focus of recruitment alone is unlikely to be effective. Building networks of Information Management professionals will foster a broader Information Management professional identity, support knowledge sharing and learning, and contribute to an environment where Information Management practitioners feel valued for their work and expertise.

In the context of the current Right to Information reforms, it has been recognised that broad cultural change is necessary to support information sharing, and to enable more effective collaboration within Government and engagement with the community. A greater understanding and commitment to Information Management is part of this. Every Government employee has Information Management and recordkeeping obligations. An understanding of the obligations of all staff needs to be promulgated so that Information Management is seamlessly incorporated into everyday processes.

Action	Objectives	Lead Agency
3.1 Develop IM governance training for senior executives, highlighting the importance of IM in leadership and development programs and frameworks.	Raise awareness of the value of IM at senior executive level	Information Management Sub-Committee
3.2 Form a collaborative network for IM professionals to discuss and share IM techniques, approaches and methodologies for successful Information Management	Support recognition of the value of IM Support peer-to-peer learning to increase IM skills	Information Management Sub-Committee and Queensland Government Libraries Consortium
3.3 Facilitate the inclusion of IM and recordkeeping obligations in public sector induction processes and investigate the possibility of developing short online training packages	Raise awareness of the value of Information Management and recordkeeping and strengthen adherence to good recordkeeping practice	Information Management Sub-Committee

Focus Area 4 – Committing to education and training

A commitment to education and training, including formal education programs and those conducted within Government, is necessary to address the supply side of Information Management skills shortages. A mix of strategies to encourage the acquisition of qualifications will be investigated to build the supply of newly-qualified professionals and to support the upskilling and retraining of existing public service staff.

The research undertaken under Focus Area 1 will support these activities by providing sound data on the types of skills which are in demand across the sector.

Challenges identified at the National Information Management Skills Summit include the fragmentation of Information Management disciplines across different schools and faculties within universities. For example, it is common for Information Management to be located within Business or ICT faculties, while some specialist areas such as Health Information Management may be located in Science. As a result, it is difficult to clearly identify Information Management courses and therefore to gain precise data on student enrolments and graduate destinations.

To address this challenge, this focus area will include investigation into the potential for partnerships with the tertiary sector, for example as research into the core skills that are common across all Information Management specialities. In addition, the feasibility of funding a Chair in Information Management to strengthen teaching and research in the field will be explored.

Strategies to promote the Queensland Government as an employer of choice for information professionals will also be considered. This aims to encourage the flow of new graduates into the public sector, by offering internships and providing professional placements to build linkages during study, or via graduate programs.

Action	Objective	Lead Agency
4.1 Investigate the feasibility of funding a Chair in Information Management at a Queensland university to strengthen teaching and research in the field	Promote research into, and visibility of, IM as a profession	Information Management Sub-Committee
4.2 Investigate the feasibility of an IM graduate recruitment program	Increase supply of skilled IM professionals	Queensland Government Chief Information Office in conjunction with the Public Service Commission
4.3 Work with the tertiary sector to provide internships, professional placements and projects for current Information Management students and investigate and promote relevant training opportunities for in-demand skills	Increase supply of skilled IM professionals	Information Management Sub-Committee, partnering with the University sector
4.4 Investigate opportunities for participation in tertiary sector forums including considering and influencing the development of university courses with Information Management content	Articulate and include necessary Information Management skills in relevant university courses to facilitate ease of transition to the Queensland Government workforce and add value to Queensland Government	Information Management Sub-Committee, partnering with the University sector

4. Implementing the IM Skills

Action Plan

This Plan has the support of the Chair of the Queensland Government Strategic Information and ICT Council Executive and has been endorsed by the Chair of the Strategic Information & ICT Council and the Director-General of the Department of Public Works.

Governance of the Action Plan will be provided by the Information Management Sub-Committee of the Strategic Information and ICT Council Executive. The Information Management Sub-Committee's role is to:

- Develop and prioritise a targeted work program of selected whole-of-Government Information Management initiatives and issues.
- Collaborate with the Queensland Government Chief Information Office on the implementation of the SDPC Review of ICT Governance in the Queensland Government Report's recommendations relating to Information Management.
- Provide direction to the Information Management reference group.
- Peer review or provide advice on whole-of-Government or related Information Management activities or projects.

In implementing the Action Plan, the Sub-Committee is responsible for:

- Providing oversight of Action Plan implementation
- Leading the completion of selected actions of the Plan
- Reporting on implementation progress to the SI & ICT Council Executive, and via the SI & ICT Council Executive to the SI & ICT Chief Executive Officer Committee.
- Revising the Action Plan in light of implementation experience and emerging priorities.

The actions in this Plan will be rolled out over a five-year period from 2009 to 2014. Lead agencies have been identified for each action and will be responsible for defining specific deliverables. The IM Sub-Committee will prioritise the delivery of actions.

Detailed timing for the delivery of each action will be confirmed in consultation between the respective lead agencies and the Information Management Sub-Committee.

In implementing the Action Plan, the Sub-Committee will act as the central point of co-ordination between all lead agencies to ensure appropriate consultation across the sector. Lead agencies will be responsible for reporting on progress to the Information Management Sub-Committee on a regular basis.

Endnotes

- ¹ Queensland Government Information Standards Glossary <http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/qgcio/resources/glossary/Pages/glossary.aspx>.
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- ¹³ Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information, collected quarterly by the Public Service Commission. Occupations are coded according to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations.

