



Queensland State Archives

Recordkeeping Assessment Framework for Queensland Public Authorities

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Contact for enquiries

All enquiries regarding this document should be directed to:

Manager, Policy and Research Unit
Queensland State Archives
07 3131 7777

info@archives.qld.gov.au

<http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/>

Foreword

The development of the following *Recordkeeping Assessment Framework for Queensland Public Authorities* by Queensland State Archives provides for the implementation of sound recordkeeping strategies across the state.

The Queensland Government is committed to open, accountable, and participatory government. Ensuring the accuracy and integrity of Queensland public records is paramount to achieving good governance. Effective recordkeeping practices also underpin the *Right to Information* reforms, allowing Queenslanders access to the records which form the basis of government decision-making.

By outlining the key steps to support the continual improvement in recordkeeping practices, this document will assist Queensland public authorities in the assessment and monitoring of recordkeeping compliance, as required by the *Public Records Act 2002* and associated Information Standards.

I endorse the *Recordkeeping Assessment Framework* as a useful tool to improve the information management practices of your public authority.



Mal Grierson AM
Director-General, Department of Public Works
Queensland Government Chief Information Officer

Government information is a strategic asset which needs to be well planned, managed, and utilised. Effective records and information management are core elements of accountable government.

Glenn Poole FCA FCPA
Auditor-General of Queensland

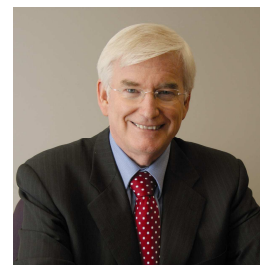




Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
1.1	Definitions	5
2	Recordkeeping Assessment Framework.....	7
2.1	Policy Development Strategy.....	8
2.1.1	Recordkeeping Policies and Guidelines.....	8
2.1.2	Recordkeeping Training and Awareness Programs.....	8
2.1.3	Planning Methodologies and Tools	9
2.2	Compliance Strategy	9
2.2.1	Recordkeeping Baseline	9
2.2.2	Road Map for Continual Improvement	10
2.3	Monitoring Strategy.....	10
2.3.1	Self Assessment.....	11
2.3.2	Internal Audit	11
2.3.3	Queensland State Archives' Program of Assessments	11
2.3.4	External Audit	11
2.4	Reporting Strategy.....	12
2.4.1	Queensland State Archives' Annual Report.....	12
2.4.2	Public Authority Annual Report	12
2.4.3	Government Reports, Publications, Presentations and Forums	12

1 Introduction

In August 2008, the Queensland Government released *The Right to Information: A Response to the Review of Queensland's Freedom of Information Act*. Queensland State Archives was tasked with monitoring recordkeeping practices across agencies through a program of rolling assessments. In support of the Report's recommendation 4, it was stated that agencies will:

*...need to collect baseline recordkeeping data required by the Queensland State Archives (QSA) to assess the performance of recordkeeping and to advise on appropriate capacity-building strategies. . . . Records management performance across agencies will be monitored through a program of rolling assessments, to be undertaken by the QSA commencing from July 2009.*¹

In consultation with Queensland public authorities, Queensland State Archives has developed this Recordkeeping Assessment Framework to assist Queensland public authorities to comply with their recordkeeping obligations under the *Public Records Act 2002* (the Act) and associated Information Standards: *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records*. Under these Standards, Queensland public authorities are required to make and keep full and accurate records of business decisions, regardless of the records' format.

Queensland State Archives' Recordkeeping Assessment Framework outlines a range of strategies, policies and tools to assist public authorities to meet their recordkeeping obligations. While Queensland State Archives does not currently undertake formal audits, a program of surveys and the collection of baseline recordkeeping data are integral components of the Recordkeeping Assessment Framework. Importantly, it is intended that the strategies and policies under the Framework will encourage continual improvement in the recordkeeping practices of public authorities.


1.1 Definitions

Key terms are defined in the following list. For an explanation of other recordkeeping terminology, please consult Queensland State Archives' *Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms*.²

Compliance: Adherence to the requirements of laws, industry and organisational standards and codes, principles of good governance and accepted community and ethical standards. Within this context, compliance refers to conformance with the *Public Records Act 2002* and recordkeeping Information Standards: *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records*.

¹See *The Right to Information: A Response to the Review of Queensland's Freedom of Information Act*, p14.

² <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/downloads/GlossaryOfArchivalIRKTerms.pdf>

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- Framework:** A high-level overview or outline, typically presented in diagrammatic form, composed of a program's deliverables joined together, which is designed to give context and structure to the program and communicate the intent and boundaries of the program.
- Monitor:** The act of observing progress towards stated requirements and maintaining a record of that progress. To monitor within this context is to check the progress of compliance with the *Public Records Act 2002* and recordkeeping Information Standards through a measurable activity.
- Policy Partners:** Those Queensland Government agencies which have responsibilities for the development and implementation of policy and procedural reforms in the Information Management domain and/or under the Right to Information initiative. The partners include (but may not be limited to) the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Office of the Information Commissioner, Office of Economic and Statistical Research, the Public Service Commission, the Queensland Government Chief Information Office and the Queensland Government Chief Technology Office.
- Program:** A number of related projects selected, planned and managed in a coordinated way in order to achieve a strategic goal.
- Strategy:** A plan or method comprised of related components designed to resolve an identified problem and achieve a specific goal or result.
- Road Map:** A plan which displays the major steps to be taken to achieve a specified outcome.

2 Recordkeeping Assessment Framework

As previously stated, the Queensland State Archives' Recordkeeping Assessment Framework has been designed to assist public authorities to meet their legislative and regulatory obligations. The *Public Records Act 2002* (the Act), *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records* are at the centre of the Framework.

The Act and Information Standards are supported by strategies that link policies, guidelines and planning methodologies with practical approaches for achieving continual improvement in recordkeeping. An explanation of specific components of the Framework is included on the following pages. Several components have been developed and are being progressively implemented by Queensland State Archives. Some components are in the planning stages for future development.

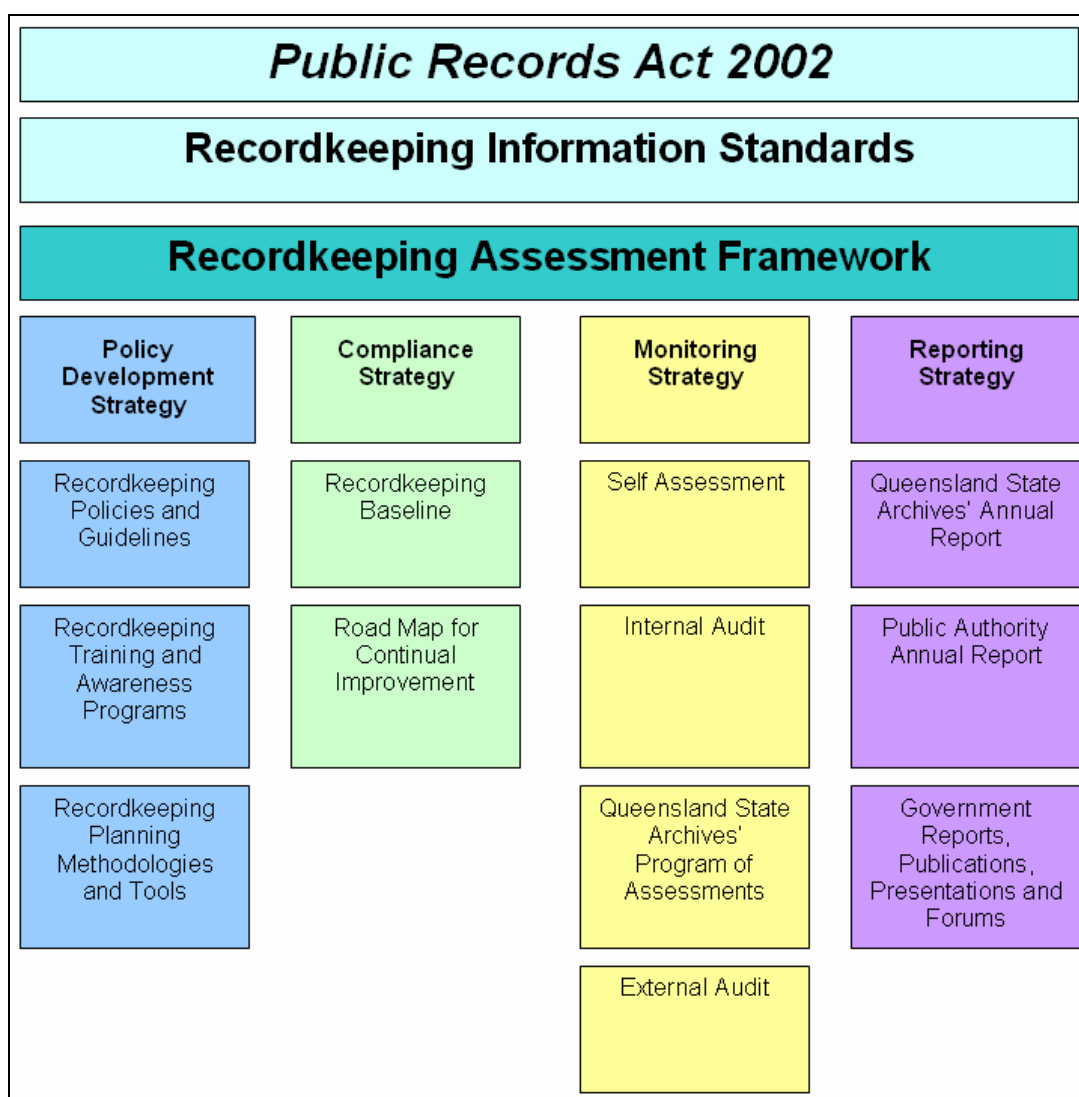


Figure 1. Recordkeeping Assessment Framework



2.1 Policy Development Strategy

Queensland State Archives' Policy Development Strategy incorporates the development and implementation of recordkeeping policies and guidelines, training and awareness programs, planning methodologies and other tools to assist public authorities to improve their recordkeeping and information management practices and to meet their legislative and regulatory obligations. This strategy will continue to evolve over time to meet the challenges presented by the management of electronic records (in various formats) throughout their lifecycle. The call for advice on change management in response to machinery-of-Government reorganisations will receive ongoing attention.

2.1.1 Recordkeeping Policies and Guidelines

Queensland State Archives has a legislated role to develop and publish recordkeeping policies, standards and guidelines for the State's 600 public authorities. To fulfil this role, Queensland State Archives manages a comprehensive Recordkeeping Policy Framework to ensure a consistent approach to the creation, management, retention and disposal, storage, preservation and retrieval of government information.

A range of recordkeeping policies, guidelines and tools have been developed to complement the Queensland Government Information Standards and to provide additional reference material and guidance for agencies when implementing these Standards. The Recordkeeping Policy Framework is regularly updated to reflect the ongoing development and delivery of key advice in response to public authorities' needs.

Resources are available on the Queensland State Archives' website at <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au>.

2.1.2 Recordkeeping Training and Awareness Programs

An integrated Recordkeeping Training Program for Queensland public authorities is under development by Queensland State Archives. Building on existing research in the area of in-demand skills and information management skills shortages, the results of a recent Training Needs Analysis indicated the recordkeeping training priorities of Queensland public authorities in order to meet their legislative and regulatory obligations.

A Recordkeeping Awareness Program is also being developed. Through targeted awareness-raising activities and opportunities, this program will focus on disseminating key messages that encourage better recordkeeping practices over time.

There is a strong recognition among agencies of the importance of targeting recordkeeping programs not only to designated records managers, but to all public sector employees. Training should be incorporated into staff induction processes, in a similar fashion to Workplace Health and Safety processes, and supporting materials used to communicate the importance of appropriate recordkeeping practices at all levels of the organisation.



2.1.3 Planning Methodologies and Tools

Methodologies for planning implementation of the recordkeeping Information Standards and guidelines can assist public authorities to systematically improve their recordkeeping practices.

The Strategic Recordkeeping Implementation Plan (SRIP) Template and Workbook have been developed for public authorities to identify, analyse and evaluate specific recordkeeping requirements. Further guidance at the operational level is provided in the Operational Recordkeeping Implementation Plan (ORIP) Template and Workbook. These templates, available from the Queensland State Archives' website, will be updated in line with the revised Information Standards.

Queensland State Archives also produces tools including policy templates and self-assessment checklists to provide public authorities with practical advice on recordkeeping issues. These tools will be reviewed to ensure their usability and relevance, and promoted on the Queensland State Archives' website.

In addition to these planning and operational tools, answers to the most frequently asked questions about recordkeeping compliance have been compiled and published online to assist agencies to manage their records through shared learnings raised by other public authorities.

2.2 Compliance Strategy


The Compliance Strategy is designed for public authorities to measure and map how effectively they are applying the Information Standards, guidelines, planning methodologies and tools available through the Policy Development Strategy. The continual improvement approaches outlined below will promote regular evaluations of recordkeeping processes to improve business efficiency and effectiveness. With the articulation of minimum requirements for compliance with the recordkeeping Information Standards, public authorities can align their monitoring and reporting strategies to recognise and encourage continual improvement in their own business processes.

Improved compliance will include the use of a recordkeeping baseline, as outlined below, to focus on opportunities for improvement in recordkeeping within an organisation. From this baseline evaluation, progress can then be measured and mapped to demonstrate continual improvement, particularly in the monitoring and reporting of recordkeeping enhancements.

2.2.1 Recordkeeping Baseline

Minimum requirements for compliance with recordkeeping principles are specified in the Information Standards: *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records*.

From mid-2009, Queensland State Archives will undertake annual surveys to collect and measure baseline recordkeeping data against the minimum requirements of the recordkeeping Information Standards. Unanimous support has been shown across government for the adoption of these requirements as the criteria for collecting baseline



recordkeeping data. By undertaking this data collection process, public authorities will be able to identify levels of recordkeeping implementation across internal business units, as well as track recordkeeping progress aligned to specific business activities. The outcome of this process may highlight gaps requiring attention.

Recordkeeping enhancements can then be planned and measured by public authorities using a proposed 'road map' for continual improvement. The development of this road map, outlined below, will take into account variations of size, risk activities and complexity of business needs.

2.2.2 Road Map for Continual Improvement

From mid 2010, the Recordkeeping Assessment Framework will include a self evaluation resource or 'road map' that public authorities can use to plan, monitor and demonstrate their continual improvement in recordkeeping.

Public authorities have indicated to Queensland State Archives that the road map should include a recordkeeping maturity model. This approach would align with the work being undertaken by Standards Australia in its draft AS ISO 15489 *Australian Standard for Recordkeeping Compliance Handbook*. In this handbook, expected to be released in mid 2010, levels of compliance are mapped against recordkeeping needs on a maturity model.

It is intended that guidelines and evaluation criteria related to various levels of compliance will be defined to assist public authorities to plan their recordkeeping implementation, monitoring and reporting strategies. Ongoing self assessments against the criteria should become an integral part of a public authority's monitoring and reporting process that demonstrates continual improvement in recordkeeping.

Queensland State Archives will undertake further consultation with public authorities on the development of a recordkeeping maturity model from early 2010.

2.3 Monitoring Strategy

Queensland State Archives is developing self assessment tools to assist public authorities in the ongoing collection of compliance data necessary for measuring and monitoring continual improvements in recordkeeping.

Under *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping*, monitoring and auditing of recordkeeping processes needs to be regularly undertaken. Public authorities can employ a range of activities to meet this obligation, including self assessments and internal audits. To supplement this, Queensland State Archives over time will consider a wider program of assessments.



2.3.1 Self Assessment

Self assessment and risk analysis can enable public authorities to determine how successfully their recordkeeping practices are currently being implemented. Depending on the nature and aims of their business activities, some public authorities may consider that their current implementation of recordkeeping practice is appropriate. Other agencies may need to plan and implement additional recordkeeping activities and systems to meet their current and future business needs.

2.3.2 Internal Audit

Conducting internal audits of business activities and business units will assist public authorities to identify where recordkeeping is being consistently implemented, along with any gaps requiring attention.

Guidelines and targeted recordkeeping advice will be developed by Queensland State Archives to assist public authorities with their internal audits.

2.3.3 Queensland State Archives' Program of Assessments

Queensland State Archives will undertake periodic formal surveys and data collection activities as an integral part of its program of assessments to monitor recordkeeping across whole-of-Government. Commencing in mid 2009 with a survey to collect current recordkeeping baseline data, results from these ongoing data collection activities will guide the development of future policy and advice.

Queensland State Archives will also use these results to assess and report on the extent to which agencies are complying with the *Public Records Act 2002* and the recordkeeping Information Standards. Based on these results, recommendations may be made regarding the measures required to prevent or reduce non-compliance. A summary of survey results will be published on the Queensland State Archives' website and key findings documented in its Annual Report. These findings will inform research into options for undertaking or supporting possible audit processes in the future.

2.3.4 External Audit

Over time, recordkeeping audits may also be considered by external monitoring authorities. However, it should be noted that Queensland State Archives does not have the authority to establish the audit priorities of bodies such as the Queensland Audit Office.

Any proposed audits could be guided by the road map to be developed by Queensland State Archives to determine if the minimum requirements for recordkeeping compliance are being met and to identify any gaps requiring attention.

Additionally, public authorities may want to commission their own external recordkeeping audits to complement and expand on any existing internal audit procedures.



2.4 Reporting Strategy

The Reporting Strategy provides direction and guidance for public authorities to identify and report on results obtained through compliance and monitoring strategies. It will assist public authorities to develop effective reporting strategies for demonstrating their continual improvement in recordkeeping compliance. This strategy involves communicating recordkeeping progress to stakeholders across the sector through Queensland State Archives' Annual Report, individual agencies' Annual Reports and other information sources.

2.4.1 Queensland State Archives' Annual Report

Under section 56 of the *Public Records Act 2002*, Queensland State Archives is required to report annually on the status of government recordkeeping. Through this reporting channel, Queensland State Archives is able to demonstrate public authorities' continual improvement in recordkeeping compliance on a whole-of-Government scale.

2.4.2 Public Authority Annual Report

In accordance with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Annual Report Guidelines, many public authorities are required to report on their compliance with the provisions of the *Public Records Act 2002* and their implementation of the recordkeeping Information Standards.

While not all public authorities are required to comply with these guidelines, a significant and increasing number of agencies are reporting on recordkeeping in their Annual Reports. Certain public authorities, such as local governments, may also have reporting requirements identified in other relevant legislation (such as those specified in the *Local Government Act 2009*).

Annual Reports offer agencies the opportunity to demonstrate their focus on developing and implementing comprehensive and appropriate recordkeeping programs to ensure that high standards of recordkeeping are being met.

2.4.3 Government Reports, Publications, Presentations and Forums

Recordkeeping issues are also raised as the subject of specialised Government reports, publications, presentations and forums to highlight areas of best practice or to reveal specific gaps and deficiencies. Queensland State Archives monitors these as additional sources of information in reporting and responding to recordkeeping issues in the Queensland public sector.

Issues arising from such reports include the need for agencies to implement clearly defined roles for data collection, document data quality standards and the recordkeeping challenges associated with machinery-of-Government changes. Queensland State Archives analyses these reports to inform future policy development.