



Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives' response to Recordkeeping Training Needs Analysis Report

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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/>

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1. Recordkeeping and Information Management reforms in the Queensland Government

The information management environment in the Queensland public sector is currently undergoing considerable change. In July 2009 the Queensland Parliament enacted the new *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

This new legislation is an outcome of an independent review commissioned by the Queensland Government into the Freedom of Information legislation. In the Government's response to the review report, it signalled a broad program of policy reform related to public access to information.

Acknowledging the link between sound recordkeeping and access to information, Queensland State Archives is promoting the requirements of the Public Records Information Standards, raising awareness of the importance of recordkeeping across public authorities and developing and implementing a recordkeeping training program.

2. Background to the Training Needs Analysis

To inform the Recordkeeping Training Program, Queensland State Archives determined it was necessary to conduct a Recordkeeping Training Needs Analysis of public authorities. As lead agency for recordkeeping in the State, Queensland State Archives is aware of the complexity of the recordkeeping training environment. Some of the variables which supported the need for a Training Needs Analysis included the fact that:

- many public authorities currently conduct in-house recordkeeping training programs
- recordkeeping training ranges in complexity from 2 hour courses to masters qualifications
- recordkeeping training needs vary depending on the role a person holds, and
- there may be gaps in the provision of certain recordkeeping training in the market.

There are approximately 600 public authorities in Queensland that vary in size, purpose and location. 'Public authority' is defined in the *Public Records Act 2002* and includes:

- large State Government departments or Government Owned Corporations which may have regional branch networks and specialised records management staff and units
- Local Government based in urban or larger regional centres with specialised recordkeeping staff
- statutory authorities, universities, grammar schools, boards and committees, whose recordkeeping skills and support varies considerably, and
- smaller Local Government authorities in rural or remote areas which manage their own records but may have limited staff or recordkeeping expertise.

Over the years, Queensland State Archives has provided some limited specialised training opportunities and information briefings for public authorities, such as masterclasses, Recordkeepers' forums and policy advice.

With this existing commitment to improving recordkeeping skills, and the new impetus provided by the Right to Information reforms across Government, Queensland State Archives is now able to facilitate enhanced recordkeeping training opportunities for the Queensland public sector.

In April 2009, Information Leadership was appointed to conduct the Recordkeeping Training Needs Analysis to analyse the recordkeeping training needs of Queensland public authorities, identify priorities and gaps, and determine suitable training courses and actions to support compliance with the *Public Records Act 2002*.

3. Findings of the Training Needs Analysis

The Recordkeeping Training Needs Analysis was informed by a survey of 274 public sector employees, from a variety of roles; six focus groups held throughout the State; market research; and key stakeholder consultation.

The report which Information Leadership presented on their findings described an active and committed group of recordkeepers who at times felt they struggled with a lack of understanding within their organisations of the value and benefits of good recordkeeping. It also identified that some public sector staff do not clearly understand their recordkeeping obligations, and more can be done to facilitate effective access to training in recordkeeping skills.

Encouragingly, the findings confirm that there are many examples of recordkeeping training already in place which provide a sound basis to further develop the Queensland State Archives' Recordkeeping Training Program.

It was recognised that to be effective, a "one size fits all" training program is not the answer. A range of training strategies are required, in a variety of formats, to meet the diverse needs of Queensland public authorities and their staff. This involves a range of training options, curriculum development, and partnerships with training organisations to deliver targeted and relevant education programs for the diverse range of skills and needs in Queensland public authorities.

Recommended tactics to address training needs were grouped into five training actions:

- Clustering - That Queensland State Archives adopt a clustering approach to group together people or organisations with similar needs
- Exemplars - That Queensland State Archives recognise and encourage exemplars
- Directory - That Queensland State Archives further develop, maintain and support directories of training and other recordkeeping services
- Online - That Queensland State Archives support, develop, and/or deliver online training support
- Targeting - That Queensland State Archives target existing training gaps by commissioning or supporting training in topics and themes that are not currently well catered for.

In some areas, it was identified that additional training should be facilitated. The key priorities which respondents identified for further training included:

- obligations under the *Public Records Act 2002*
- promoting recordkeeping in your organisation
- training staff in recordkeeping
- control mechanisms for records
- disaster preparedness, and
- retention and disposal.

The findings of this Training Needs Analysis complements research already undertaken by Queensland State Archives on information management skills shortages to provide evidence-based data on specific skills gaps. Queensland State Archives is also currently working on a Recordkeeping Awareness Program which will provide tools to assist authorities in promoting recordkeeping in their organisations.

4. Recordkeeping Training Program – initial response

In fostering the availability of appropriate recordkeeping training for public authorities, Queensland State Archives is ensuring a sound investment in the effective management of the information assets of Government.

Currently under development, the Recordkeeping Training Program will provide an integrated and targeted program of recordkeeping training opportunities, from a range of providers, for Queensland public authorities. Queensland State Archives is committed to working in partnership with public authorities to promote a cultural change that values recordkeeping as strategically important for sound information and records management.

To meet the immediate need, Queensland State Archives has fast-tracked the first stage of the training program to address the priority needs identified in the Training Needs Analysis. This initial roll-out of training options will include:

- online training options – a new online email training module available through the Queensland State Archives' website, free of charge and ideal for use as part of an induction program or refresher course to raise awareness across the organisation
- short courses and masterclasses for recordkeeping practitioners – Queensland State Archives offers “masterclass” training packages on contemporary recordkeeping topics, customised to the Queensland jurisdiction, and will continue to develop this suite of products:
 - Recordkeeping Metadata
 - Recordkeeping in Business Systems
- information management governance masterclasses for senior executives – Queensland State Archives is working with policy partners to deliver targeted training for senior decision-makers later in 2009
- a training toolkit that can be customised for use within public authorities to enable them to deliver training to their own staff – the *Introduction to Recordkeeping* training package includes slides and a training manual which can be used as is, or adapted by agencies in accordance with their own needs. While this program is also suited to an induction program, it has been designed with all public sector employees in mind and is recommended to all agencies. It is also free of charge and is available online at www.archives.qld.gov.au
- Queensland State Archives is currently working with the Queensland Government Chief Procurement Office to establish a Panel of Training Organisations which will be able to deliver a range of recordkeeping training to public authorities throughout Queensland
- a Recordkeeping Awareness Program guide to assist public authorities in promoting recordkeeping in their organisations.

5. Recordkeeping Training Program – future plans

The Recordkeeping Training Needs Analysis has identified that there is a wide range of activities that can be undertaken to build recordkeeping capability in staff, and support those individuals and organisations which have already demonstrated a commitment to training.

Further analysis is being undertaken of the Recordkeeping Training Needs Analysis' recommendations and Queensland State Archives will continue to populate its training program throughout 2009 and beyond, to respond to the needs identified by public authorities. Training updates and advice will be available through the Queensland State Archives' website: <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/training> or from the Policy and Research Unit on telephone 07 3131 7746.

