

Guideline to Principle 1: Strategy Principle

A resource for implementing the Standard for Records and Information Governance

INTRODUCTION

Records are evidence of business activity. The *Territory Records Act 2002* (the Act) defines them as ‘information created and kept, or received and kept, as evidence and information by a person in accordance with a legal obligation or in the course of conducting business.

Within the context of the Act, to be understandable, usable, and reliable as evidence of an ACT Government business transaction or event, a record must have the following properties:

1. Content – Text, data, symbols, or images that convey information.
2. Structure –Arrangement of this information into understandable formats, such as designated fields for required information.
3. Context – A direct relationship to the technical and/or business environment that created the record, for example through software applications or metadata.

The Act allows the Director of Territory Records to approve standards for records management, which ACT Government organisations must comply with. The ACT [Standard for Records and Information Governance](#) (the Standard) sets out seven principles that must be applied to ensure that data and information can be managed in ways that allow them to function as records when this is required to support business and accountability requirements. This Guideline is intended to assist organisations to comply with the Strategy principle.

While the term ‘record’ has a specific meaning, in practice it can at times be difficult to distinguish between records and other types of information or data. The Standard is explicitly designed to meet the requirements of the Act in terms of records, but is also a guide to good practice approaches for managing information and data for the ACT Government. The [Data Governance and Management Policy Framework](#) is complimentary to the Standard, with the common aim of providing a framework in which information assets can be made, kept and used by the ACT Government.

The Strategy Principle

The Strategy Principle means organisations must establish high-level documented plans to help achieve a robust state of records, information, and data management.

The high-level plans to be developed include a Records Management Program, which incorporates a Records and Information Governance Policy. The Records Management Program will provide a framework for ensuring records, information and data management requirements are met.

The broader records and information management framework includes:

- the *Territory Records Act 2002*;
- the Standard for Records and Information Governance provided by the Director of Territory Records;
- other applicable legislation, policies and administrative directions of the ACT Government;
- the organisation's Records Management Program;
- the organisation's Records and Information Governance Policy;
- the organisation's Records, Information and Data Management Procedures; and
- the organisation's Records, Information and Data Architecture Register (for business systems).

It is important that the Principal Officer (CEO or Director-General, for example) endorses the program and the policy so the whole organisation is required to follow them.

By adhering to this Strategy Principle, as well as the other Principles set out in the Standard, ACT Government organisations can ensure they meet legislative requirements outlined in the Act.

Complying with the Strategy Principle

There are two aspects to complying with the Strategy Principle:

1. Developing and implementing a Records Management Program: a Records Management Program is a formal document required by the *Act*.
2. Developing and promulgating a Records and Information Governance Policy: the policy formalises directions to the whole organisation to help ensure that full and adequate records of business activities will be made and kept (including information and data that inform decision-making or are evidence of business transactions). This ensures the organisation can conduct its business and fulfil its functions effectively, and that sufficient evidence of the performance of those functions is retained for an approved time.

For an organisation undertaking a comprehensive assessment of its records, information, and data management, use the Territory Records Office's Records Management Maturity Assessment Tool in association with this and other guidelines to implementing the Standard for Records and Information Governance.

Further information

This guideline should be read in conjunction with the Standard for Records and Information

Governance and the Guidelines which support each of its seven principles.

Along with the seven guidelines, further information can be found in the following resources:

- Territory Records Act 2002
- CARE principles for Indigenous data governance
- FAIR data principles
- International Council on Archives Tandanya Declaration
- International Standard: ISO 15489—Records Management
- International Standard: ISO 26122—Work Process Analysis for Recordkeeping
- International Standard: ISO 30300 series Management systems for records
- International Standard: ISO 16175—Requirements for Records in Electronic Systems
- Australian Standard: AS 5044—AGLS Metadata Standard
- Australian Standard AS/NZS 5478—Recordkeeping Metadata Property Reference Set
- Territory Records Office Records Advice series.
- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Archives

DEVELOPING A RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each ACT Government organisation that is subject to the Act is required to have in place a Records Management Program that is approved by the principal officer and submitted to the Director of Territory Records. The Records Management Program is a formal document required by the Act. Its purpose is to set out how an organisation will comply with its responsibilities under the Act.

Comprehensive

An organisation's Records Management Program must explain how the organisation will resource, assess, control, retain, protect, and provide access to its records in compliance with the seven principles outlined in the Standard for Records and Information Governance. While there is no fixed format for a Records Management Program it must include:

- the organisation's statement of policy on Records and Information Governance;
- reference to the procedures in place to manage records, information and data in support of the seven principles outlined in the Standard; and
- an architecture register for its business systems.

The Territory Records Office provides templates and other guidance that can assist organisations with the development of their program, policy, procedures, and architecture documents.

The Territory Records Office provides the following templates and overviews in association with this guideline:

- Records Management Maturity Assessment Tool;
- Records Management Program (template);
- Records and Information Governance Policy (template);
- Overview of Records and Information Governance Procedures;
- Overview of Records and Information Governance Architecture Register; and
- Records Advices.

Compliant

Section 16 of the Act sets out a number of elements an organisation's Records Management Program must contain. These include arrangements for:

- disposal of records;
- notifying the Director of Territory Records about outsourcing of the organisation's records management arrangements; and
- preserving records that may allow people to establish links with their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Using the templates provided with this Guideline can assist organisations to comply with all the Records Management Program requirements in the Act.

Endorsed

An ACT Government organisation's Records Management Program must be:

- consistent with the Standard for Records and Information Governance;
- endorsed by the Principal Officer of the organisation (CEO, Director-General or similar); and
- submitted to the Director of Territory Records as a copy.

An ACT Government organisation may adopt the Records Management Program of its parent organisation if the Program is compatible with its business needs. The adopting organisation must still appoint a Senior Manager responsible for records management, who should retain responsibility for implementation of the program within the organisation and ensure that the adopted Program remains relevant and appropriate to the adopting organisation.

Current

An ACT Government organisation's Records Management Program should be reviewed, updated, and re-issued every three to five years. The program must also be reviewed after a significant change occurs within the organisation, such as machinery of government changes.

Implemented

An ACT Government organisation's Records Management Program must be implemented, measured, and reviewed regularly. It must also be made accessible to the public.

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DEVELOPING AND PROMULGATING A RECORDS AND INFORMATION GOVERNANCE POLICY

Better practice standards, including the International Standard on Records Management (ISO 15489), emphasise the importance of having a records management policy to achieve good recordkeeping and good governance. An organisation's records management policy helps staff to understand the importance of managing records well and sets the broad standards that staff must follow to achieve good records, information and data management.

Comprehensive

The aim of the Records and Information Governance Policy is to commit the organisation to meeting certain requirements, including those found in:

- legislation;
- international standards; and
- codes of best practice.

The organisation's Records and Information Governance Policy must make a broad statement of outcomes the organisation seeks to achieve for its records, information, and data. It must also comprehensively state the responsibilities its staff have in relation to records, information and data management. This includes nominating a senior manager responsible for records management within the organisation.

Using the templates provided in association with this Guideline can assist organisations to develop a Records and Information Governance Policy that complies with the Strategy Principle of the Standard and supports the aims of the Act.

Endorsed

An ACT Government organisation's Records and Information Governance Policy must be endorsed by the Principal Officer of the organisation (CEO, Director- General or similar).

Current

An ACT Government organisation's Records and Information Governance Policy should be reviewed, updated, and re-issued every three to five years. The policy must also be reviewed after a significant change occurs within the organisation, such as machinery of government changes.

Promulgated

An organisation's Records and Information Governance Policy should be known to all staff – including full-time and part-time staff, volunteers, contractors, and outsourced providers.

The policy should be referenced within most organisational policies and procedures to ensure its application is widespread and consistent.