

Making your Annual Records Management Maturity Assessment work for you

Introduction

This advice is to provide Records Managers with points of consideration in using the results of a maturity assessment to support strategic outcomes and planning. Reviewing maturity assessment responses can identify trends or gaps in capability and highlight achievements. The results of a quality maturity assessment can be used to provide evidence for the review of policy, business strategies and processes or in advocating for resources or training.

Beyond an assessment of conformity with legislative requirements, monitoring can actively assist agencies to embed good practices and processes. It ensures that records, information, and data are effectively managed to meet the business needs of the agency, the expectation of customers, and the requirements of government. Monitoring will support the organisation's capacity to use records, information and data for decision-making, policy development and the delivery of high-quality public services. It should enable agencies to identify and manage information and risks, to provide business continuity and protect the rights of all stakeholders.

Background

The Guideline on [Principle 2: Capability](#) of the *Standard for Records and Information Governance* ([the Standard](#)) requires agencies to undertake an annual assessment of their records management maturity.

In September 2018, the Territory Records Office (TRO) requested each directorate undertake and report on their self-assessment to provide a baseline of current performance across the ACT Government against each of the seven principles included in the Standard, these being: Strategy; Capability; Assess; Describe; Protect; Retain; Access. Since then, TRO has coordinated these directorate maturity self-assessments annually.

The aim of the annual maturity assessment is to:

- improve understanding of records and information governance capability and practice in the ACTPS.
- help directorates target their improvement efforts.
- provide the TRO an overview of regulatory alignment across ACT Government agencies and an understanding of trends and issues to determine service priorities and allocation of resources.

While all Directorates are required to complete the survey, many smaller agencies and statutory authorities participate as an avenue to build information governance awareness.

The TRO collates, analyses, and summarises results across government. There is an emphasis on identifying trends and patterns in the ratings and responses including comparative analysis across years.

Targets

In 2022, ACT's Strategic Board agreed to set annual performance targets that agencies would need to reach over the next calendar year. Targets are determined through analysis of agency assessment responses within each principle and identifying common areas for improvement. *Annual targets are agreed by Strategic Board before being circulated to directorates for inclusion in their planning for the following year.*

Using Assessment Results

Through the analysis of their own results, organisations can recognise their achievements and determine their own path to recordkeeping maturity. Prioritisation of improvements requiring minimal resourcing, and the recognition of achievements can lift the profile of a Records Management Unit and therefore overall information governance across the wider organisation.

When assessments are done well, the results provide a clear picture of the organisation's records and information management state. Results tell a story. Results can be used to:

- **Identify areas of strength and improvement** - results from the assessment can give insight into current and developing records management practice across an organisation. It can help identify areas of focus as well as success stories to celebrate and promote.
- **Improve decision-making** – use the facts and figures in the results to make informed decisions about what you should prioritise, celebrate, inform management about, spend time and effort on or allocate resources to.
- **Report and inform** – determine who needs to know to get the best impact and build relationships. Report on the current state of play of the records and information governance programs, open access, data sharing, privacy, and security.
 - Use the results to inform content in Annual Reports and other internal documents.
 - Look for opportunities to share your findings with other business areas who may have an interest and can become a strategic ally.
- **Support a position or business case**– use the results as evidence to support a strategic direction, justify investment, bid for resources (including financial and human), update or procure a system or to instigate a project.
- **Strategically plan** - the results can help you identify and develop actionable plans to improve an area, a particular business unit's capability or an information system
- **Help to strengthen business relationships** - By talking about the results you can build trust and create a shared commitment to developing improved outcomes.
- **Measure and reflect on progress** – use the results year on year to determine growth in maturity. Are there areas that have not progressed as well and need to be a future priority? What has influenced successes or caused a barrier?
- **Build human capability** – use the results to target training needs of the organisation as well as professional skills of records and information staff. Consider the results in determining workforce capability. What is required to meet the changing demands of the work landscape?

- **Collaborate** -The assessment can also provide opportunity for Directorates to collaborate, through the sharing of knowledge and data, to develop or replicate successful records management approaches in relation to the various principles.

Using the results

Using the results, the TRO and agencies can engage in strategic initiatives to support capability including knowledge, skills and ideas. For example, assessment results helped inform strategic documents including the TRO's five-year maturity implementation plan for improving records and information across the ACT Public Service. This has led to collaborative efforts in developing records and information case studies and defining expectations for induction training for new starters to the ACT government public service.

Examples from directorates include:

- CMTEDD used the results of their 2020 and 2021 Maturity Assessments to help build a business case for more resources for a digital records team to assist the directorate to achieve greater digital information management maturity. They successfully obtained funding to include a permanent Digital Information Manager Role and EDRMS helpdesk support position.
- EPSDD drew on data from the 2022 Assessment to inform their revised Records Management policy and program.
- CHS's combined Maturity Assessment response of Corporate and Clinical Records in 2022 led to revised assessment rankings and a clearer picture of the Directorate wide environment.

The results of the Maturity Assessment provide an opportunity for directorates and agencies to review their business and implement performance measurement processes. Monitoring is the first step, analysing the results is the next and most important one. Having hard data supplied by the Maturity Assessment provides the opportunity to align the records management program with higher-level corporate planning and objectives.



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