Information management

Our principles for managing our information, including transparency and accountability.

Why information is important ›

Information is a key resource. Information resources, supporting technology, and processes need to be coordinated and managed effectively. There are legal requirements to ensure we manage our resources effectively, ethically and efficiently. Our information resources are contained in the form of data and records, and in the knowledge, experience and judgment of our people and intermediaries.

How we manage information ›

We apply 4 basic principles to how we manage information.

Our approach to information gathering ›

Learn how we approach information gathering as part of our compliance checks.

Our Information Governance model ›

Our Information Governance model defines the framework for how we manage information.

Why information is important

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Last updated 22 February 2021

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Information management

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Our vision for managing information

Our principles

Quality information is the foundation of our services. By having accurate, reliable and timely information available and accessible to clients and staff, we contribute to the experience they have when they participate in the tax and superannuation systems.

What is information

Information is 'the representation of an object, event or a concept.' Our information exists in both digital and hard-copy format, including:

- our business records
- our clients' information

- data we use to manage high-volume transactions with appropriate quality, security and privacy.

Data

Data is 'the value of an attribute of an object, event or a concept'. It is not just a number or word, it has to be expressed in context for it to be useful.

Good data allows us to undertake complex analyses to assist in assessments, investigations and enable effective services to be provided to government, clients and staff.

Records

A record is 'the evidence of a business transaction or decision'. We treat our records as being a valuable component of the information we acquire, use and share. We only keep the records that are required to provide transparency and accountability of our business.

Keeping good records allows us to:

- identify assets

- capture evidence

- reuse valuable information

- provide our clients and government with transparency of our performance in achieving our purpose.

Information management

Information management is 'the management practices through which we acquire and generate value from information'.

Information management includes:

- collection, management and analysis of data including master data and metadata

- web content management and social media

- document management

- digital asset management and learning content management

- management of digital and hard-copy (legacy) records and information assets

- email, eMessaging and online collaboration

- enterprise search

- researching and resourcing information sources and reference material

- management of shared drive content

- information governance

- information security and risk management

- Intellectual Property (IP)

- managing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests

- design, graphics and publishing.

Key drivers

Performance

The most compelling driver for effective management of our information is improving our service delivery. Having authoritative, reliable and credible information encourages participation in our tax and superannuation systems. Good information practices enable us to have confidence in decisions we make and advice we provide to our clients, staff and to government.

Risk

Our ability to manage information security and confidentiality is paramount to the trust clients have in our services and systems. Loss of that trust would have a significant impact on client participation in the tax and superannuation systems.

Accountability

We are required to comply with legislative and regulatory instruments to ensure appropriate levels of transparency and accountability.

Key legislation includes the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability, Archives, Privacy, FOI and the Evidence and Income

Tax Assessment Acts.

Efficiency

Ongoing pressure and competition for resources drives how we plan, acquire and store our information. To deliver our services, we need to ensure we make the best possible use of our systems, technology and resources to deliver our services.

Our vision for managing information

Our vision statement is a key part of our information management framework. It describes how we aspire to operate and where we want to be.

We contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of Australians by making our information relevant, accurate and easily accessible by clients and staff.

Our principles

Our information management principles provide a foundation for making better decisions about services, risk, capabilities, priorities and investments in information management technology.

Our information:

1. is well organised and managed

2. is easily found and used

3. is available and accessible by clients and staff

4. demonstrates transparency and accountability of our business

5. delivers value for money

6. is authoritative, reliable and credible

7. is secure and confidential.

QC 33536

How we manage information

We apply 4 basic principles to how we manage information.

Last updated 11 February 2025

Lifespan model

Our Information Management lifespan model is a representation of the functions and activities involved in managing our information in the ATO over time. Our models are an important element of our information architecture and provides a foundation for defining and analysing our information management activities.

This model presents the lifespan of information from source and create through to archive and dispose. It indicates the governance and operational elements for the management of information and the enabling services we provide in partnership with our client-facing activities.

The 4 elements of the Lifespan model are:

- [Source and create](#)

- [Store and manage](#)

- [Use and share](#)

- [Archive and dispose](#).

Figure 1 – The ATO Information Lifecycle Management model

Flowchart with 5 boxes. The first box Information Governance Framework -We manage information assets throughout the lifecycle. 4 boxes underneath: Source and create, Store and manage, use and share, Archive and dispose. 4 more arrows point down, connecting these boxes with a box Information Asset Management CEI and Data - our principles guide our activities involving information assets.

Source and create

We plan how we source and create information to ensure we build in quality and appropriate techniques for obtaining and storing the information we need to do our jobs.

We receive data from clients and other stakeholders, search and find information we need from a range of sources or create new information from our analysis or business activities.

We apply different management efforts depending on the value of information.

Store and manage

We apply contemporary practices aligning with the National Archives' Information Management Standard and the NAA Building trust in the public record policy to store and manage our information assets.

Our information management capabilities are integrated into business systems, activities, and business processes to enable everyone in the ATO to comply with legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures. Our information management professionals work with business areas to identify and resolve issues, provide advice and access to resources.

We implement our strategy to manage our information and establish governance practices ensuring we achieve the transparency and accountability expected of us by the government and community.

Use and share

We apply contemporary management practices and leading technology to effectively use the information we acquire. We make decisions based on evidence we can rely on and protect the information we are entrusted with. We leverage technology to arrange our information more logically and to support the work of others.

We share information with our clients and stakeholders as necessary to meet our objectives while maintaining the confidentiality of their information. We publish and present information in a professional manner. Our information is easily understood, accessible and consumed by a broad audience, including people with accessibility challenges.

Archive and dispose

We archive information that is no longer required for business purposes and systematically destroy information that has met its business and legal retention.

QC 33534

Our Information Governance model

Our Information Governance model defines the framework for how we manage information.

Last updated 20 January 2025

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Our governance model

Chief Information Officer

Strategy Committee

Security Committee

Information Governance Working Group

Our governance model

There is a flowchart showing three boxes in varying shades of blue above one large dark blue box. The first box on the top level is light blue and labelled "security committee" with a shield icon. The middle box on the top level is a darker blue and is labelled "CIO" with three people connected by small dots as the icon. The last box on the top level is darker than the last two and is labelled "strategy committee" with a message icon. These three boxes flow into one large box on the bottom level that is royal blue and labelled "information governance working group" with three people as the icon.

Figure 1 – ATO Information Governance Model

Chief Information Officer

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) champions the importance of our information assets and how they're managed across the ATO. The CIO's role includes:

- establishing and maintaining an enterprise-wide culture for an accountable and business-focused information management environment

- retaining overall responsibility for information governance across the ATO

- advocating importance of managing information assets across the ATO

- having oversight on the ATO's information asset management policies.

Strategy Committee

The Strategy Committee oversees the acquisition, use and sharing of data. It shapes and guides the ongoing development and use of data and analytics capabilities to inform strategies and future direction.

It ensures an enterprise approach is championed for data and analytics strategies, roadmaps, partnerships, capabilities, and technology. This accelerates business outcomes while providing strategic input and recommendations to other committees and decision-makers.

Security Committee

The Security Committee is a security and business focused group overseeing the integrity of our information assets. It's responsible for overseeing the Security and Business Continuity Management (BCM) capabilities.

Information Governance Working Group

The Information Governance Working Group (IGWG) ensures information is treated as a corporate asset and optimises the use of information in the various corporate services and compliance initiatives. It's also responsible for ensuring appropriate governance for the acquisition, use and sharing of information.

The Information Governance Working Group:

- assesses and contributes to the ATO's information asset management, strategy, policy, practice, risk, and architecture effectiveness

- contributes to and reviews program and project proposals for information management initiatives.

QC 33511

Our commitment to you

We are committed to providing you with accurate, consistent and clear information to help you understand your rights and entitlements and meet your obligations.

If you follow our information and it turns out to be incorrect, or it is misleading and you make a mistake as a result, we will take that into account when determining what action, if any, we should take.

Some of the information on this website applies to a specific financial year. This is clearly marked. Make sure you have the information for the right year before making decisions based on that information.

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