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Public Records Audit Report for New Zealand Forest Research Institute Limited (Scion)

Prepared for Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand

October 2023

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Independence

We are independent of Te Rua Mahara in accordance with the independence requirements of the Public Records Act (PRA) 2005.

Contents

1. Executive summary

New Zealand Forest Research Institute Limited (Scion) is a Crown Research Institute (CRI). Scion specialises in research, science, and technology deployment for forestry, wood, wood-derived materials, and other biomaterial sectors.

Scion creates public records relating to funding, science contracts, and commercialisation. Scion has 300 staff. The Executive Sponsor is supported by four information management (IM) staff, including the Chief Information Officer, Knowledge Centre Manager, Information Management Advisor, and the Microsoft 365 (M365) Applications Analyst. These staff make up the Knowledge Centre Team.

Scion uses SharePoint as its main document management system. Scion maintains a science outputs repository that contains final versions of science contributions produced by employees. Scion also maintains a data storage platform that holds data and intellectual patents.

While most of Scion's records are maintained digitally, some physical records are maintained on-site. Some physical records are held by a third-party storage provider.

Scion's IM maturity is summarised below. Further detail on each of the maturity assessments can be found in Sections 4 and 5 of this report.

Beginning	**1**
Progressing	**11**
Managing	**8**
Maturing	**0**
Optimising	**0**

2. Introduction

KPMG was commissioned by Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand (Te Rua Mahara) to undertake an independent audit of New Zealand Forest Research Institute Limited (Scion) under section 33 of the PRA. The audit took place on-site in September 2023.

Scion's information management practices were audited against the PRA and the requirements in the [Information and records management standard](#) (the Standard) as set out in the Te Rua Mahara IM Assessment.

Te Rua Mahara provides the framework and specifies the audit plan and areas of focus for auditors. Te Rua Mahara also provides administrative support for the auditors as they undertake the independent component of the audit process. The auditors are primarily responsible for the onsite audit and writing the audit report. Te Rua Mahara is responsible for following up on the report's recommendations.

3. This audit

This audit covers all public records held by Scion including both physical and digital information.

The audit involved reviewing selected documentation, interviews with selected staff, including the Executive Sponsor, information management staff, the information technology team, and a sample of Scion staff. The Executive Sponsor is the Senior Responsible Officer for the audit.

The audit reviewed Scion's information management practices against the PRA and the requirements in the Standard and provides an assessment of current state maturity. As part of this audit, we completed systems assessments over Scion's key systems that act as a repository for public records. The systems assessed were SharePoint, a data storage platform, and a science outputs repository. Where recommendations have been made, these are intended to strengthen the current state of maturity or to assist with moving to the next level of maturity.

The summary of maturity ratings can be found at Section 4, with detailed findings and recommendations in Section 5. Scion has reviewed the draft report, and a summary of their comments can be found in Section 6.

4. Maturity Assessment

This section lists all assessed maturity levels by topic area in a table format, refer to Appendix 1 for an accessible description of the table. For further context about how each maturity level assessment has been made, refer to the relevant topic area in the report in Section 5.

Category	No.	Topic	Maturity				
			Beginning	Progressing	Managing	Maturing	Optimising
Governance							
	1	IM strategy		●			
	2	IM policy and processes			●		
	3	Governance arrangements and Executive Sponsor		●			
	4	IM Integration into business processes		●			
	5	Outsourced functions and collaborative arrangements		●			
	6	Te Tiriti o Waitangi		●			
Self-monitoring							
	7	Self-monitoring		●			
Capability							
	8	Capacity and capability			●		
	9	IM roles and responsibilities			●		
Creation							
	10	Creation and capture of information		●			
	11	High-value / high-risk information		●			
Management							
	12	IM requirements built into technology systems			●		
	13	Integrity of information		●			
	14	Information maintenance and accessibility			●		
	15	Business continuity and recovery			●		
Storage							
	16	Appropriate storage arrangements			●		
Access							
	18	Information access, use and sharing		●			
Disposal							
	20	Current organisation-specific disposal authorities			●		
	21	Implementation of disposal decisions		●			
	22	Transfer to Te Rua Mahara	●				

Please note: Topics 17 and 19 in the Information Management Maturity Assessment are applicable to local authorities only and have therefore not been assessed.

5. Audit findings by category and topic

Governance

The management of information is a discipline that needs to be owned from the top down within a public office. The topics covered in the governance category are those that need senior-level vision and support to ensure that government information is managed to ensure effective business outcomes for the public office, our government, and New Zealanders.

TOPIC 1 – IM strategy   Progressing

Summary of findings

Scion has a draft Knowledge and Information Management Strategy (the draft Strategy) that was developed in 2019 that has not been formally approved. The update to the draft Strategy is identified in the Information Technology and Knowledge Centre Operating plan, with a target date of completion of December 2023.

The draft Strategy provided strategic direction and supports business needs between the periods of 2019 – 2022. The draft Strategy covers the purpose, scope, business drivers and goals for IM. The draft Strategy refers to the Digital Collaboration Project as an initiative to improve IM practices at Scion and was used during the migration period to SharePoint. The draft Strategy included several objectives but does not define specific activities for Scion to undertake to achieve their objectives.

The Strategy was not communicated to all staff as it was in a draft state.

Recommendation

The draft Knowledge Information Management Strategy should be reviewed as scheduled in late 2023. The Strategy should inform a work programme that contains measurable activities to achieve Scion's strategic objectives.

Summary of findings

Scion has a Records and Archives Policy (the Policy) that was issued in August 2022, and is scheduled to be reviewed in August 2024 by the Executive Sponsor. The Policy includes statements that hold Scion accountable to maintain full and accurate records and dispose of records in line with legislative requirements, the Standard, and good business practice. The Policy also includes generic IM responsibilities for a range of positions ranging from all staff to the Board and Audit and Risk Committee. The Board and Audit and Risk Committee are responsible for oversight of compliance with statutory responsibilities in relation to records and archives.

As the Policy is a high-level document, Scion maintains an Information Management Guidelines and Standards document to support the Policy. The Information Management Guidelines and Standards document provides practical guidance and advice to ensure that all staff meet the Policy's intent and act upon their responsibilities.

There is no active monitoring programme in place to identify breaches of the Policy and the Information Management Guidelines and Standards.

The Policy and the Information Management Guidelines and Standards are introduced to staff and contractors as part of their on-boarding process. These documents are also uploaded to Scion's intranet. Regular communication through intranet posts reminds staff of their obligations under the Policy.

Knowledge Centre staff have also developed some process documentation that is available to all staff via the intranet. Examples include processes such as Electronic Archiving, Electronic Records – Information and Tips, Lab Book Process, and Scion's Leavers Procedure. Some staff interviewed during the audit raised that process documentation is difficult to locate on the intranet.

Recommendation

Actively monitor breaches of the Records and Archives Policy and the Information Management Guidelines and Standards. Report breaches to the Executive Sponsor for addressing.

TOPIC 3 – Governance arrangements and Executive Sponsor   Progressing

Summary of findings

Scion does not currently have a governance group that covers IM. Information management is covered on an as-needed basis at Executive Management Team meetings. The Executive Sponsor confirmed that IM is discussed when there are any changes to systems and initiatives to improve IM practice.

The Executive Sponsor understands their oversight and monitoring role for IM and sometimes performs their oversight and monitoring role. The Executive Sponsor is involved in changes to Scion's IM systems and is currently working with business units to improve their science publication processes. The Executive Sponsor and the Chief Information Officer are currently working on integrating IM into the business plan for the next financial year.

The Chief Information Officer is responsible for reporting to the Executive Sponsor on key activities performed by the Knowledge Centre, which is then reported to the Board and the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment.

Recommendation

Decide if IM governance should have its own group or be part of another governance group and develop Terms of Reference.

TOPIC 4 – IM integration into business processes   Progressing

Summary of findings

Responsibility for the management of information within business units is not assigned to business owners.

Requirements for managing information are integrated into some business processes and activities. Process documents are in place to provide guidance for adding new physical records to the on-site archive. Process documents are in place to provide guidance to electronically archive records on SharePoint. There are currently no process documents regarding how information should be managed in specific IM systems maintained by Scion. Promapps are currently being created to address this. The Knowledge Centre Manager is actively involved to ensure the Promapps include all IM considerations.

Issues with the management of information that impact business processes and activities are directed to the Knowledge Centre.

Recommendation

Assign and communicate responsibility, and provide support to, business owners to ensure they incorporate IM requirements into all business processes.

TOPIC 5 – Outsourced functions and collaborative arrangements   Progressing

Summary of findings

The Executive Sponsor and IM staff are not aware of any significant outsourced functions. Scion has some collaborative arrangements with other Government agencies and commercial entities. Scion has a Data Management Plan that sets out the requirements for the handling, management, storage, accessibility, and disposal of research data.

Requirements for IM are outlined in some of the sampled agreements. Agreements include clauses covering the access to and keeping of record, and data management. Roles and responsibilities for IM were detailed in some of the sampled agreements, including the requirement to meet record keeping requirements of the agreement and the arrangement. All agreements included provisions on confidentiality, security, and intellectual property.

Recognition of the public records status of information was evidenced in one agreement. The clause requires that data that is not personal, confidential, or classified is released in accordance with the Government's Declaration on Open and Transparent Government, wich refers to the active release of high-value public data.

Recommendations

Identify IM requirements and IM roles and responsibilities in all contracts for collaborative arrangements and any future outsourced functions.

Monitor that IM requirements are met and that requirements set out in the Data Management Plan are monitored.

TOPIC 6 – Te Tiriti o Waitangi   Progressing

Summary of findings

Scion has a Te Ao Māori team that works with scientists to identify information of importance to Māori. This is done in an ad-hoc manner and is dependent on business functions and project leaders. Some projects have a higher focus on the management of information depending on the nature of the project and iwi requirements.

While Scion's data storage platform includes metadata that identifies information of importance to Māori, this is not consistently applied across all systems. Scion is investigating how appropriate metadata fields in all systems can capture information of importance to Māori.

Plans are in place for implementing changes to IM practices for information of importance to Māori. Scion is part of a wider CRI group that has been working on issues and principles relating to Māori data governance. The Knowledge Centre team and the Te Ao Māori Team are actively involved in the project. The principles drafted will affect the way that Scion manages information of importance to Māori. These principles are yet to be reviewed by the Executive Management Team.

Staff with IM expertise are not currently involved in any new agreements with Māori or of importance to Māori to ensure IM implications are analysed and documented. In addition, IM
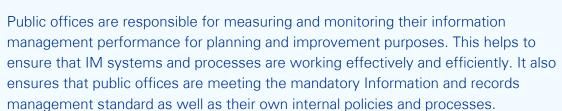
implications from Te Tiriti o Waitangi agreements and any other agreements with Māori and the application of them for IM practices is not documented.

The Interim General Manager Te Ao Māori is developing an indigenous policy that will take into consideration IM. The Knowledge Centre has been actively involved in the development of this policy which will be implemented in June 2024.

Recommendation

Involve information management expertise when forming any new agreements with Māori or of importance to Māori, to ensure IM implications are understood and documented.

Self-monitoring

Public offices are responsible for measuring and monitoring their information management performance for planning and improvement purposes. This helps to ensure that IM systems and processes are working effectively and efficiently. It also ensures that public offices are meeting the mandatory Information and records management standard as well as their own internal policies and processes.

TOPIC 7 – Self-monitoring   Progressing

Summary of findings

There is occasional monitoring of compliance of the SharePoint environment, science database and network drives against the Policy and Information Management Guidelines and Standards. At the time of this audit, the Information Management Advisor was performing a stocktake of active documents stored on SharePoint. IM staff identified that there will be more reporting functionality in the upcoming upgrade to the M365 E5 license.

IM requirements from the PRA, the Standard, and other relevant legislation is referenced in the Policy and detailed in the Information Management Guidelines and Standards. There is evidence of some monitoring against these requirements in the Legal Compliance Statement prepared by each General Manager at the end of each financial year. The Legal Compliance Statement includes a declaration of any breaches against legislation, including the PRA. The result of this monitoring is reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Knowledge Centre addresses non-compliance on an as needed basis and has a structured approach to remediate non-compliance. The approach begins with training and education. More serious cases will be escalated to the Knowledge Centre Manager or Executive Sponsor.

Recommendation

Establish a regular and proactive approach to monitoring compliance with IM requirements in both the Records and Archives Policy and the Information Management Guidelines and Standard. The results of these monitoring activities should be reported to the Executive Sponsor.

Capability

Information underpins everything our public offices do and impacts all functions and all staff within the public office. Effective management of information requires a breadth of experience and expertise for IM practitioners. Information is a core asset, and all staff need to understand how managing information as an asset will make a difference to business outcomes.

TOPIC 8 – Capacity and capability   Managing

Summary of findings

The Executive Sponsor and Knowledge Centre staff raised that IM capacity is appropriate for the current business needs of the organisation. There are five skilled staff in the Knowledge Centre that have the capability to oversee and support IM at Scion. Knowledge Centre staff are well respected and are the first point of contract for any queries or issues relating to IM.

Knowledge Centre staff interviewed expressed that an additional resource, such as a Records Management Advisor, would be a 'nice to have'. The Executive Sponsor expressed that while they may not be able to add additional resource to the Knowledge Centre, they are focussing on developing the capability of existing staff. Scion employs students during the summer period to support the organisation digitising and describing records to save into SharePoint.

Capacity and capability are assessed in business planning processes which take all areas the business into consideration.

Scion allocates funding for professional development. The Knowledge Centre staff have access to IM related professional development provided by various external organisations such as Archives and Records Association New Zealand (ARANZ) and Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance (RIMPA). However, Knowledge Centre staff indicated that they would like more training covering the requirements of the PRA and the Standard.

Recommendation

Ensure that IM capability and capacity is regularly assessed and monitored against business needs including resources to implement the Strategy.

Summary of findings

Scion has recently introduced a standard template for job descriptions. The template has a section dedicated to IM responsibilities. The level of responsibility differs for members of the Audit and Risk Committee, Executive Sponsor and Management. There is a mandatory statement that details the requirements for all staff creating and capturing information, and expectations for compliance with IM policies, standards, and guidelines. Information management requirements are not addressed in the Employment Standards and Addressing a Breach of Standards at Scion document.

Information management responsibilities and legislative requirements are communicated to new staff and contractors during the Knowledge Centre and Information Management induction. Contractors attend this induction on a case-by-case basis, as some have a short tenure at Scion.

Scion is currently planning to develop ongoing organisation-wide IM training. The Knowledge Centre provides ongoing support to all staff regarding IM. Training is communicated via posters around the office, marketing items published on the intranet, targeted emails, and meetings with Team Leads.

Recommendations

Deliver the ongoing organisation-wide IM training as planned. Ensure attendance from all relevant staff and contractors.

Develop a plan to regularly assess if the IM induction meets the current needs of the organisation, including the use of controlled systems.

Creation

It is important to take a systematic approach to the management of government information, and this starts with an understanding of what information must be created and captured. It is expected that public offices create and capture complete and accurate documentation of the policies, actions, and transactions of government. Knowing what information assets are held by public offices is essential to IM practice.

TOPIC 10 – Creation and capture of information   Progressing

Summary of findings

Staff interviewed understood their legal obligations to create and capture full and accurate records. Staff interviewed understood the information that must be created to support business functions and activities where it is part of standard practice for funding arrangements and publishing of scientific articles. Some business units maintain SharePoint sites that are restricted to their unit and staff understood that information should be created and captured in these environments.

Staff interviewed were aware that the use of network drives is discouraged and understood that information should be captured in controlled environments such as SharePoint. Information management taxonomies and structures are present. Staff interviewed indicated more training and support is required to encourage use of appropriate systems. Network drives are still actively used at Scion, resulting in some information not being captured in controlled environments.

Appropriate metadata is created to support the usability, reliability, and trustworthiness of information. For information held in SharePoint, the metadata that is captured meets the minimum metadata requirements issued by Te Rua Mahara.

Information usability issues have been identified but have not yet been addressed. Issues identified include difficulty navigating controlled environments such as SharePoint and inconsistent use of taxonomies making information difficult to find.

Recommendations

Identify the usability, reliability, and trust issues with SharePoint and implement mitigations as needed.

Actively monitor the use of network drives and work with staff to ensure controlled environments are used.

Summary of findings

Scion has an inventory of all physical information. This is an electronic inventory of physical information held on-site and an online index identifying where physical information is stored within the on-site storage. There is no formal inventory of all digital information assets held by Scion.

Scion has identified high-value / high-risk information in a Vital Records Register (VRR). The VRR is currently under review as it has not been updated since 2018. The VRR records what digital and physical information is unable to be reproduced and is critical to preserve or re-establish the work of the organisation. While the VRR details controls in place to protect records, there is no formal documentation of what risks to the vital records the controls are mitigating.

Recommendations

Adapt the VRR to identify information assets and keep these up to date,

Analyse and document risks for both physical and digital high-value/high-risk information assets.

Management

Management of information should be designed into systems to ensure its ongoing management and access over time, including following a business disruption event. Information must be reliable, trustworthy, and complete and managed to ensure it is easy to find, retrieve and use, as well as protected and secure.

TOPIC 12 – IM requirements built into technology systems   **Managing**

Summary of findings

IM expertise is involved in design and configuration decisions relating to most new and upgraded business systems. During the migration to SharePoint, the M365 Information and Architecture group was established. This group involved staff from the Knowledge Centre, who were actively involved in the migration process. Expertise from the Knowledge Centre and Information Technology Team was included during a recent migration to a new science outputs repository.

The Executive Sponsor confirmed that internal and external IM expertise is sought prior to going to market for systems. IM expertise largely comes from the Knowledge Centre, Business Analysts from the relevant business units, and external vendors.

There are no standardised IM requirements documented. Information management requirements are determined depending on the nature of the system.

Scion's SharePoint included all minimum metadata requirements issued by Te Rua Mahara. Information management staff also noted that retention and disposal schedules will be implemented once they upgrade from the Microsoft E3 to E5 licence.

System design and configuration are fully documented and maintained for all business systems.

Recommendation

Create standardised information management requirements for new and upgraded business systems.

TOPIC 13 – Integrity of information   Progressing

Summary of findings

Staff interviewed have confidence that the information they create and manage is comprehensive and complete. However, information management practices are inconsistent between business units and across the organisation.

Inconsistencies in the management of information include documents being saved to network drives, inconsistent application of version control and naming conventions. Some staff expressed that they are reluctant to use SharePoint and are more comfortable saving information to network drives. As a result, staff have a variable experience when trying to find and retrieve information.

Recommendation

Identify barriers for staff in using SharePoint and plan to mitigate the barriers so that the system is fit-for-purpose.

TOPIC 14 – Information maintenance and accessibility   Managing

Summary of findings

Scion has strategies in place to manage and maintain physical information during business and system changes. Scion maintains an online catalogue of all physical information held on-site and at the Christchurch branch that displays the list and location of records. Additionally, Scion maintains a register of all physical records held at a third-party storage provider. A process is in place to digitise physical records which ensures information is digitised and stored in the appropriate system.

Scion has strategies in place to manage and maintain digital information during business and system changes. Migration plans are in place for all systems. Information Technology staff interviewed noted there is continuous monitoring of data and full testing scripts are run to ensure the correct transfer of information.

Some technology obsolescence risks have been identified and addressed. For example, Scion had implemented a new science outputs repository as the former repository was approaching its end-of-life.

Some risks to the ongoing accessibility of historical physical information have been identified and addressed. For example, Scion has digitised some physical records due to the natural aging of paper-based records.

Some preservation needs for physical information have been addressed by having appropriate environmental controls for the on-site storage and access is restricted to a small number of staff within the Knowledge Centre.

Preservation needs for digital information have been addressed, which includes the maintenance of open-format records to enable continuity and access controls are restricted to business units or roles. Digital information cannot be permanently deleted.

Recommendation

All technology obsolescence risks should be identified and addressed.

TOPIC 15 – Business continuity and recovery   Managing

Summary of findings

Scion maintains a Knowledge Centre Disaster Plan that was last reviewed in August 2022. The Knowledge Centre Disaster Plan includes actions to be taken for the restoration of physical information, and access to expertise for the salvage and restoration of physical information.

Scion maintains an IT Disaster Recovery Plan that was last updated in August 2023. The IT Disaster Recovery Plan is linked to the general Emergency Response and Continuity Plan. This plan includes the prioritisation of systems that must be restored and actions to restore these systems. Digital information is replicated and snapshotted every four hours and stored on disk for six months. Data is backed up to tape monthly and kept for 13 months. The yearly backup to tape is held for seven years.

Both the Knowledge Centre Disaster Plan and the IT Disaster Recovery Plan do not identify information that is critical to Scion's operations. IM staff indicated that critical digital and physical information is detailed in the VRR, however the VRR has not been updated since 2018.

The IM staff informed us that most critical information has been digitised. Outstanding records include historic field trial, wood preservation, and genetic trial data.

The Knowledge Centre Disaster Plan and the IT Disaster Recovery Plan were both tested in the last six months.

Recommendations

All critical records where possible should be stored in digital format to enable business continuity and recovery.

The Knowledge Centre Disaster Plan and the IT Disaster Recovery Plan should reference the VRR to ensure all staff understand critical information that must be prioritised for recovery.

Storage

Good storage is a very important factor for information protection and security. Appropriate storage arrangements for both physical and digital information ensures information remains accessible and usable for as long as it is required for business and legal purposes and for accountable government.

TOPIC 16 – Appropriate storage arrangements   Managing

Summary of findings

Scion has appropriate protection and security in place to protect physical information against unauthorised access, loss, or destruction. Physical information is stored in Scion's on-site storage, where access is restricted to a limited number of staff. If general staff want to gain access to the information held in the archives, employees must request access through the Knowledge Centre to view or loan the resource. Controls, including sprinklers and temperature control, are in place to reduce the impact of natural hazards. Remaining physical information is securely stored with a third-party storage provider.

Appropriate protection and security measures are in place for digital information. Access to information is confined to business units and groups. If a staff member wants to access information that is outside their business unit, their manager and the owner of the business unit must authorise access. Information Technology staff interviewed noted that the firewall is monitored daily, and virtual private networks are in place to allow staff to safely work. Digital information is maintained by two cloud service providers. Scion also has a cyber security programme which includes one or two external audits per year covering different parts of their infrastructure. These audits include penetration tests and controls review and testing.

Information protection and security risks are not regularly reported to the Executive Management Team.

Recommendation

Information protection and security risks should be identified and regularly reported to the Executive Management Team and remediation actions should be identified.

Access

Ongoing access to and use of information enables staff to do their work and the public to hold government accountable. To facilitate this, public offices need mechanisms for finding and using this information efficiently. Information and/or data sharing between public offices and with external organisations should be documented in specific information sharing agreements.

TOPIC 18 – Information access, use and sharing   Progressing

Summary of findings

A taxonomy, file plan, and metadata schema are available for information. However, these are inconsistently applied in practice. Staff know how to use some systems and tools that facilitate the access to information. Staff interviewed noted that information can be difficult to find as a taxonomy is available, but not consistently applied in practice. Because of this, staff indicated that it is easier to maintain documents on their Q: Drive but are open to further training on search techniques and the application of metadata.

Digital access controls for IM systems are documented in the M365 directory. However, access controls are not regularly maintained, and access is only revoked upon request.

As mentioned in Topic 16 – *Appropriate Storage Arrangements,* access to physical information is restricted to a small number of Knowledge Centre employees and a log is maintained of who has accessed the archives.

Metadata used to find and manage information in SharePoint complies with the metadata requirements issued by Te Rua Mahara.

Information management processes are applied to incoming and outgoing information and data shared with external parties. This includes using independent SharePoint sites when projects require external collaboration. External collaborators are not able to to share information outside of the SharePoint Team sites and Corporate Information sites used internally.

Recommendations

Identify issues for staff in finding information in IM systems and establish a plan to remediate these.

Access controls for IM systems should be regularly maintained.

Disposal

Disposal activity must be authorised by the Chief Archivist under the Public Records Act. Public offices should have their own specific disposal authority as well as actively use the General Disposal Authorities for disposal of general or more ephemeral information. Disposal should be carried out routinely. Information of archival value, both physical and digital, should be regularly transferred to Te Rua Mahara (or have a deferral of transfer) and be determined as either "open access" or "restricted access".

TOPIC 20 – Current organisation-specific disposal authorities   Managing

Summary of findings

Scion has a current, approved organisation-specific disposal authority, that covers information relating to all business functions and formats. This disposal authority is scheduled to expire in 2024. There is a regular review cycle to ensure that the organisation-specific disposal authority reflects business and legislative changes as part of the CRI initiative.

Scion is currently collaborating with other CRIs to develop a sector-specific disposal authority and they will move into this schedule once approved by Te Rua Mahara.

Recommendations

Ensure that the current disposal authority is renewed with Te Rua Mahara to provide coverage until the new CRI disposal authority is approved.

Ensure the CRI-wide disposal authority includes requirements for all information created and used by Scion.

TOPIC 21 – Implementation of disposal decisions   Progressing

Summary of findings

Process documentation outlining disposal requirements of the general and organisation-specific disposal authorities is available to staff. Staff interviewed as part of this audit understand the requirements of disposing information to ensure information is retained in line with general disposal authorities and the organisation specific disposal authority. The Knowledge Centre is planning to integrate retention and disposal schedules into SharePoint once they upgrade their M365 licence from E3 to E5.

There has been some disposal of physical information between 2009 and 2022, which is evidenced in Scion's Archives and Disposal Register. The disposal register documents the description of information that was disposed of, under what authority, the action taken, along with the date and who authorised the disposal. The register does not detail who performed the disposal action. Destruction of physical information is secure, complete, and irreversible.

Recommendation

Integrate requirements of the general and organisation-specific disposal authorities into business systems and practices.

TOPIC 22 – Transfer to Te Rua Mahara   Beginning

Summary of findings

Scion has some awareness of physical information of archival value that is over 25 years old, but this has not been formally identified. Some digital information of archival value has been labelled as 'archived' on SharePoint.

No physical or digital information has been transferred to Te Rua Mahara. Scion has historically had some deferral of transfer agreements in place; however, these have since expired. Scion is currently identifying legacy records through their Legacy Records Project and will report their progress to Te Rua Mahara relating to the deferral of transfer.

Physical and digital information over 25 years old has not been determined as having open or restricted access. All information is considered open access unless it is a client report.

There are currently no plans to transfer digital information to Te Rua Mahara.

Recommendation

Identify the information held that is over 25 years old in preparation for transferring to Te Rua Mahara or developing and agreeing a new deferral of transfer. This will include establishing an access authority for these records.

6. Summary of feedback

We accept all the recommendations of the audit report.

We accept all the ratings in the report.

Given the overall report findings and recommendations we see the following actions as requiring priority attention:

1. *Completing the Knowledge and Information Management Strategy, including a defined work plan.*

2. *Continuing to develop training materials and deliver training on the practices and technologies in support of effective Information and Records management.*

3. *Ensure that we have our vital records register up to date and have completed risk assessments.*

7. Appendix 1

The table in Section 4, on page 3 lists all assessed maturity levels by topic area in a table format.   This table has been listed below for accessibility purposes:

Topic 1, IM strategy – Progressing

Topic 2, IM policy and processes – Managing

Topic 3, Governance arrangements & Executive Sponsor – Progressing

Topic 4, IM integration into business processes – Progressing

Topic 5, Outsourced functions and collaborative arrangements – Progressing

Topic 6, Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Progressing

Topic 7, Self-monitoring – Progressing

Topic 8, Capability and capacity - Managing

Topic 9, IM roles and responsibilities - Managing

Topic 10, Creation and capture of information - Progressing

Topic 11, High-value / high-risk information – Progressing

Topic 12, IM requirements built into technology systems - Managing

Topic 13, Integrity of information - Progressing

Topic 14, Information maintenance and accessibility - Managing

Topic 15, Business continuity and recovery – Managing

Topic 16, Appropriate storage arrangements – Managing

Topic 18, Information access, use and sharing – Progressing

Topic 20, Current organisation-specific disposal authorities – Managing

Topic 21, Implementation of disposal decisions – Progressing

Topic 22, Transfer to Te Rua Mahara – Beginning

kpmg.com/nz

11 December 2023

Julian Elder
Chief Executive
New Zealand Forest Research Institute
Limited
Julian.Elder@scionresearch.com

Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand
10 Mulgrave Street
Wellington
Phone +64 499 5595
Websites www.archives.govt.nz
www.dia.govt.nz

E te rangatira e Julian tēnā koe

Public Records Act 2005 Audit Recommendations

This letter contains my recommendations related to the recent independent audit of the New Zealand Forest Research Institute Limited (Scion) completed by KPMG under section 33 of the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA). Thank you for making your staff and resources available to support the audit process.

Introduction

Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand (Te Rua Mahara) is mandated by the PRA to regulate public sector information management (IM). The audit programme is a key regulatory tool in our Monitoring Framework.

Monitoring IM practice across the public sector gives assurance that the government is open, transparent and accountable by providing visibility of public sector IM practices. Full, accurate and accessible information improves business efficiency and government decision-making and accountability, which in turn enhances public trust and confidence. Information that is well managed unlocks the value of government information for the benefit of everyone.

We are confident that you and your organisation are committed to delivering high-quality, trusted information to decision-makers, other government organisations, customers and stakeholders. We trust that the audit process will support this commitment. The audit report and this letter recommend changes to support improvement of your organisation's IM practices.

Audit findings

In the audit report, the auditor has independently assessed your information maturity against the framework of our IM Maturity Assessment. Prior to the audit, your organisation completed the Maturity Assessment. This provided a self-assessment of IM maturity for your own use and as context for the auditor about your organisation.

Organisations that are assessed as having a maturity level of 'Managing' across all IM topics are broadly meeting the minimum requirements expected by the PRA and the mandatory Information and records management standard. Scion's IM is assessed as operating at the Progressing and Managing level.

In the audit report, Section 6 *Summary of feedback,* Scion has already prioritised training to support the use of SharePoint which will help to address some of the issues identified by staff in finding information. To ensure SharePoint is fit for purpose there are also other issues to address as described in Topic 18: *Information access, use and sharing.* Areas to work on include improving the SharePoint structure and metadata to lessen the reliance on shared drives and integrating retention and disposal.

Prioritised recommendations

The audit report lists 29 recommendations to improve your organisation's IM maturity.

We endorse all recommendations as appropriate and relevant. To focus your IM improvement programme, we consider that your organisation should prioritise the eight recommendations as identified in the Appendix.

What will happen next

The audit report and this letter will be proactively released on our website shortly. We would be grateful if you would advise of any redactions that your organisation considers are necessary within 10 working days.

As required by the PRA, I will also provide the Minister of Internal Affairs with a report on the results of the audit programme for each financial year, which is tabled in the House of Representatives.

We will follow up this letter with a request to your Executive Sponsor that your organisation provides us with an action plan to address the prioritised recommendations. Our follow up process will track your progress against the action plan.

Thank you again for your support with the audit. We would greatly appreciate further feedback on the audit process and the value it provides to organisations. We have sent a feedback survey link for the attention of your Executive Sponsor in the accompanying email.

Nāku noa, nā

Anahera Morehu
Poumanaaki Chief Archivist
Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand

Cc Justine Wilmoth, Acting General Manager Finance and Corporate Services (Executive Sponsor) justine.wilmoth@scionresearch.com

APPENDIX

Category	Topic Number	Auditor's Recommendation	Comments from Te Rua Mahara
Governance	1: IM strategy	*The draft Knowledge Information Management Strategy should be reviewed as scheduled in late 2023. The Strategy should inform a work programme that contains measurable activities to achieve Scion's strategic objectives.*	This is fundamental to scoping, agreeing, and implementing IM improvement activity across the organisation. Information and records management strategy
Governance	3: Governance arrangements and Executive Sponsor	*Decide if IM governance should have its own group or be part of another governance group and develop Terms of Reference.*	This will ensure that all relevant staff are involved in regularly discussing IM and that trends and issues can be considered as reported to the Executive Sponsor.
Governance	4: IM integration into business processes	*Assign and communicate responsibility, and provide support to, business owners to ensure they incorporate IM requirements into all business processes.*	This should tie in with the recent changes to the job descriptions with its section dedicated to IM responsibilities.
Governance	9: IM roles and responsibilities	*Deliver the ongoing organisation-wide IM training as planned. Ensure attendance from all relevant staff and contractors.*	It is useful to monitor training to ensure it is meeting current needs. In relation to Topic 4 above targeted IM training for business owners would be useful.
Creation	10: Creation and capture of information	*Identify the usability, reliability, and trust issues with SharePoint and implement mitigations as needed.*	These issues are also highlighted in Topic 13: Integrity of Information.
Creation	11: High-value/high-risk information	*Adapt the VRR to identify information assets and keep these up to date.*	Collaboration with the wider CRI sector over this may be useful considering there is a joint DA in development.

Category	Topic Number	Auditor's Recommendation	Comments from Te Rua Mahara
Management	12: IM requirements December 2023built into technology systems	*Implement retention and disposal schedules in SharePoint and ensure that minimum metadata requirements issued by Te Rua Mahara are addressed in the licence upgrade.*	Implementation of disposal and retention schedules is a useful next step for control of digital records
Disposal	22: Transfer to Te Rua Mahara	*Identify the information held that is over 25 years old in preparation for transferring to Te Rua Mahara or developing and agreeing a new deferral of transfer. This will include establishing an access authority for these records.*	Being based in Rotorua, Scion would transfer physical records to our Auckland repository. Discussion with Te Rua Mahara on options around transfer/deferral of transfer is necessary.