

On the record:

2013 Sir Rupert Hamer Award case studies



Melbourne Water laps up recordkeeping

Wide-ranging consultation, an alignment with Public Record Office Victoria standards, and an innovative, user-focused information governance model were the key elements to Melbourne Water's successful "Info Program." Melbourne Water received a Sir Rupert Hamer Recordkeeping Award for its efforts.

The Category: Victorian Government Agency

About Melbourne Water:

Melbourne Water is a Victorian Government-owned organisation that manages Melbourne's water supply catchments, treats and supplies drinking and recycled water, removes and treats most of Melbourne's sewage, and manages waterways and major drainage systems in the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

The Challenge:

Melbourne Water had an information management system that had been outgrown by the organisation. It no longer supported the organisation's compliance obligations for information management and was not sufficiently tailored to the business needs. The security and access model employed did not comply with Melbourne Water's new Information Management Policy or Security Policy and searching for documents was made difficult by poor categorisation and metadata.

The Solution:

Melbourne Water developed and introduced the "Info Program", a collection of interrelated projects running over eighteen months that resulted in the Melbourne Water Information Management (IM) Strategy. The program set out to deliver clear policies and

accountabilities for key information sets, along with a prioritised action plan to: address severe risks; migrate significant documents to a system which supports effective information management (including effective governance); introduce data models and standards for strategic data; and improve communication and training.

Approach:

The Info Program was based on a strategic roadmap defined through extensive consultation across the organisation over twelve months, which focused on the current information management maturity of the organisation. This resulted in a series of achievable objectives and a realistic plan of change. The complex program of interrelated projects required a high degree of project and program management rigour. The information management strategy and roadmap outlined the entirety of the program. Business cases were developed and processes were followed for capital projects such as the renewal of the electronic document and records management system (EDRMS).

A Steering Committee, comprised of senior representatives from each of the eight business areas across the organisation, as well as the Chief Information Officer, Program Manager and Program Director, met monthly to make major decisions about the program. This group played an important role by ensuring each of their respective business areas were considered and involved throughout the project. In addition, each member was affiliated with a particular stream (governance, people & culture, unstructured information, structured information), leveraging expertise and interest.

A program roadmap, which provided an overall view of completed, current and upcoming activities, complemented a weekly 'snapshot' with program headlines, key activities for the period, issues and risks, and a traffic light status for each of the four streams.

Mostly internal resources were used, with vendor and contractor support where required. Other specialist parts of the business were also utilised as required. For example, the Business Systems team worked on the EDRMS. As success for the program depended on a collective change in behaviour, Melbourne Water sought and attained a high degree of involvement from within the organisation to deliver the work.

The Result:

The program delivered a significant improvement in Melbourne Water's information management capability, including an innovative information governance model where individuals became accountable for making decisions about particular sets of information.

There was also a better understanding of the organisational risks associated with poor information management and those that can be reduced through improved information management.

The key outcomes were:

- Improvements to the EDRMS including improved user experience, configuration to meet records compliance obligations and information structures aligned with current business practices
- An agreed model and definitions for conceptual information holdings (enterprise information model) which assists with systems planning and underpins the Melbourne Water governance model
- Improved training program and IM/RM awareness
- A community of practice established around the integration of business practice with the EDRMS
- Information management now included in the new-starter induction processes and the code of conduct
- Organisational best practice in change management, communications, stakeholder management and innovation.

An external review referenced the Info Program as one of extremely high complexity. This was due to the high level of business engagement required, the staff's diverse needs, and the magnitude of the work affecting every Melbourne Water employee, contractor and others collecting information on the organisation's behalf. To address this complexity, the program had a key focus on change management, communications and stakeholder engagement.

Importantly, staff became more aware of information management across the organisation and received training in the new starter process. The program also saw a 20 per cent increase in the daily use of the EDRM system and, by the end of the project, more than 4TB had been moved onto the system.

On a compliance level, as part of the program, Melbourne Water developed seven standards for information management aligned with Public Record Office Victoria standards. These standards are now implemented and are scheduled for review every two years at a minimum.

Furthermore, it is expected that the Info Program will deliver a positive return on investment in the range of \$10-25M. It is not anticipated that any investment beyond 'business as usual' will be required to deliver these benefits.

Key Discoveries:

- If the change affects everyone, make sure you invest heavily in change management.
- Do not start unless you have senior executive support and the business is prepared to recognise this as a significant project requiring whole of business priority and attention.
- Break your program of work into small manageable projects.
- Be clear on what your 'negotiable' and 'non-negotiable' components are and be sure to involve the business in deciding how any negotiable elements will be implemented. Also make sure the business knows what the non-negotiable elements are and why.

Benefits of Entering:

The Melbourne Water team publicised the Sir Rupert Hamer Award win internally. As well as receiving positive feedback from management and colleagues, it made the team feel proud about the work they had achieved together.

As the project is complete, the award did not deliver specific benefits at the project level, however, at a business-as-usual level it provided a solid foundation to fall back on.

The team say they would definitely enter again if they had a completed project that met the criteria.