

## Statement of Knowledge for Recordkeeping Professionals

### ***Introducing the Statement of Knowledge***

This statement of knowledge identifies the unique body of theory, standards and ethics that differentiates recordkeeping professionals from other professionals.

The recordkeeping profession is diverse in scope but comparatively small in population. As with any profession, knowledge is core to the recordkeeping profession and allows its members to move between contexts, including different organisations and recordkeeping environments. Records continuum concepts underpin this statement of knowledge.<sup>i</sup> The continuum does not separate past, present and future roles, processes, archives and records, and places records in organisational and community contexts or dimensions.

This statement of knowledge is a guiding document that forms a foundation for the responsibilities of the recordkeeping profession. The primary audience is the recordkeeping profession and aims to:

- inform the design of educational programs, assessment and qualifications frameworks;
- course recognition and accreditation; and
- membership of professional associations.

### ***Authority and status of the Statement of Knowledge***

The statement of knowledge is based on *AS ISO 15489 - 2002 Records Management*<sup>ii</sup> and *BSB01 Business Services (Recordkeeping) Training Package*<sup>iii</sup> and is a collaborative endeavour of the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. (ASA) and the RIM Professionals Australasia. The statement was approved by the ASA Council in March 2006 and the RIM Professionals Australasia Board on December 2006 and will be reviewed in August 2008.

The statement of knowledge is not an isolated document, but sits within a broader recordkeeping profession education framework. Figure 1 shows the education framework, comprising the sources of the statement of knowledge, potential uses and links to internal and external contexts of professional recordkeeping associations.

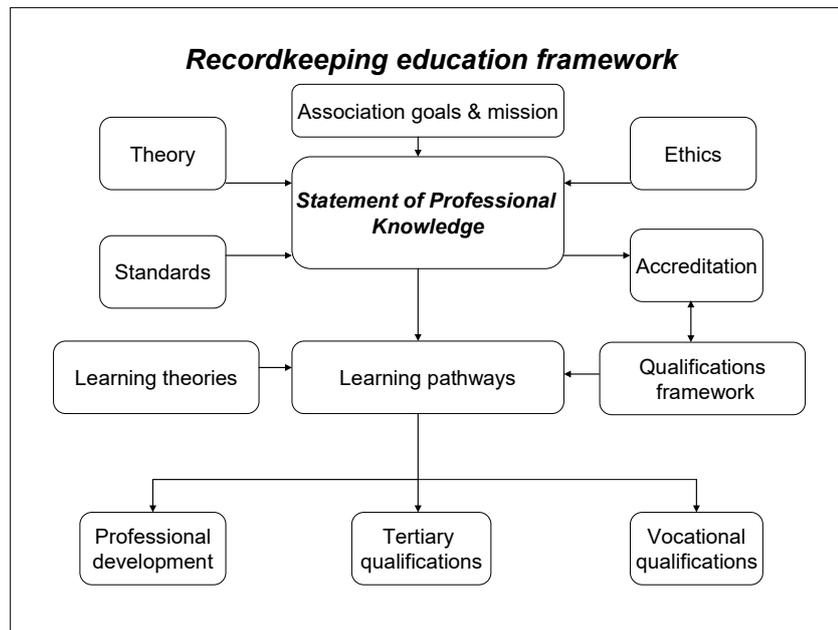


Figure 1: Place of the statement within the recordkeeping education framework

### ***The Statement of Knowledge***

Recordkeeping professionals support societies, communities and organisations as they try to make meaning out of decisions, actions and memories. Recordkeeping professionals provide an essential bridge between the past, present and future dimensions in which records and their contexts belong; through understanding the environments that generated the records and the way records act as evidence of those environments.

Recordkeeping professionals:

1. Establish, manage and maintain **recordkeeping frameworks** that:
  - enable accountability and governance;
  - preserve memory and identity; and
  - provide information.
2. Establish, manage and maintain **recordkeeping processes and systems** that:
  - capture, maintain and provide authentic, reliable, accessible and trusted records of social and business activities; and
  - meet the needs and expectations of individuals, organisations and society.
3. Apply theory and practice through ethical behaviour, promulgated in codes of practice or conduct.

4. Engage in an advocacy role for the recordkeeping profession to promote awareness and understanding of recordkeeping theory, practice and ethics.

The fundamental knowledge that binds all recordkeeping professionals in fulfilling these roles is their understanding of:

- ◆ *the purposes and characteristics of records and recordkeeping systems;*
- ◆ *the context in which recordkeeping occurs; and*
- ◆ *recordkeeping processes and practices.*

The statement is structured around three integrated concepts: theory, ethics and practice. Theory justifies why we take a course of action, principles or ethics guide how we approach that course of action and practice shows what course of action we take. Through a structure of inter-related knowledge domains, this statement seeks to show the interaction of theory, practice and ethics.

Theory underpins all decisions and actions undertaken by practitioners. Today's theories are embodied in *AS ISO 15489*, but recordkeeping professionals also need to know about theories that

informed records and recordkeeping systems in the past. It is not possible, or appropriate to replicate the full body of theory in this statement; it is contextual to the learning or work place environment, so different theories will apply at different times and places. This means that when learning about or working with records from different eras, it is essential to understand the theories that would have informed the decisions and actions of the agents at the time. Examples of past and present theories include:

- records continuum theory;
- life cycle theory;
- respect for original order; and
- respect for provenance.

These theories are articulated, debated and challenged in professional literature and discourse and influence all knowledge domains.

The statement recognises that recordkeeping is influenced by the period and place or dimension in which it occurs. It also recognises that recordkeeping is a complex business and social activity that has relevance and influence beyond the immediate context in which it occurs. This time and space contingent of each knowledge domain is reflected in Figure 2.

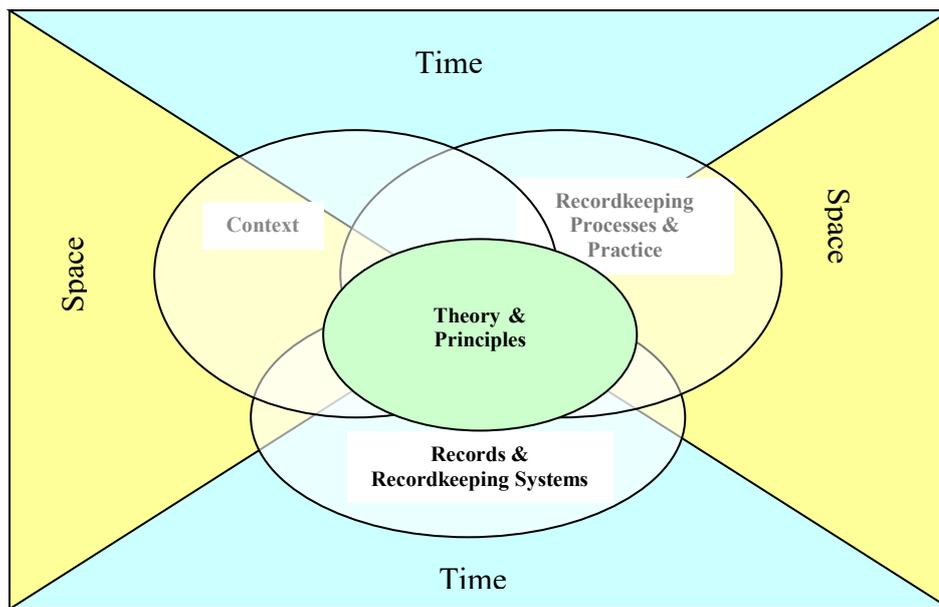


Figure 2: Concept diagram showing the knowledge domains of the recordkeeping profession

**Knowledge Domain 1: Purposes and characteristics of records and recordkeeping systems**

Recordkeeping professionals understand the purposes and characteristics of records and recordkeeping systems. This domain is about understanding the records and the systems in which they are created and maintained; why they are created, the information they contain and how evidence is represented in the records. The system could be hardcopy or digital and exist in the past, present and future.

**Purpose of records**

The primary purpose of records is to provide evidence of and information about social and business activities. Records underpin individual, organisation and social accountability and memory.

Recordkeeping professionals understand the value and role of records as information and evidence within the various environments and recordkeeping contexts in which they exist. Recordkeeping professionals also understand how recordkeeping processes and practices enable the purposes of records to be fulfilled.

**Characteristics of records**

Recordkeeping professionals understand the purpose of records and the characteristics that distinguish them from other information resources: authenticity, reliability, integrity and useability. They understand how to manage and maintain full and accurate records in context through time and space.

Recordkeeping professionals understand that characteristics of records are contingent on the social and business activities that they document and the purposes for which records serve.

### **Purpose of recordkeeping systems**

Recordkeeping professionals understand the purposes of recordkeeping systems as enablers of process and practice through:

- being mechanisms for ensuring the characteristics of records are maintained;
- capturing and maintaining recordkeeping metadata that relates to records;
- their management in aggregations and contexts; and
- enabling accessibility of records to meet business requirements and community expectations.

To ensure recordkeeping systems achieve these objectives, recordkeeping professionals need to understand:

- records entities and aggregations;
- recordkeeping metadata; and
- recordkeeping contexts.

This in turn is underpinned by an understanding of:

- respect for original order;
- respect for provenance;
- arrangement and description; and
- the nature and effect of custody.

### **Characteristics of recordkeeping systems**

Recordkeeping professionals understand the characteristics of recordkeeping systems that are designed to capture, manage and preserve records. Such characteristics include accessibility, reliability and integrity and being compliant, comprehensive and systematic.

### ***Knowledge Domain 2: Context***

Recordkeeping professionals understand the recordkeeping and broader environmental context needed to support the design, development, documentation and management of recordkeeping systems and the records they manage.

This domain is about understanding the broader environment that is needed to support the creation and maintenance of records. A recordkeeping professional's understanding of context includes ethical consideration of community expectations, legislative and regulatory mandates, governance frameworks, the business environment, and recordkeeping principles and standards.

A recordkeeping professional's understanding of the environmental context considers the:

- expectations and needs of individuals, organisations, communities and society in the past, now and in the future;
- characteristics of the jurisdictions in which recordkeeping activities occur;
- influence of technology on recordkeeping;
- influence of advances in best practice on recordkeeping;
- influence of continuity and change on recordkeeping and the value of records;

- culture and language of individuals, organisations or communities;
- risk management;
- perspectives and needs of stakeholders in that domain where there is a responsibility to identify requirements and educate;
- expertise and knowledge of agents and users of records; and
- role of recordkeeping processes, practices and recordkeeping systems.

Consideration of the environment requires an understanding of:

- respect for provenance;
- legal mandates and ownership of business process;
- principles of risk;
- information management frameworks; and
- principles of administrative change where records follow function.

### ***Knowledge Domain 3: Recordkeeping processes and practices***

Recordkeeping professionals understand and apply recordkeeping processes and practices to establish, manage and maintain recordkeeping infrastructure and behaviours that are appropriate to the context in which they operate. Recordkeeping frameworks, theories and principles inform this understanding.

This domain is about understanding how recordkeeping theory, frameworks and standards may be implemented. This domain also reflects the responsibilities of the many and varied roles that members of the profession might carry out.

Recordkeeping processes and practices may include:

- defining recordkeeping roles and responsibilities;
- documenting context; including administrative change;
- designing and implementing recordkeeping processes and systems;
- determining records to be captured into a recordkeeping system;
- defining how long to retain records;
- capturing records;
- identify requirements to support recordkeeping functionality in business systems;
- design of language control systems;
- registering records into a recordkeeping system;
- classifying business functions, activities and transactions;
- storing and handling records;
- protecting and preserving records;
- maintaining persistent links between records and other entities through recordkeeping metadata;
- enabling access to records;
- implementing disposal;
- documenting recordkeeping processes and practices; and
- establishing and maintaining recordkeeping capabilities.

Knowledge of recordkeeping processes and practice is underpinned by an understanding of:

- arrangement and description;
- preservation;
- custody and storage;
- metadata schemas
- business and systems analysis;
- functional approaches to recordkeeping
- appraisal of records and functions; and
- reference and access.

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<sup>i</sup> Upward, F. (1996). 'Structuring the Records Continuum Part One: Post-custodial Principles and Properties'. *Archives and Manuscripts*, 24, no. 2, pp.268 – 285.

Upward, F. (1997). 'Structuring the Records Continuum Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping'. *Archives and Manuscripts*, 25, no. 1, pp.10 – 35.

<sup>ii</sup> Standards Australia (2002). *AS ISO 15489 – 2002 Records Management*. Sydney: Standards Australia.

<sup>iii</sup> Business Services Training Australia (2001). *BSB01 Business Services (Recordkeeping) Training Package*. Melbourne: Business Services Training Australia.