

Reducing file share dependencies: The Aboriginal Housing Office's approach

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Next to emails, share drives / network drives or file shares are probably the most utilised resource for storing records in any agency. Often they are a nightmare to navigate, let alone manage.

One of the strategies used to solve the problems associated with file shares is to implement an electronic document and records management system (EDRMs). However, having EDRMs in place doesn't guarantee reduction of file share usage.

We are fortunate that the Aboriginal Housing Office shared to us how their Records Management (RM) Program implementation increased their EDRMs usage adoption and reduced their file share footprint.

The Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is a legislative authority established under the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998. The AHO administers the policies and funding arrangements for Aboriginal community housing in NSW.

Pre-2015 records management in AHO

AHO's records management was characterised by the following:

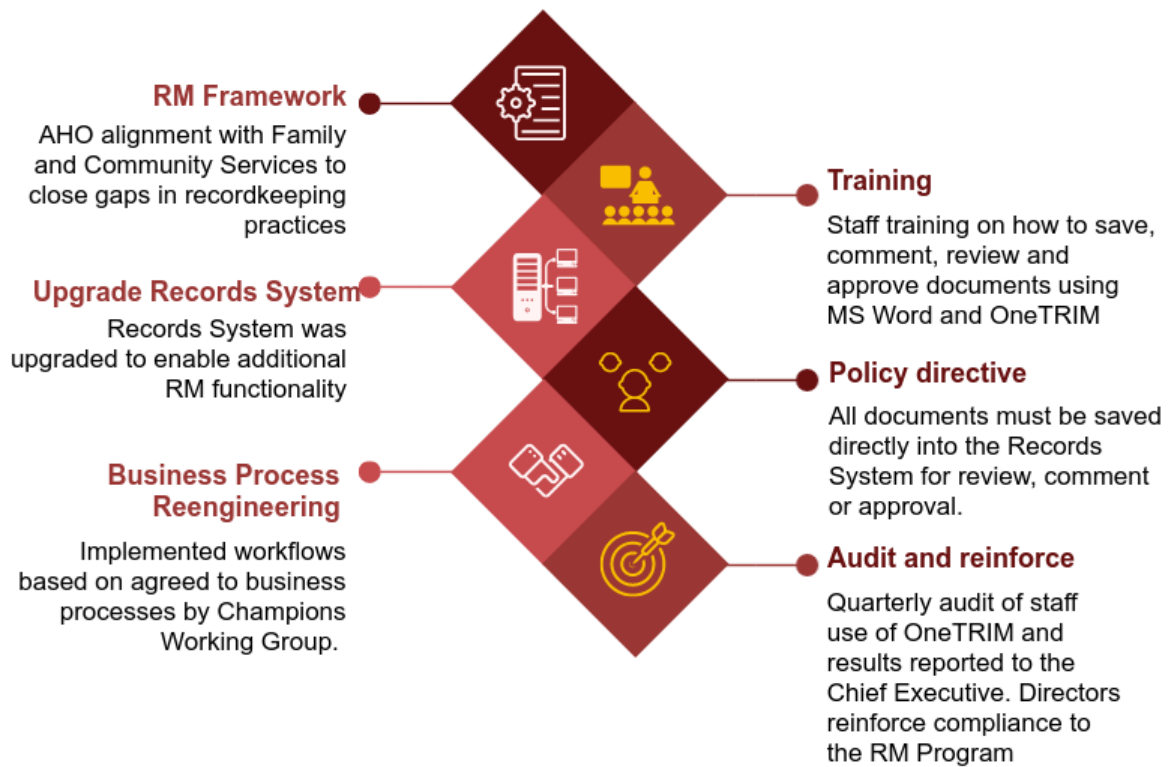
- hard copy records were stored in various locations and pinpointing where specific records were, took a lot of time and effort
- AHO didn't maintain its own recordkeeping system
- staff were not supported or trained in records management procedures / processes
- file share G:/ was the default repository for most of AHO records.

It was increasingly hard for AHO to administer its programs without trustworthy records and robust records management processes.

In 2015, AHO partnered with the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) to modernise records management through the OneTRIM program.

Records Management Program

The AHO had strong change sponsorship from Shane Hamilton, Chief Executive which was critical to the success of the RM Program. (Click [here](#) to listen and view Shane's presentation.) The RM program consisted of:



File Share Reduction Implementation Timeline

During the RM Program implementation, AHO identified that records were stored in file shares and not in the records System. A strategy to reduce file share usage was included as part of the RM Program. The strategy consisted of:

- Policy – all records for comment and approval need to go through the Records System and that all records previously saved in file shares will have to be saved in the Records System. The policy also recommended that file share G:/ will be read-only.
- Stakeholder engagement – business units were consulted and their business processes and needs were taken into consideration as part of change management. This resulted in the identification of exceptions where the Records System is unable to manage specific records or business processes.
- Training and communication – staff were given training and cheat sheets were developed and provided to the staff. Information relating to the implementation were also communicated. In addition, records management training was also included in the induction process.

Implementation Timeline

July
2016



File share policy

The Chief Executive approved the recommendation to change AHO File Share to Read-Only AHO Group (G:/).

Stakeholder engagement

Business units were engaged to ensure that business processes were not disrupted by the implementation of the File share policy.

Identified exceptions

The Business Units and the Records Coordinator identified and agreed on instances where the Records System can't manage AHO records and information. Below are the following exceptions:

- Images and videos used by the Communications team
- MS Excel spreadsheets used by the Finance team
- AHO Property Register database

The identified exceptions were then transferred from G:/ to an alternate drive - T:/

Refresher training and "nuts & bolts"

Refresher training on how to directly save MS Office documents into the Records System were offered to staff. A cheat sheet was also developed and communicated through the "Nuts & Bolts" internal newsletter.

Sept
2016



G:/ drive read-only access

On 9 September 2016, AHO made their G:/ drive read only. Since then, no additional exceptions were identified.

To view this case study as an infographic, click [here](#). To download the infographic in PDF, click [here](#).

Thank you very much to Christine Tran of AHO for sharing their strategy with us!

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