Benchmarking Research

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:

NSW GOVERNMENT | State Archives & Records

20 November 2018

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

The State Archives and Records Authority of NSW is a statutory body established by the *State Records Act 1998*, with the Act providing for the creation, management and protection of the records of public offices of the State and for public access to those records.

Within NSW State Archives and Records the Government Recordkeeping Program is responsible for the administration of the *State Records Act 1998* through the provision of records management advice, standards, policies and tools to help NSW public offices meet Parts 2, 3, and 5 of the Act.

In 2018-19 a key focus of the Government Recordkeeping Program will be to improve understanding of recordkeeping obligations, with this focus to encompass a range of projects including:

- a new website made up of content from the Government Recordkeeping section of the NSW State Archives and Records' website and Future Proof blog
- review of current communication activities
- a new visual ID to present Government Recordkeeping as a modern and helpful regulator.

To inform the development and delivery of the above projects the Government Recordkeeping Program of NSW State Archives and Records has identified the need for:

- measurement to be made as to current levels of understanding of the *State Records Act 1998*
- information as to current practices and pain points regarding recordkeeping obligations within organisations
- understanding to be had as to the effectiveness of current communication strategies

With the above information to be used to both provide a benchmark measurement against which the effectiveness of initiatives to improve understanding can be measured, as well as provide insight and direction to inform the development of future information and communication strategies that will act to improve understanding and compliance.

The specific insights needed to provide the required depth of understanding to deliver to the above requirement, are detailed within the sections following.

Summary of Key Insights

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF RECORDKEEPING UNDERSTANDING
Employees working within the recordkeeping field, as well as those working in Councils and Universities, are significantly more likely to feel confident about their understanding of recordkeeping requirements.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCESS TO INFORMATION & UNDERSTANDING OF REQUIREMENTS
There is a strong correlation between access to recordkeeping information and the degree to which an employee understands their recordkeeping obligations.

ADVOCACY IS HIGHLY DESIRED
Inductions and internal training are recordkeeping resources typically available and used by many organisations, yet these resources have limitations for some organisations. As a result, SROs seek stronger advocacy from NSW State Archives and Records to assist in heightening awareness and changing behaviour.

LACK OF SUPPORT
Senior Executives are often seen as a key barrier to implementing and encouraging recordkeeping practices. This lack of support is further evidenced by the IT department's conflicting technology-related interests, despite numerous attempts to educate them regarding their recordkeeping requirements.

MOVEMENT TOWARDS A POSITIVE CULTURE
There is clear movement towards a more positive recordkeeping culture, however persistence, time, and the right resources are key. This includes heightening employee engagement, changing mindsets, making use of recordkeeping advocates, and automating systems to streamline activities.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ACT
The Act is seen to be quite information-heavy and complex. Employees often feel misguided by their incorrect interpretation of what is expected of them.

KEEPING UP-TO-DATE WITH THE ACT
More 'current' information relating to the Act is desired by many SROs.

AWARENESS OF NSW STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS
There is strong awareness of NSW State Archives and Records, especially amongst Recordkeeping professionals, Senior Executives, and Universities. Despite this high degree of awareness, there is generally limited understanding of the specifics relating to the role and responsibility of NSW State Archives and Records.

ABILITY TO RESPOND TO GENERAL ENQUIRIES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE RECEIVED
NSW State Archives and Records is seen to offer great advice and knowledge for all matters relating to general enquires. Further to this, some SROs reported a less than satisfactory experience with the level of service they receive, particularly with the quality of response and the information provided.

KEY ATTRIBUTES RELATED TO NSW STATES ARCHIVES AND RECORDS STAFF
'Knowledgeable' and a 'good source of advice and information' were seen to be the two strongest staff attributes.

RECORDKEEPING AUDITS
SROs have reported a strong desire for their organisation to be audited or held accountable for not complying with their recordkeeping obligations.

DISSEMINATING RECORDKEEPING INFORMATION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION
Most employees reported receiving communication about recordkeeping through each of the prompted channels in the last 12 months.

TOP-DOWN COMMUNICATION
Recordkeeping information received from NSW State Archives and Records is often filtered and tailored to suit the needs of the wider organisation.

MOST PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNEL
Direct email communication was the most popular form of communication desired from NSW State Archives and Records.

LESS TEXT AND MORE VISUALISED, SIMPLIFIED INFORMATION
Receiving information that caters for all learning styles, is highly appealing.

PRACTICAL AND RELEVANT
Public offices are seeking information that is relatable and directly applicable to their specific needs and recordkeeping requirements.

Summary Scorecard

Degree of recordkeeping understanding
by Job Position

RECORDKEEPING PROFESSIONALS
- 0 to 4 (Disagree)
- 5 to 7
- 8 to 10 (Agree)

Senior Executives
- 0 to 4 (Disagree)
- 5 to 7
- 8 to 10 (Agree)

OTHER STAFF
- 0 to 4 (Disagree)
- 5 to 7
- 8 to 10 (Agree)

Statement	RKP 0-4	RKP 5-7	RKP 8-10	SE 0-4	SE 5-7	SE 8-10	OS 0-4	OS 5-7	OS 8-10
I have a good understanding of recordkeeping requirements for my job	2%	15%	83%	23%	35%	42%	11%	41%	48%

MEAN SCORE — RKP: 8.8 | Senior Executives: 6.6 | Other Staff: 7.2

Statement	RKP 0-4	RKP 5-7	RKP 8-10	SE 0-4	SE 5-7	SE 8-10	OS 0-4	OS 5-7	OS 8-10
Creating records as part of your work	5%	17%	78%	23%	35%	42%	15%	37%	49%
Saving records into official recordkeeping systems	5%	18%	77%	15%	35%	50%	19%	35%	47%
Procedures for handling and storing records	4%	24%	71%	23%	35%	42%	21%	43%	35%
Rules and procedures for deleting or destroying records	9%	21%	70%	19%	46%	35%	33%	39%	28%
Rules and procedures for providing access to your organisation's records	4%	27%	69%	23%	19%	58%	19%	44%	37%
Policy and rules for managing emails	8%	27%	65%	27%	42%	31%	22%	43%	35%
Protect sensitive and confidential records from unauthorised access	3%	12%	85%	15%	19%	65%	14%	32%	54%
Print and file emails, or save emails electronically into the recordkeeping system	5%	17%	78%	24%	28%	48%	26%	34%	40%
Create minutes of meetings and save into the recordkeeping system	7%	18%	76%	23%	23%	54%	26%	37%	37%
Transport records, remove records from office accommodation for meetings or site visits & return to storage	12%	20%	69%	32%	40%	28%	37%	33%	29%
Delete or destroy drafts and working papers	9%	26%	66%	38%	31%	31%	38%	37%	26%
Create notes of telephone conversations, oral decisions and commitments	11%	26%	64%	23%	50%	27%	31%	36%	33%

Communication channel preferences
by Total Population (scores 8 to 10 – Interested)

- EMAIL 40%
- E-NEWSLETTER 39%
- WEBSITE 38% (recordkeeping)
- LEAFLETS VIA EMAIL 28%
- LEAFLETS VIA WEBSITE 24%
- FACEBOOK 7%
- TWITTER 3%
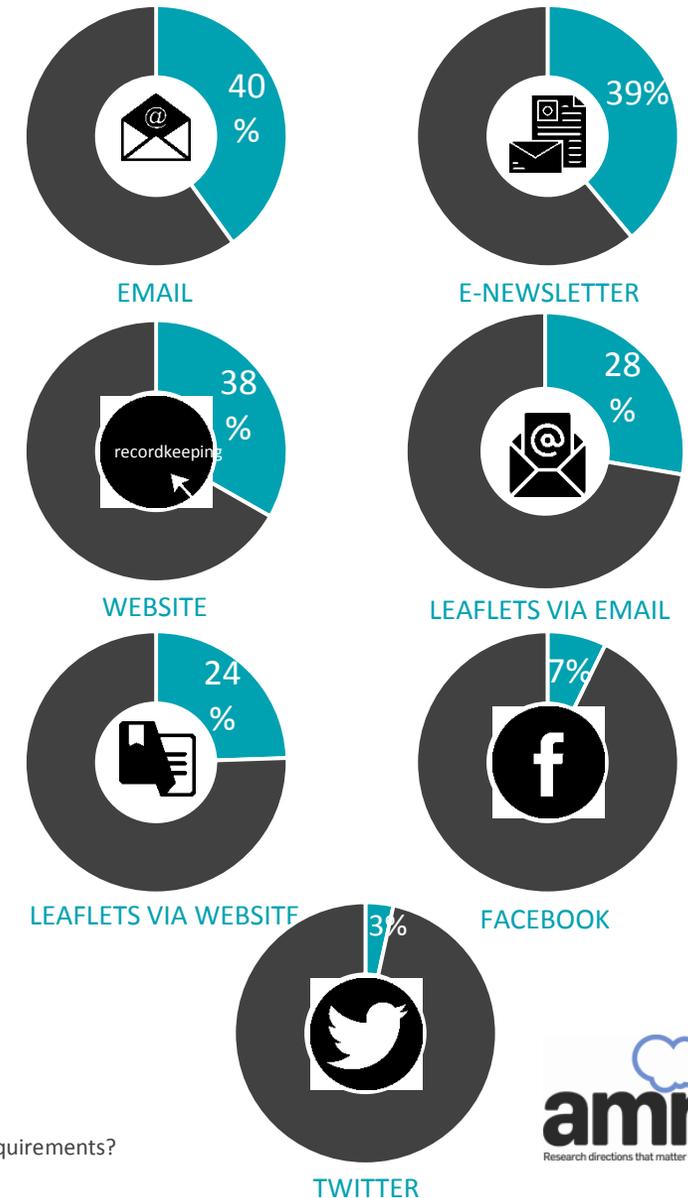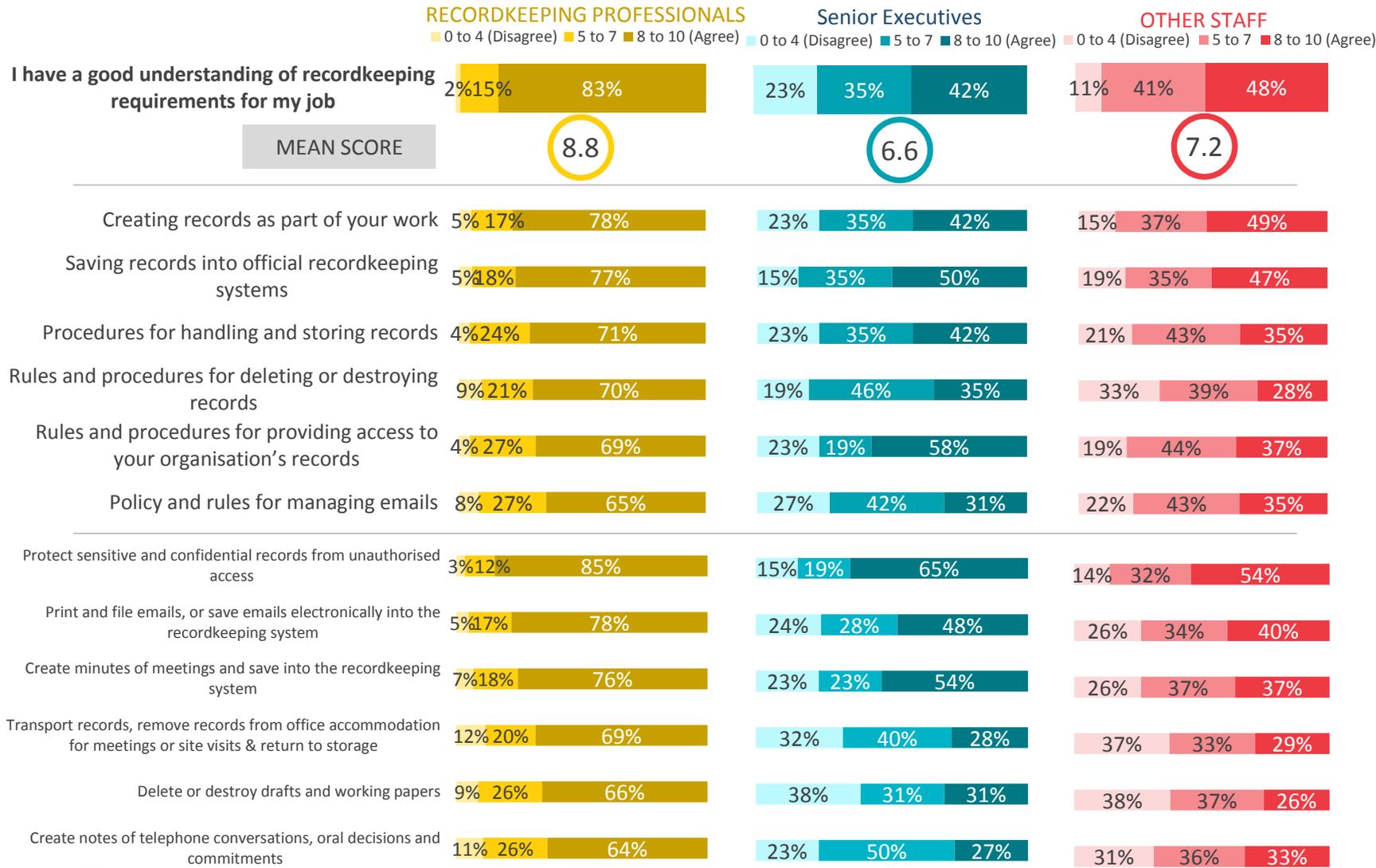
Q16. To what extent to you disagree or agree with each of the following statements about recordkeeping in your job?
Q19 How well do you consider you are up-to-date on the following requirements in your organisation?
Q20. And how well do you understand what to do in relation to these specific actions?
Q39. How interested would you be in each of the following channels for notifying you and informing you about recordkeeping requirements?
Base: total n=995; Recordkeeping Professionals n=336; Senior Executives n=26; Other Staff n=633

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2. Key Insights, in more detail

Key Insights (1 of 5)

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF RECORDKEEPING UNDERSTANDING
Employees working within the recordkeeping field, as well as those working in Councils and Universities, are significantly more likely to feel confident about their understanding of recordkeeping requirements.

As anticipated, recordkeeping professionals reported a higher level of knowledge of all records management processes than other groups, whilst Senior Executives struggled the most with 'policy and rules for managing emails' and other staff reported 'disposal of records' as the area they consider most challenging. Senior Executives and other staff also consistently reported low results across other key areas, reinforcing need for greater communication cut-through to those groups. An opportunity exists for NSW State Archives and Records to explore ways in which they can better support SROs to further educate and share information with the wider organisation to help heighten employees' confidence in their recordkeeping knowledge and skills.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCESS TO INFORMATION & UNDERSTANDING OF REQUIREMENTS
There is a strong correlation between access to recordkeeping information and the degree to which an employee understands their recordkeeping obligations.

This pattern suggests that the lack of knowledge is strongly related to the lack of access to information and advice, which is further supported by the results reflected and assessed in more detail in reported exposure to different communication channels. Therefore, by assisting SROs with ideas on how to make information more easily *accessible* and *available* to employees, organisations can ultimately enhance their overall understanding of their recordkeeping obligations.

ADVOCACY IS HIGHLY DESIRED
Inductions and internal training are recordkeeping resources typically available and used by many organisations, yet these resources have limitations for some organisations. As a result, SROs seek stronger advocacy from NSW State Archives and Records to assist in heightening awareness and changing behaviour.

Induction for new employees typically involves some form of 'recordkeeping and management' component. Yet, for many organisations, this component is often very small and, therefore, subsequently only briefly discussed. Moreover, internal training is often challenged by high staff turnover, infrequent inductions, demographics of the workforce, geographically dispersed staff, lack of resources/budgets, non-mandatory training sessions, and general lack of interest in recordkeeping . This ultimately impacts productivity and degree of compliance. It is apparent that SROs would benefit from stronger advocacy from NSW State Archives and Records to help them heighten the importance of recordkeeping within the organisation which may potentially support their business case for more recordkeeping budget or resources.

Key Insights

LACK OF SUPPORT
Senior Executives are often seen as a key barrier to implementing and encouraging recordkeeping practices. This lack of support is further evidenced by the IT department's conflicting technology-related interests, despite numerous attempts to educate them regarding their recordkeeping requirements.

As role models in their respective organisations, Senior Executives often regard recordkeeping as 'bureaucratic red tape' and 'archaic'. This lack of support only amplifies the resistance already evident across the wider organisation. As a result, there is a strong desire for SROs to be better supported by NSW State Archives and Records. The SRO's responsibility to carryout their role according to the Act is acknowledged. A possible solution to this strong desire for additional support, is to dial-up communication regarding *how* NSW State Archives and Records currently supports SROs - as it is often found, through the depth interviews, that SROs aren't fully across all the resources and support already available to them.

MOVEMENT TOWARDS A POSITIVE CULTURE
There is clear movement towards a more positive recordkeeping culture, however persistence, time, and the right resources are key. This includes heightening employee engagement, changing mindsets, making use of recordkeeping advocates, and automating systems to streamline activities.

Employee resistance to their recordkeeping obligations has been widely reported by SROs, but many of these SROs have shown determination and willpower to overcome this barrier. They are seeking additional support via ideas, examples, and case studies of organisations dealing with similar challenges. It is understood that NSW State Archives and Records currently provides such resources via multiple platforms - on the website, through forums, and blogs. However, it is apparent that there is low awareness of such resources and therefore there is an opportunity to heighten awareness by reviewing and modifying how these tools and resources are being advertised.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ACT
The Act is seen to be quite information-heavy and complex. Employees often feel misguided by their incorrect interpretation of what is expected of them.

Many SROs feel the need to re-read and digest the Act in 'bite-size pieces' to help them navigate through the complexities of the Act. As a result, they have a strong preference for condensed information or simplified explanations or summaries to use as a reference tool. It is understood that NSW State Archives and Records currently provide information leaflets – there is an opportunity to strengthen the publicity and accessibility of these valuable and highly sought after resources.

KEEPING UP-TO-DATE WITH THE ACT
More 'current' information relating to the Act is desired by many SROs.

Digitisation of records has played a significant role for many organisations in recent history. SROs are particularly interested in more information on best practices relating to transferring paper records to digital records and its potential challenges, including cloud integration and cyber security. Furthermore, many recordkeeping professionals expect information and resources regarding the Act to be better integrated with broader information management and data security principles, such as privacy. This information is currently available to SROs through the NSW State Archives and Records. SROs would benefit from learning more about how and where to access such tools.

Key Insights

AWARENESS OF NSW STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS
There is strong awareness of NSW State Archives and Records, especially amongst Recordkeeping professionals, Senior Executives, and Universities. Despite this high degree of awareness, there is generally limited understanding of the specifics relating to the role and responsibility of NSW State Archives and Records.

Amongst SROs, it was clear that they were confident about their general knowledge, however limited understanding of matters beyond general knowledge was also evident. About 3 in 4 'Other Staff' (ie managers and non-managers without recordkeeping experience) reported having heard of the NSW State Archives and Records name, yet the same proportion said that they have only heard of the name or know little about what they do. According to SROs, the wider organisation may not necessarily have heard of NSW State Archives and Records, but are more likely to be familiar with the their recordkeeping obligations through their internal policies and other documentation - therefore communication should continue to target the SRO-level, with less priority on reaching out to the wider organisation level.

ABILITY TO RESPOND TO GENERAL ENQUIRIES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE RECEIVED
NSW State Archives and Records is seen to offer great advice and knowledge for all matters relating to general enquires. On the other hand, some SROs reported a less than satisfactory experience with the level of service they receive, particularly with the quality of response and the information provided.

Areas that some SROs were less than satisfied with include: NSW State Archives and Records being under-resourced, lack of response timeliness, and receiving information that isn't helpful or relevant to their initial enquiry. It is recommended that NSW State Archives and Records review their handover protocols and monitor how complaints or constructive feedback are dealt with, to help ensure the NSW State Archives and Records' Guarantees of Service are continually being met.

KEY ATTRIBUTES RELATED TO NSW STATES ARCHIVES AND RECORDS STAFF
'Knowledgeable' and a 'good source of advice and information' were seen to be the two strongest staff attributes.

Most employees had a generally positive view of NSW State Archives and Records. The majority of recordkeeping professionals and Senior Executives believed that the organisation had 'knowledgeable staff' (79% and 82% respectively), with more than half of both groups also agreeing that it is a 'good source of information and advice', 'provides clear explanations about recordkeeping standards', and 'provides helpful resources and tools'. While strong scores, there is still a substantial proportion of employees who scored a 7 or less out of 10, which represents some areas that can be further reviewed and improved.

Key Insights

RECORDKEEPING AUDITS
SROs have reported a strong desire for their organisation to be audited or held accountable for not complying with their recordkeeping obligations.

Audits and penalties for being non-compliant are believed to be non-existent. Many SROs have found employees (including Senior Executives) have become complacent and consider their recordkeeping obligations a low priority. There is an opportunity for NSW State Archives and Records to explore providing a formal audit or publishing results that benchmark an organisation's performance against other organisations. As a result, SROs may feel better supported in their role, feel more confident in asserting their authority within their organisation, and potentially receive targeted consultation and support tailored to their specific improvement areas.

DISSEMINATING RECORDKEEPING INFORMATION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION
Most employees reported receiving communication about recordkeeping through each of the prompted channels in the last 12 months.

The most common was through internal organisational communications (73%) or via a manager (72%). Encouragingly, more than half (59%) had participated in face-to-face training. Looking at specific types of communications, the most frequent form tended to be that provided by a senior recordkeeping professional (55% of records professionals reported receiving this 3 or more times). Managers, in addition to recordkeeping professionals, play a critical role when it comes to information sharing. NSW State Archives and Records should provide and make easily accessible information that is presented in a way that can easily be shared, e.g. infographics, short videos, or quick reference tools.

TOP-DOWN COMMUNICATION
Recordkeeping information received from NSW State Archives and Records is often filtered and tailored to suit the needs of the wider organisation.

The majority of SROs believe that there is no need for NSW State Archives and Records to communicate with the wider organisation, as information is often filtered through the SRO / Recordkeeping team and tailored to suit the organisation's specific needs. Therefore, content that can easily be shared by the SRO is key. Nonetheless, there were some SROs that were of the belief that NSW State Archives and Records can continue to provide support to their role by maintaining communication with CEOs, to help them reiterate and confirm the importance of being a compliant organisation.

MOST PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNEL
Direct email communication was the most popular form of communication desired from NSW State Archives and Records.

Respondents were most likely to indicate a high level of interest in direct email communications from NSW State Archives and Records (40% giving a score of 8 to 10), with similar scores reported for an e-newsletter (39%) and via the website (38%). On the other hand, there was a clear lack of interest in receiving information via social media, with fewer than one in ten interested in Facebook (7%) and Twitter (3%). These results indicate that time and resources are best spent on email communication rather than social media.

Key Insights

LESS TEXT AND MORE VISUALISED, SIMPLIFIED INFORMATION
Receiving information that caters for all learning styles, is highly appealing.

Although the information provided by NSW State Archives and Records is very helpful, there were some suggestions on how to communicate the text-heavy information to people who are more visual learners or who are time poor, examples include summarised content, infographics and flow charts.

PRACTICAL AND RELEVANT
Public offices are seeking information that is relatable and directly applicable to their specific needs and recordkeeping requirements.

Communication that includes practical information, case studies and examples is highly desired. It is understood that NSW State Archives and Records currently provides case studies on the website, yet these highly desired resources are underutilised, most likely due to low awareness. It is recommended that NSW State Archives and Records continue to provide and develop similar tools and review how these resources are being advertised and distributed.

SROs also suggested that emails should not only include 'advanced' information that is specifically targeted at SROs, but simplified content that is useful for non-recordkeeping professionals, therefore making it easier to share the information with the wider organisation.