

Information Privacy Strategy

STATE RECORDS
of South Australia



Government of South Australia
State Records

“Organisations and agencies collect, use and disclose huge amounts of personal information.

The practices to keep it safe, and to use it responsibly, need to keep pace.

People, organisations and agencies need to get ‘back to basics’ and ensure they have covered the privacy fundamentals.”

Adapted from the joint statement by the Privacy Authorities of Australia, April 2023

Vision

Personal information privacy is respected and proactively managed by all South Australian government agencies in a consistent manner that aligns with international best practice.

Government functions are usually reliant on information from the public, including personal information. Best practice in the handling of personal information is addressed at the state, federal and international level through various schemes of privacy principles. Principles support the balance between the needs of the record-subject and the record holder and are often technology-neutral.

In the absence of state government legislation, this Strategy seeks to ensure all personal information collected, used, disclosed and stored by South Australian government agencies is respected and proactively managed.

Purpose

This Strategy provides a principle-based approach to proactively manage the privacy of personal information collected, used, disclosed and stored by South Australian government agencies.

State Records has developed this Strategy for use by all state government agencies. It is also available to support local government and other organisations.

It aligns with international best practice. It provides guidance on best practice privacy measures and focusses on respect, information safety

and security, data minimisation, design and transparency.

It is consistent with the Information Privacy Principles Instruction (IPPI). The IPPI, also known as PC012, regulates the way South Australian government agencies collect, use, store and disclose personal information.

It recognises the need for guidance and uniformity. Management of personal information is ideally achieved in a consistent manner, in recognition of the public need and of the core sets of principles in place in different levels of government.

Context

In the era of emerging technologies and greater public awareness around the risks in providing personal information to government or business, it's an important time to build on known best practice in managing personal information.

Vast amounts of personal information continue to be collected and used - to fulfil government services, to improve and streamline customer interactions through online applications and in the development of government policy.

When things 'go wrong' with the management of personal information, the public are more aware of the risks

and their rights. They want to know how their personal information will be used, whether it is really needed, what is being done with it and is it safe?

This Strategy highlights the importance of personal information privacy and provides guidance to proactively integrate privacy considerations into business-as-usual.

Content for this Strategy reflects the resources available through other state and territory privacy policy and advice, including the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. While the legislation they apply is different, the principles are largely the same.

Collecting personal information

Why governments collect information

Agencies need to collect personal information to fulfil their functions and deliver services to the community. Collection can be for a variety of reasons; to treat a patient, open an account, or manage a complaint.

Collecting personal information can also help governments to learn what the public thinks about a policy or an initiative, or to improve its services.

Collection should be limited to the minimum information necessary to achieve a legitimate purpose.

Collecting excessive information goes against the best interests of the individual and risks inappropriate access and unauthorised use.

Why it needs to be respected and protected

Public goodwill can be strengthened by government agencies being open and transparent in their handling of personal information. Agencies can recognise and acknowledge the need for people to understand how their personal information is being treated by implementing measures to handle personal information.

Failure to protect personal information can lead to harm for an individual. As well as causing its own detriment, it can also make an individual reluctant to participate in public services in the future.

Broken trust can lead to individuals withholding or falsifying information, which leads to failure of programs, projects, operations and outcomes that agencies seek to achieve.

Handling personal information

Agencies should ensure when they collect personal information, they have adequate reasons for collection and use. In addition, they need secure systems in place for access, use, disclosure, storage and disposal. This is achieved through the development of a Personal Information Privacy Management Framework.

Developing a Personal Information Privacy Management Framework

The creation of a strong privacy culture, together with privacy practices and policies for managing personal information, lead to a personal information privacy management framework that protects the personal information held by the agency.

It is built around the following high-level elements:

Respect.

Keeping the interests of the individual front of mind by taking action to incorporate and improve the protection of individual information privacy.

Information Safety and Security.

All personal information is used, collected, stored, shared and disposed of safely and securely.

Data Minimisation.

Only collect the personal information required and only keep that information for the minimum amount of time.

Transparency.

Being upfront and open in the way personal information is managed, fostering trust in government's ability to protect individual privacy.

Design.

Establishing methods and measures for protecting personal information privacy that are built into systems and practices, resulting in individual privacy being essential without compromising on functionality or business need.

The appropriate management of personal information will:

- » ensure personal information is collected, held, disclosed, stored, used and disposed of in a safe and secure manner
- » foster trust in the South Australian public sector
- » build accountability and transparency of the collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information
- » prevent, or at least lessen, privacy breaches from occurring, and
- » mitigate the harm when breaches occur.

Implementation

We can't know what's around the corner that may impact on personal information privacy, but we can take steps to protect it. There are core principles that work to protect personal information regardless of the technology and despite predictable risks.

South Australian government agencies can **foster a privacy culture** and train staff about the importance of privacy and how to effectively manage the personal information held.

Agencies **can implement and review policies and procedures** that transparently demonstrate information privacy requirements are being taken seriously.

Agencies should only **collect the minimum amount of personal information** needed and when it's no longer needed, it is disposed of safely and securely.

Agencies can conduct **early analysis of projects and initiatives** against privacy

considerations and mitigate privacy risks as they are identified.

Privacy is incorporated into the design, development and implementation of any initiative that deals with personal information.

Agencies can **continuously improve** the foundation of trust with the public by clear communication of expectations and learning from mistakes.

By **committing to a strong privacy culture**, agencies can strive to build and retain public trust in all that we do as a government.

The *Protecting Personal Information - the Privacy Fundamentals* has been developed to assist agencies in managing personal information and privacy obligations.

The Fundamentals includes how to develop a **Personal Information Privacy Management Framework** to proactively incorporate privacy across the agency. It is separated into four parts:

Commitment to Personal Information Privacy

Good information privacy governance and leadership foster a culture that respects privacy and prioritises individuals

Education

Staff are appropriately trained and know their information privacy obligations

Information Privacy Policies and Practices

Strong processes and policies manage privacy obligations and ensure compliance with the IPPI and privacy best practice

Monitoring and Reporting

Continuous improvement to ensure personal information privacy considerations remain current and are effective

Need further assistance?

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