Using Information Management as a Strategic Resource at South Brisbane Community Legal Service: Case Study

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1. Introduction

In this report, information management is perceived as **a process focused on systematic and innovative methods, practices, and tools for managing the generation, acquisition, exchange, protection, distribution, and utilization of information and knowledge (Montana, 2000),** through planning, budgeting, and organising the service's information resources, and its tacit and explicit information, as well as directing and training staff to become effective knowledge workers. The goal is to change the service's culture into one of intelligent learning, because this change will not only enhance performance but also lower overhead costs and allow for a better management of human and time resources.

This definition embraces a wider view of what constitutes "information management" than most of the older definitions that limited themselves either to computer systems or management of tangible information resources. It comprises, in addition to the standard information management terminology, such notions as "organizational learning", "knowledge assets", "knowledge base", "knowledge mapping", "collaboration", "knowledge representation", and many others **(Murray, 1996)**.

The current report will limit itself to the initial phase of an Information Management project undertaken since August 2000 to enhance Knowledge Management at South Brisbane Immigration and Community Legal Service (henceforth referred to as SBICLS), in Brisbane, Australia. The project is named INFOMATE. The current stage of the project is already manifold, and activities are being undertaken on the fronts of record management, digitalization and training provision. On the technological side, a number of web-based applications have been commissioned, and an intranet is in the process of being implemented. The staff and management of the Service are very keen to see the project succeed, and the organizational culture promotes knowledge sharing and creation. The project is planned to end in December 2001, however, due to financial constraints; it seems that this deadline will not be met.

As the Service is a non-profit, community based organisation, with no current competitors in its field, information use as a strategic resource is limited to three areas: lowering costs, generating potential income, and maximising performance.

2. The Service

2.1 What is SBICLS

The South Brisbane Immigration and Community Legal Service Inc. was previously known as the South Brisbane Community Legal Service Inc. The Centre was established in 1980 as a legal advice service of the Brisbane Migrant Resource Centre to assist non-English speaking background communities in addressing the difficulties they face in accessing legal information and services.

The service became inundated with requests for advice and has developed considerable expertise in immigration law that is now widely recognised. There is no other service in Queensland that specialises in this area. Referrals are received from Legal Aid Office (Qld.), Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Bureau of Ethnic Affairs, Queensland Police Force, Migrant Resource Centres in Brisbane, Cairns, and Townsville, Ethnic Communities Councils in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, and Mt Isa, and other Community Legal Centres throughout the State.

SBICLS specialises in immigration law and other issues affecting non-English speaking background communities. The service is open Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 PM. Free legal advice and assistance with immigration law and other areas of law are offered each Monday and Wednesday evening 6.30 PM to 8.30 PM. This service is provided primarily for unemployed and low-income earners. However, anyone can come to the evening advice session for initial advice. Interpreters are arranged by the service through the Telephone Interpreter Service.

SBICLS is managed by a community based management committee that is elected annually and comprised of lawyers, social welfare workers, ethnic community and local agency representatives. The management

committee exercises general control and management of the administration of the affairs, property and funds of the Association and has authority to interpret the meaning of these rules and any matter relating to the Association on which these rules are silent.

The service currently employs two solicitors who take on immigration casework, a community welfare worker, an administrator and two administrative/information workers. The administrator provides the financial and administrative management of the Service. The secretary and part-time administrative assistant provide clerical and administrative support. The solicitors and community welfare worker are engaged in casework, community legal education, research, law reform, and policy development in the immigration areas, which are also integral parts of the function of the service. The service also employs Project Workers from time to time to work on special projects from one-off grants received from the Department of Family Services, Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Department of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs and other sources.

SBICLS is non-hierarchical with no single Director. It operates with a relatively flat organisational structure that relies heavily on good communication within the workplace for its success, as there is no central coordination point.

SBICLS also has a many volunteers, including community and social welfare students on placement; people from non-English speaking backgrounds on work experience; and law students.

The Service specialises in the provision of advice and assistance to people of non-English speaking backgrounds ("NESB"). Our Service provision takes many form - ongoing legal casework; community education programs; law reform activities; community development projects; and representation of NESB issues on government and non-government boards, committees and reference groups.

SBICLS especially targets the NESB community in recognition of the cultural, language and consequent socio-economic barriers which non-English speakers face in accessing the Australian legal system. We try to create a friendly, informal and sympathetic environment for NESB people, so that their (often first) contact with the legal system can occur in a supportive environment. SBICLS is a service based on the belief that access to appropriate legal assistance and equity in legal representation is a basic right of all people from disadvantaged backgrounds. We strive for access to justice especially for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people from marginalised sections of society, including women.

SBICLS auspices other community agencies through the Centre. Currently, there are auspicing agreements with the *Factory Information Project* and the *Asylum Seekers Centre*. Day-to-day support and direction is provided by the Community Worker/Immigration Caseworker. Financial management and reporting requirements are the responsibility of the Administration Officer.

In late 1999, SBICLS was also given funding by Legal Aid Commission of Queensland (LAQ) to establish an Outreach Service for clients residing on the Gold Coast/Logan area, two hours from metropolitan Brisbane. The funding is for a two-year period, being eligible for renewal after a performance review.

2.2 Funding Sources

SBICLS received its first funding to employ staff in 1984. A grant from the Queensland Law Society's Grants Committee was given in 1985 and the service moved to its own premises in the West End Shopping Centre.

SBICLS is one of the many community legal centres in Queensland. It is an independent non-profit organisation funded by the LAQ. Until July 1997 we also received a grant from the Department of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) under the Immigration Advisory Services Scheme but this scheme was discontinued and we were required to submit to a tender process. Fortunately our tender was successful.

The service is presently funded by a grant from the Commonwealth and State Attorney-Generals' Departments and the Queensland Law Society Grants Committee administered by the Legal Aid Board (Qld), and a tender from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. Apart from the above the

only other monies the service receives are one-off grants from the Brisbane City Council, Community Gaming Machine Funds and through training the service provides.

2.3 Funding Criteria

SBICLS is subject to the conditions of the contract with Commonwealth of Australia, DIMA. Notably DIMA requires the opening of a minimum of six (6) new visa applications by asylum seekers, and a minimum of six (6) new visa applications by non-asylum seekers over a two-year period. The DIMA funding comprises 20% of the total yearly funding. Other conditions imposed by DIMA are that the Clients must suffer financial hardship **OR** have suffered torture and trauma (in case of refugee applications) **OR** are disadvantaged in other ways (non-English speaking, disabled, remote residents, etc.) **AND** cases must have merit.

The current Service Agreement between SBICLS and LAQ requires, among others, that services provided do not duplicate other legal aid services available in the defined community, that it targets people from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, that SBICLS provides high quality legal **information and advice** to target communities and high quality legal representation in immigration and refugee matters. LAQ funding comprises 80% of the total annual funding.

LAQ uses the following Performance Indicators to assess SBICLS eligibility for continued funding:
- 1600 clients
- 380 telephone legal advice
- 1100 telephone information/referrals (50% to people outside Brisbane Metropolitan Area)
- 110 face to face advice by staff
- 270 face to face advice by volunteers
- 13 mail advice
- 90 evening advice sessions
- 810 hours of volunteer time
- 220 open cases (120 to be finalised each year)
- 12 tribunal/court appearances

This amounts to 74 cases per case officer annually, 126 telephone legal advice, 37 face to face advice and 4 court appearances by each case officer. The two administrative staff (sometimes assisted by a daytime volunteer) give most of the telephone referrals and information, this amounting to 550 per person per year. Since each administrative officer works only 4 days a week, and counting holiday time and leave as non-working time, the number stands at 3 referrals per person per day. In actuality, the real number of referrals and information given each day by the staff is much higher than this. The same applies to the number of cases undertaken by the case officers.

3. The Information Resources at the Service

3.1 Available Resources

a. Tangible Assets:

SBICLS is in possession of two kinds of tangible information resources: IT and the library. On the technical side, each worker at SBICLS has his/her own workstation PC, mainly Pentium 166, with either Windows 95 or Windows 98 as the operating system. There is one server, operating on NT Workstation, which is also the main repository of the data generated during each workday. All staff workstations are networked to the server and to each other. The service has a permanent Internet connection, through a router, permitting every worker to access the Web simultaneously. The Outreach program coordinator, being a non-resident worker, operates from a laptop. The laptop is not networked, and does not have the hardware necessary to do so.

The seven workstations are networked to two printers: one is a bubble jet HP printer, and the other a LaserJet HP printer. The library workstation (which the volunteers are researchers use) is also attached to a HP scanner.

Besides the above equipment, the Service also has a photocopier, a fax, a television set, a video, two recording apparatus, an answering machine and an PABX system. Attempts are being made to upgrade the last item.

Software applications available at SBICLS are:

Windows OS (95/98) on 6 PCs; NT Workstation V.4.0 on the server; Microsoft Office 97 (Word, Excel, Access and Outlook) on each PC, MS Publisher (on library PC), OmniPage Pro 10 (on library PC), PhotoShop 5.0 (on library PC), Adobe Acrobat Reader on each PC, WinZip V7.0 on each PC, LBC Immigration Software (including FormFlow) on each PC (database resides on the server), Internet Explorer 4.0 on each PC; Client Management Application, proprietary to SBICLS, on the server.

The library contains:

1.   General law texts: Immigration information, texts and resources. These consist of material published by the Australian Department of Immigration, the Minister's Office, various law bodies and policy committees

2.   A large in-country information section with each different country in a separate file. These include reports from human rights and relief organizations, newspaper clippings, documents provided by clients, reports from UN bodies, etc.

3.   Practice manuals:

The Queensland Law Handbook	This is published by Caxton Legal Centre. It is an easy to use, quick reference guide to many aspects of general law, including legal aid, consumer issues, employment law, criminal law, housing problems, family law, discrimination and so on.
The Lawyers Practice Manual	A two volume loose-leaf service published by the Law Book Company. It covers, in practical terms, many of the above topics of general law, and more.

4.   An up-to-date set of the *Migration Regulations,* the *Migration Act*, the *Procedural Manual* and copies of the current *Immigration Kit*. These are also available on CDROM, which is installed on the server to allow simultaneous access for all caseworkers.

5.   Immigration forms are kept in numerical order.

6.   Lists of relevant documentation and of the documentary evidence needed to support an application (also known as Info Sheets)

7.   Pamphlets covering all sorts of areas. Some of them are in different languages.

8.   Texts on social issues affecting migrant communities and refugees: HIV, use of language services, equity of access to law, and texts on multiculturalism.

9.   Texts on issues affecting the Aboriginal community, women and youth.

10.   Periodicals: these fall into two main categories – general publications, such as The Economist, The New Socialist, etc; and specialised publications published periodically by various bodies and organizations.

11.   Digests of immigration and administrative case law.

The above documents are all available to the public. Besides the public domain, SBICLS has, by law, to archive all case files and advice given to the Service's clients for the period of eight years. These files are currently kept in a separate room, in hard copy. After the passage of eight years, the service has to destroy these documents. The closed case files and advice sheets fall under the non-disclosure clause, and are not available to persons who are not current members of the staff.

b.   Intangible Assets:

It is very difficult to quantify the intangible assets at SBICLS. However, in terms of years and wealth of experience, the staff at SBICLS is one of Australia's best in the field of immigration law. The permanent staff are not the only sources of infinite knowledge riches. One has to add to it the fact that SBCILS has more than a 120 volunteers, ranging from High Court barristers, to social workers, to information professionals, who between them share and use an incredible amount of knowledge and expertise. The second stage of the INFOMATE project intends to attempt a creation of a knowledge base, where these intangible knowledge assets can become quantified, organised and used for the strategic improvement of service provision.

3.2   Current Information Resource Usage

At the time when InfoMate Project started, the tangible information resources at SBICLS were in a state of chaos. Most of the library was packed into boxes, and what was on the shelves was in disorder, neither catalogued nor updated. Updates, often years old, were gathering dust. Subscriptions lapsed, or publishers did not send copies at all. The huge in-country information was filed haphazardly into bulky arch-lever folders, in no given order and no index. Client files were archived by file number and date, but the archives had not been cleaned for the past two years. The storage mode itself was harmful to the archived documents, as files were placed so tight together in filing cabinets, that trying to pull one out damaged the contents.

The staff had very little information management skills. They were all new to the Internet, and search techniques were seriously lacking. To many, the amount of information available online was bewildering, and the inability to find it frustrating. Staff depended more on each other's tacit knowledge than on printed/electronic resources. Often law students with a bit fresher legal research skills would be asked to contribute. The material they produced was, unfortunately, never systematically stored.

When the Service subscribed to the electronic LBC service, which comprises the Immigration Act, Regulation and Procedural Manual necessary to the operation of any Immigration Solicitor or Agent, it was noted that case workers migrated to the electronic media very slowly, and still preferred the paper counterpart. This is mainly due to lack of training, which is due to lack of time in which this training can take place.

Client management was limited, as the proprietary software SBICLS uses is outdated and not integrated with any other application. The application only resides on the server, there is no backup copy of it anywhere, and this limits access to it to one administration officer, who has then to provide this information to each case worker.

The paper wastage at SBICLS is extra-ordinary, as neither case workers nor the admin staff has the skills to manage information in a more economic way. For example, although Immigration Forms can be filled in online using the LBC Form Flow software, and then printed per client, the administration and caseworkers still keep printing out tens of copies of each form to be filled in manually. Many of these forms never get to be used.

Backup procedures at SBICLS occur only when the InfoMate Project Consultant raises the issue, although there is a process in place to do the backup on daily bases. The SBICLS Procedural Manual does mention Information Management, but it is never referred to. The Procedural Manual (still in draft) has been prepared before the InfoMate Project started. It forms the foundation for the project, however, it needs to be implemented and continually updated as new automated systems are implemented.

InfoMate project started with an Information Needs Analysis and an Information Audit. The following questions were asked:

- What information is there?
- How is it identified and coded?
- Who is responsible for different information entities and co-ordination?
- What kinds of documents will be put into the system?
- Who needs access to these documents?
- How well versed are the users in available information usage techniques?
- How are the documents currently filed?
- How are the documents retrieved?
- How is the information to be used?
- What is the information going to be used for?

Using **Skyrme's (1997)** scheme for auditing, gaps and duplication of information were identified. Roles and responsibilities of owners and users of information were clarified with the view of cost saving in the procurement and handling of information. The cost/benefits of different information resources was identified, so that quality information could actively support decision-making processes at SBICLS.

The audit allowed the InfoMate Consultant to then proceed with applying correct Record Management procedures to the information resources available at SBICLS. This is a lengthy and time consuming process, which involves sifting through thousands of items, removing duplicates and outdated items, cataloguing, creating an electronic database, updating legal resources and shelving the materials in a way that will make them easily accessible to users.

The needs analysis helped the Consultant to plan the overall Information Management strategy and decide on the technologies that will assist in its implementation at SBICLS According to **Devadason & Lingam (1996):**

> *"The effectiveness of an information system depends on the extent to which the system's characteristics are in correspondence with the situation of the user and on how much the potential user of the system is willing and able to make use of the services provided by the information system. A careful identification, analysis and classification of the 'real' information needs of users (including all potential users and non users as well) is an essential basis for the planning, implementation and operation of information systems. In fact, any lapse in proper identification of information needs will affect the efficiency and effectiveness of information systems and services."*

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4.   Information As Asset – How Will it Benefit SBICLS?

The paradoxical situation in which the majority of legal workers find themselves is that, on one hand, they complain there is too much information to deal with, and on the other, that they do not seem to be able to locate the information they need – when they need it – to make decisions of vital importance to their firms and clients.

(Skyrme, 1997) states that "symptoms of overload are a growth of incoming information, including electronic mail, and an explosion in the volume of information sources. Symptoms of scarcity are the lack of vital information for decision making, unexpected legal changes and the inability to find the relevant 'needle in the haystack'."

Information needs to be structured before it becomes useful **(Petell, 1999).** Once structured, information can be used like any other tangible asset, for improved performance, decision-making processes, lowering of cost and generating income.

4.1. Maximising Performance

SBICLS caseworkers need to be able to make quick and correct legal decisions on a daily basis. From deciding whether a case has merit (and therefore can be taken on by the Service), to what country information needs to be presented for a refugee case, to which barrister in Brisbane can take on another High Court case pro bono, these decisions have vital impact on the lives and safety of the Service's clients. To be able to make these decisions quickly, case officers at SBICLS need timely access to the right information, at the right time and in the right format. Currently, attempts at locating this information are at best time-consuming and at worst frustrating and futile. With correct information management in place, case officers will spend less time searching and more time using information. This will not only improve the quality of service to be provided, but also allow the Service to provide its services to a wider base of clients.

Correct Information Management procedures will also lighten the workload of administrative staff, freeing them from continual information re-handling and providing them with better tools and resources with which to provide the administrative support the Service needs. It will also permit them to become better information/referral providers.

4.2. Lowering Expenditure

The application of information management procedures to the Service will also permit lowering of overhead costs. At the moment, the office expenditure on printing and photocopying is relatively high, as information resources are being doubled, stored in multiple places, disjointed, hoarded and finally thrown out. A look at the recycle bin every weekend is a disheartening activity. On the other hand, masses of potentially useful information about clients and stakeholders are not stored, or stored incorrectly. There is no integrated plan of action when it comes to such basic things as, say, file structure on the server.

The Service also pays for subscriptions, often for materials which can either be obtained for free online, or for materials that are seldom if ever used. An example was a subscription to the New Internationalist, while the whole archive could be found on the magazine's website for free.

Digitalisation of the library resources, integration of client and document management software to provide a peer-to-peer access to information, and continuous training of staff in research techniques, resources availability and best IT practices will significantly increase performance, and cut down expenditure at the Service.

4.3. Generating Income

This, in the opinion of the InfoMate Project Consultant, is the gist of the whole information management project undertaken. SBICLS is a non-profit organisation, totally dependent in its functionality on funding and tenders. Although the administration and staff at the moment cannot see any service that could seriously compete for the funding, it has to be noted that the funding itself is government policy, and that tends to be very fickle. In the past few years, there has been an increasing trend for the Federal Government to cut, not increase, funding, throwing community based organisations out of work. Many of these have rebounded back, by implementing schemes whereby they generated income for their own service.

The Charter prevents SBICLS from having a moneymaking venture. It does not, in theory, prevent it from accepting donations from other bodies. If the InfoMate Project proves effective, the owners of the project are willing to take it a step further, and created an Information Resource Centre, capable of providing information to other community based legal services, as well as to various allied organisations and bodies, for a reasonable fee. The money so generated will then be donated back to SBICLS. It is hoped that within the next five years, the money generated by the IRC will be sufficient to render SBICLS independent of external funding.

5. Brilliant, But Can We Deliver?

5.1. Financial Constraints

SBICLS funding has not perceptibly increased for the past six years, while the Service's expenditure has increased by 30%. The strain on the finances is considerable. Most of the funding is paid as wages to the Service's employees, in rent and other day-to-day office expenses. Very little is left for such important aspects as IT upgrading and maintenance, or information systems. The InfoMate project has so far survived on the good will of everybody involved, and it is hoped that the first phase will actually be completed with very little overheads expenditure. However, the risk is there, as finances are needed for taking the project from Records Management into the Knowledge Management phase: hosting of an intranet and extranet, purchase of additional hardware, creation of the IRC, etc.

5.2. Work Culture

SBICLS is a small service – in terms of numbers of employees – that does a very big job. The resident employees number seven, and this small number encourages a relaxed, non-competitive and informal work environment. The structure is a friendly non-hierarchical one, which also enhances knowledge sharing. The value of this is detracted, however, by the fact that most of the knowledge shared is tacit – news, gossip, discussions, experiences, stories and questions are swapped between workers in the corridor, over lunch or while having cups of coffee. None of this is ever recorded. As such, this invaluable repository of expertise is lost for future recycling.

5.3. Legal Issues

Two main legal issues are involved in the InfoMate Project; that of copyright and of confidentiality. Both are discussed very well in **Williams (2000)**. To reiterate, in IT terms information management consists of three concepts; capture of information, storage of information and access to information. Information management encourages knowledge sharing. As copyright reserves to the owner exclusive rights to his/her intellectual creation, activities such as downloading, storing, copying, manipulating and disseminating information not produced by the service itself may infringe on copyright laws. It may also impinge on confidentiality, especially if the information shared pertains to a legal case of a client.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The following recommendations are in place for SBICLS:

- Current knowledge and information resources (or entities), their users, usage and importance should be identified, as well as their sources, cost and value. This information and knowledge should then be classified by its key attributes and knowledge maps developed.

- Information resources at SBICLS should be understood, not only by the staff and involved volunteers, but also by the Management Committee. Information can add value to SBICLS' services. Improved information flows can improve the quality of decision making and internal operations. Yet many managers do not fully understand the real impact of information management as a risk-minimising tool.

- Responsibility for the management of information and information resources at SBICLS should be assigned to every single member of the staff. Every staff member should be involved in a continual learning process of becoming a knowledge worker, implementing correct information management procedures in his/her daily work. Raw information needs interpretation, discussing and analysing teams of experts, offering different perspectives. This know-how sharing is a hallmark of successful organisations.

- Policies for ascertaining information needs, acquiring and managing information *throughout its life cycle* should be developed and appended to the current Procedural Manual. Particular attention should be paid to ownership, information integrity and sharing. A culture of information creation, management and sharing should be actively fostered and implemented.

- Information Management process should become an inherent part of the total management process of SBICLS.

- The legal and regulatory, political, social, economic and technological environment, as well as the inner environment of the service: clients, stakeholders and affiliates, should be monitored systematically. Selective and tailored dissemination of vital information to caseworkers should be provided.

- Information purchases should be optimised, by not confusing the medium with the content. Both aspects of the information systems need continual upgrading and maintenance.

- Available information should be mined, refined and edited, so that it reaches the end-user in a friendly format. This implies an integrated content and document management on a large scale.

- Applications that permit knowledge sharing should be purchased and implemented: an intranet and groupware make it possible for more widespread sharing and collaborative use of information.

- Technical integration and convergence should be actively sought in managing information at the Service, permitting internal knowledge sharing and external dissemination of information.

7. APPENDIX 1: SBICLS Procedural Manual on Information Systems Management

7.1 FILE IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY

SBILCS shall ensure that a system is in place to identify files to ensure that files are not lost and that all information about the matter can be traced. This policy covers paper and electronic file systems and client as well as administrative files.

Procedures

ACTION	PROCEDURE
To open a file	LOCAL PROCEDURE TO BE INSERTED
To identify a new file	"
To make up a file	"
To change client details	"
To add documentation	Caseworkers place typed letter in a *Caseworker Outgoing Mail* tray on the Secretary's desk. Trays with files and correspondence must be in a secure place and kept from public view. If letter includes enclosures, then the file must be attached to the letter and enclosures flagged for copying. Administrative/Information Workers to copy letter and either file it immediately in the appropriate working file OR Place the copy in a CASEWORK TO BE FILED tray on the secretary's desk to be filed as soon as possible.
To store the file	LOCAL PROCEDURE TO BE INSERTED
To trace a file	"
To archive a closed files	"
To open closed files	"
To remove files from SBCILS	" e.g. when attending Court/ Tribunals etc. There should be a register to sign in and out- which is regularly audited

7.2 FILE CONTROL AND FOLLOW UP

SBILCS shall ensure that a system is in place

➤ to ensure that client matters are recorded accurately and completed in terms of immigration, legal and administrative requirements
➤ to ensure that risks are managed

➢ to ensure that the quality of our service is maintained

This policy covers paper and electronic file systems and client as well as administrative files.

ACTION	CONTROL PROCEDURE
Opening and distributing inward mail/ faxes	The Administration Officer opens incoming mail and makes a record of mail in and out Each item is date stamped Cheques received are stamped NOT NEGOTIABLE Mail is sorted and placed in folders for each officer to collect
Receiving and opening deliveries	Items delivered to the front reception desk are signed for and opened by the Administration Officer
Signing legal advice	All legal advice and opinions are signed only by the relevant SBICLS solicitor Briefs to Counsel for opinions proceed only with the written approval of the client
File notes	A file record of telephone conversations and interviews relating to the matter are retained and placed on the file This record is in addition to any diary sheet being maintained for the matter
Referrals	Referrals to outside solicitors and/or immigration agents shall only be made to those on the Referral Register This Register must be updated regularly to ensure the competence of service providers
Bring-ups	Solicitors and Immigration Workers must record critical dates for a matter in their diary Matters subject to time limitations e.g. reviews and appeals, must be recorded in a Register maintained for this purpose.
Time limitation matters	Entries are made in the Time Limitations Register (SEE ATTACHMENT 2) to record: . the matter . staff member responsible . date cause of action arose . file number and location . date for Notice of Insurer . last date to issue proceedings . date proceedings commenced . date of settlement/ judgement . date file closed This Register is kept (INSERT HERE) A Review of the Register is conducted weekly by the Administration Officer and outstanding matters actioned by the staff member responsible

7.3 MANAGEMENT OF CLIENT DOCUMENTS

SBILCS shall have a system in place to ensure the proper care of documents received from or on behalf of clients for retention and use during the conduct of a matter.

Procedures

ACTION	CONTROL PROCEDURE
Record of documents received	A record is made by the Administration Officer upon receipt of all information and documents provided in whatever format. This record is signed and dated by the officer and placed on the client file. Records received under cover of a letter may be recorded as received by a notation on the letter.

Acknowledgment of documents received	Receipt of documents is acknowledged within 24 hours if requested by the provider.
Inspection of documents received	All documents are inspected on receipt for: . their condition . completeness Defects and deficiencies are advised to the provider immediately. Information provided in electronic format is first subjected to a virus check before loading onto the SBILCS computer system.
Identification of documents received	Documents are stored on the client file or if too large, in an archive box identified by the file number, client name and matter
Storage location	A record of the storage location is noted on the record of documents received and kept on the client file
Record of documents returned	A record is kept on the client file of all documents returned noting the recipient, the address and date delivered. Documents are inspected before return and any deterioration in condition is noted and advised.

7.4 FILE RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

SBILCS shall have a system for

➤ establishing periods of retention for specific categories of documents
➤ storage of documents while being retained and
➤ a schedule for file disposal/destruction once the retention period expires

This is the responsibility of the Administrative/Information Workers

<mark>FOR FURTHER ACTION – ONCE THE ABOVE IS KNOWN</mark>

Procedures

ACTION	CONTROL PROCEDURE

7.5 COMPUTER SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Computer Program Settings

CyberSBICLS DIMA has numerous contract specifications entered into its systems configuration which need to be updated as follows:

New Calender Year
File numbers reset to "1" of the new year
Advice numbers reset to "1" of the new year

New financial year
Contract date
Invoice numbers reset to "1" of the new financial year
DIMA Project Officer's name and position
Unit costs
Funding levels under the contract

Computer Backup Procedures

ACTION	CONTROL PROCEDURE

Frequency	Computer system data is backed up:
	 . daily/ weekly/ monthly (INSERT)
	  Accounting data is also backed up at the end of each financial year on 30 June
	  Word processing data is backed up at intervals not exceeding 10 minutes

Backup media	
Location of backup media	
Inspection and testing of backup tapes	
Responsibility	

Computer Tasks Management

TASK	WHO	WHEN
Computerising the file register		
Collection and data entry of statistics		
Managing the computer network		
Managing Internet access and use		
Organising computer training and monitoring who is trained		

7.6 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

ACTION	CONTROL PROCEDURE
Computer equipment	Maintenance agreements are negotiated with suppliers (INSERT NAME) for: . file server . mirrored hard drives . tape backup unit . printers
Response time	
Computer Software	Consultancy agreement negotiated for telephone and on-site support for all computer software with (INSERT NAME)
Office Equipment	Service agreements negotiated with suppliers for: . fax machine . photocopier etc
Testing procedures	Mirrored hard drives – daily synchronisation test Uninterrupted power supply unit – weekly battery test Computer data backup – daily verification of data capture

7.7 MAILING LISTS

The Administrative/Information worker is responsible for maintaining the mailing lists.

      - recording: - incoming mail
                         - outgoing mail

7.8 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to be followed to ensure that urgent and high priority tasks are managed:

CORRESPONDENCE TO BE TYPED:

Type letters in **URGENT** black tray first.

Type letters in **ORDINARY** black tray second.

Blue tray photocopy letters before mailing

Red tray fax docs then photocopy and send if necessary.

DATA ENTRY

Remember to record and write all file no. Keep Advice Phone/Face to Face

Typing of client work is the priority for the service. Kathy and Lennie would like as much notice as possible of typing jobs to be done particularly if they are large documents.

If it is not clear which typing task should take priority, the matter should be referred to the caseworkers to resolve.

It is the caseworker's responsibility to put the appropriate references on any letter to be typed and to either attach any enclosures or to flag necessary enclosures in the file.

7.9 RESOURCES AND LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

ACTION	CONTROL PROCEDURE
Making sure that Immigration Forms are available	
EAS resources and Advisor's kits are available on time	
Library management	
Standards Forms management	e.g. Intake Sheets; Telephone Advice Forms; Interpreter Booking Forms etc.

8.   References

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