



26 July 2016

John Creser

[fyi-request-4253-](#)

1cb7e96f@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Creser

Thank you for your Official Information Request submitted to the website www.fyi.org.nz. You requested the *definition used by the Chief Archivist to assess whether or not a Government organisation is complying with its statutory requirement to maintain full and accurate records*.

There is no one definition used by Archives New Zealand to assess compliance with statutory requirements to maintain full and accurate records. Rather, a combination of legislation, standards and an audit programme are used to determine the maturity levels of recordkeeping in public offices under the Public Records Act 2005 (the Act).

The Act is the regulatory framework for creating and managing information in government. The purpose of the Act in this context is to promote government accountability through reliable recordkeeping and to enhance public confidence in the integrity of government records. The Act covers all public offices and local authorities, and applies to physical and digital records, including records held in business systems and email accounts. Under the Act, public offices and local authorities are required to create and maintain records; dispose of public records only as authorised by the Chief Archivist or otherwise by law; transfer archival records to the control of the Chief Archivist; and classify the access status of all records.

To assist public offices in meeting regulatory obligations under the Act, Archives New Zealand issues mandatory and discretionary standards. The current core standard is the *Information and Records Management Standard*. The standard establishes how to manage information and records systematically, and sets out the minimum level of compliance that organisations must meet. The standard is available through the Records Toolkit website (<http://www.records.archives.govt.nz>).

Public offices are required to create *full and accurate records* under section 17(1) of the Act. Full and accurate records are underpinned by the effective management of information as part of normal, prudent business practice. This means that recordkeeping practices and procedures must be designed to ensure that records are made, that they accurately reflect the transactions they document, are complete in their information, are authentic and have integrity, and are useable. In addition, full and accurate records must have the appropriate metadata available to ensure the meaning and context is associated with the relevant information and records. Full and accurate records will support business outcomes, decision making, accountability, and provide evidence. The *Information and Records Management Standard* provides information on the appropriate management infrastructure for sound recordkeeping.

One of the functions of the Chief Archivist under the Act is to monitor and report on the compliance of public offices with the Act (section 11(1)(b)(vi); section 33). Archives New Zealand audits all public offices against the Act in order to assess their level of records management capability. The first five year audit cycle under the Act was completed in 2015.

I hope this information is of use to you. You have the right, by way of complaint to the Ombudsman under s 28(3) of the Official Information Act, to seek an investigation and review of my response to your request. The contact address is: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ML', with a large loop at the top and a horizontal line at the bottom.

Marilyn Little
Chief Archivist