

	Victorian Office PO Box 260 Melton Victoria 3337 T (03) 9747 3077 F (03) 9747 6599	New South Wales Office 119 Willoughby Road Crows Nest NSW 2065 T (02) 8987 1926 F (02) 9439 2157	Queensland Office PO Box 4286 Elanora Queensland 4221 T (07) 5525 7733 F (07) 5525 7744	<h1>Case Study</h1>
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Lower Murray Water

Records Management Program & EDRMS Implementation

The Challenge of Change

1. The Organisation

Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Authority was created under the provisions of the *Water Act 1989* via Order in Council effective 1 July 2004. It assumed the whole of the property, rights, liabilities, obligations, powers and functions under the *Water Act 1989* of the Lower Murray Region Water Authority and Sunraysia Rural Water Authority.

From 1 July 2007, the Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Corporation came into effect. Lower Murray Water's (LMW) core business is to meet the present and future needs of customers and the community by providing reliable and secure water services.

LMW's area of operation extends from Kerang to the South Australian border taking in the municipalities of Mildura, Swan Hill and Gannawarra. LMW provides the region with urban water and wastewater services, treatment and effluent disposal services, river quality water to stock, garden and irrigation customers as well as collection and disposal of subsurface irrigation drainage water.

2. The Challenge

In the face of an ever growing volume of documents and information, the former Sunraysia Rural Water Authority (SRWA) had implemented a centralised system to aid in the capture and management of this vital information asset. However, the amalgamation between SRWA and the Lower Murray Region Water Authority and the departure of the SRWA Records Officer in 2004, left the newly formed Lower Murray Water (LMW) in a state of risk and exposure to potential records management disasters.

Understanding the records management challenges they faced, LMW Executive and Senior Management threw their combined energies and support behind the development and implementation of a new records management framework and program.

3. The Process

With assistance from Records Solutions, the newly appointed records management team shifted their primary role from one of back office processing to a primary role of trainers and educators with a level of authority and responsibility which encompasses key compliance and quality management monitoring.

The previous Records Management Framework at LMW, as seen by Records Solutions, presented many challenges, including, but not limited to:

- Critical shortage of storage space for hardcopy records, particularly large size plans;
- Complex and oversized network drives which demanded a dependence on local knowledge as to the contents and breed a culture of “silo” systems;
- Little or no regard to appropriate Retention or Disposal, particularly of electronic records; and
- Very little emphasis on training and control of the Records Management System, including compliance and auditing.

Ideally, LMW wanted to achieve best practice in records management and manage the operational functions associated with compliant and accountable recordkeeping. Their desires included the effective and strategic utilisation of available resources and technologies which would directly or indirectly aid in the achievement of record keeping regulatory compliance and operational efficiencies.

A best practice solution for records management at LMW meant a long term Strategic Plan was required to establish a comprehensive Records Management Program that would govern the creation, capture and management of all records within the organisation, regardless of format or point of origin. The plan also called for a paradigm shift in relation to the responsibility for record keeping, taking it from one that was primarily focused on records management staff to one that is shared by all staff across all levels of the organisation.

4. *The Outcome*

At the core of these significant changes was the implementation of an Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS) that would provide the enabling technology for electronic creation and capture of records at the desktop. Records Solutions also successfully assisted in implementing the overarching Records Management Program which incorporated security (including the capacity to assign and restrict individuals and work group access to documents and records), retention and disposal, version control, tracking and workflow and capturing records originating in paper form, finalised records from network drives (and possibly other business systems, if required), and of course, email.

With an orientation towards flexibility and communication, Records Solutions assisted LMW in the development of new Policies and Procedures, a new Records Classification Scheme, organisational wide education and the overall transition from the old system to the new, including assessing benefits of the transition via Post Implementation Reviews.