Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture

Principles

Shaping government ICT to support business outcomes

Information principles

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Information security

This document has been security classified using the Queensland Government Information Security Classification Framework (QGISCF) as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the QGISCF.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The principles in this document represent a statement of the fundamental beliefs and values underpinning the information layer of the Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture (QGEA), and the rules or behaviours with which government agencies are expected to comply with in this context. The *QGEA Information principles* provide high-level guidance on the required approach to information and its management across government and should not require frequent change or amendment.

The *QGEA Information principles* have been developed to supplement the *QGEA Foundation principles*.

1.2 Scope

Due to their underpinning nature, the *QGEA Information principles* apply to all elements of the information layer and supplement the overarching *QGEA Foundation principles*.

These principles applies to all Queensland Government departments (as defined by the Public Service Act 2008). Accountable officers (not already in scope of the Public Service Act 2008) and statutory bodies under the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 must have regard to these principles in the context of internal controls, financial information management systems and risk management. Please see the Applicability of the QGEA for further information.

1.3 Audience and derivation

The *QGEA Information principles* have been produced for the use of all officers within the Queensland Government and in particular, those who are involved in the governance, management and use of information.

These principles are based on the following:

- the *QGEA Foundation principles*
- the government's overall objectives and priorities with regard to information and communication technology, including *Towards Q2 through ICT,* the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- a comparative analysis of information principles used in a number of public sector jurisdictions within Australia and internationally
- information drawn from Queensland Government departments and the original Government Information Architecture White Papers to provide a local context and greater relevance.

2 QGEA Information principles

The *QGEA Information principles* are a set of ambitions or values that departments should aspire to when making decisions regarding their information and its overall management.

The rationale and implications of the principles in this document are focussed on their application specifically to information and its management processes and practices. Broader implications of the principles outside of this domain are not articulated within this document. An explanation of the structure of the principles is available in *Appendix A: Structure of the QGEA Information principles*.

2.1 Transparent: The public has a right to information

Rationale	Queensland Government is the custodian of significant amounts of information. It is critical to an open, accountable and participatory government that 'recourse to legislative rights [to access information] becomes a matter of last resort in the context of increased proactively released government information.'[1] Consequently, the public has a right to access information held by the government. Not only does this support increased openness and accountability, but '[a] better informed community means that users of government services will be better placed to participate in the design and delivery of those services. Hence, increased openness is also a means by which the value of the information held by government can be unlocked to deliver better public services.'[2] Likewise, appropriately priced and licensed information products provide further support to the principle that information is transparent. This principle extends to the exchange or sharing of information between agencies and other governments, which improves efficiencies and reduces overall costs. It should be noted that this principle acts in concert with related security and privacy principles, legislation, and regulation.
Key implications	• Information collected at public expense is made available to citizens to access wherever practicable and appropriate in accordance with legislation and regulations. • Agencies embed the right to information in their administrative practices and right to information considerations underlie all information management decisions. • Staff are educated and aware that the right to information is a legitimate and core aspect of their work and they must work within the regulation and legislation that governs this access. • When information is not provided for free, pricing should be transparent and consistent both within agencies and across government. • Clear licensing arrangements ensure that the public understands how they can use government information lawfully. • Agencies share and exchange information amongst themselves and other governments, unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

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[1] *Queensland Government,* The right to information: a response to the review of Queensland's Freedom of Information Act, *2008*, p. 4.

[2] Ibid.

2.2   Trustworthy: Information is accurate, relevant, timely, available and secure

Rationale	Effective and valued government services must be trusted by their users. It is therefore essential that information used for the delivery of services is of high quality and integrity, and is managed in an ethical and accountable manner throughout its lifecycle to ensure it is accurate, relevant, timely, available and secure as appropriate.
Key implications	• Information is collected and organised in a manner that enhances its authenticity, quality and integrity. • Information should be relevant – i.e. it is collected for a purpose and to meet specific business requirements and outcomes. • Confidentiality, privacy, and security considerations underlie all IM decisions and are balanced against the right to information appropriately. • Mechanisms and procedures are in place to ensure appropriate confidentiality, privacy, security and access processes are maintained and that these requirements are understood by all staff. • Redress mechanisms are available that provide appropriate transparent complaints and appeals processes. • Agencies will work towards having a single point of truth for key information assets. • Retention and disposal of information must be managed appropriately.

2.3   Private: Personal information is protected in accordance with the law

Rationale	The Queensland Government collects and holds significant amounts of personal information. Citizens have a right to privacy and departments are responsible for ensuring that such information is responsibly and transparently, collected and managed. Whilst the intent of this principle is covered under the principles that information is 'Trustworthy' and 'Managed' its importance is such that a specific principle is appropriate.
Key implications	• Agencies comply with information privacy requirements and embed them in their administrative practices. • Staff are educated and aware of compliance requirements in relation to information privacy. • Citizens have a right to privacy and to the access and amendment of their own personal information in the government's possession or under the government's control unless, on the balance it would be contrary to the public interest (as per the *Information Privacy Act 2009*).

2.4 **Equitable:** Information is accessible to all

Rationale	The principle 'Transparent: The public has a right to information' states the government's intent to make its information available for access. This principle seeks to ensure that in doing so, government information is accessible *to all* in a manner that ensures social equity, regardless of geographic, economic, social or disability situations.
	Equity also embodies the concept of user-centricity – i.e. that the information must be presented in a way that is user-centred and intuitive to understand and use as much as is practical.
Key implications	- Arrangements exist to enable all to access government information as equitably as practical. - Particular attention should be made to ensure information is accessible to those who may in some way be disadvantaged economically, socially or through disability. - The principle of equity is about the need to ensure that information is made available in a manner in which it can be consumed by those it is given to. This may lead to the need to present information in different formats so that consumers of the information may choose the format that they can best access. - Staff are educated and aware of the requirement that information is to be accessible to all.

2.5 **Valued:** Information is a core strategic asset[3]

Rationale	Information is foundational to the operation of government. This principle explicitly recognises that information is a valued and strategic asset of government and thus that it needs to be managed, maintained and exploited in a manner similar to that of other more traditional assets of government.
	This principle is closely related to the following principle that information is 'Managed.' It is possible to view the need to manage information as an implication of this principle, but the importance of appropriate information management justifies the need for its own principle.
Key implications	- Staff are educated and aware that information is a valued asset and is to be optimised and exploited to its fullest extent. - Information is included in and linked to organisational strategic planning. - Information assets are managed in a whole of life manner. - Agencies share and exchange information amongst themselves and other governments to maximise its value.

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[3] FOI Independent Review Panel, *The right to information: reviewing Queensland's Freedom of Information Act, 2008.*

2.6   Managed: Information is actively planned, managed and compliant

Rationale	The Queensland Government is the custodian of a large and complex volume of information that represents a significant investment and that underpins the continued delivery of services. The FOI Independent Review Panel also acknowledged that '[t]he "front end" information policy issues of information planning, creating and collecting are as critical'[4] to open, accountable and participatory government as the principle that information is 'Transparent.' For these reasons, information must be managed over its lifecycle to ensure that its ongoing use is optimised and exploited to its fullest extent. Agency information management must comply with current legislative, regulatory, business, cultural, ethical, technical, economic, environmental and social responsibility requirements. Lack of compliance can lead to unforeseen liabilities and litigation that could otherwise be avoided. This principle is closely related to the aforementioned principle that information is 'Valued.'
Key implications	• Planning and investment arrangements for information are formalised and apply agreed standards, methodologies and best practices. • Agencies have formal architecture, structures, responsibilities and policy functions to govern information throughout its lifecycle. • The *Queensland Government Information Management Policy Framework* identifies the key domains that require management. • Planning includes key stakeholders from agency business units. • Information custodianship underpins the management of information. • Agencies commit adequate resources to ensure that information management activities and initiatives are successful. • Staff are educated, aware and understand their information management responsibilities and are empowered to fulfil them. • All change is managed and communicated. • Compliance requirements across agencies are consistent, comprehensive, actively monitored and regularly reviewed.

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[4] Ibid.

3 Applying the QGEA Information principles

3.1 Adopting the Information principles

The *QGEA Information principles* are not meant to direct immediate action or specific instruction but rather provide a set of reference points or guidance. They are intended to have long term applicability and their essence is reflected and refined in specific instruments such as QGEA strategies, policies, positions and Information Standards.

However, in the absence of more specific guidance within the QGEA or within a department, the principles should be used to address emerging issues and guide agency planning, management and implementation processes.

In this event, it is expected that the *QGEA Information principles* would provide only one element in an agency's overall policy and process development cycle.

For this reason it is envisaged that agencies will adopt and expand on the statements within the 'Key implications' component of each principle to reflect more accurately their specific circumstance. These agency-specific implications of the *QGEA Information principles* should take the form of agency Information Standards, or QGEA-aligned policies and positions, as appropriate.

3.2 Compliance with the Information principles

Consistent departure from the principles will lead to increasing difficulties at agency level and may impact adversely on the agency's capacity to fulfil its commitments to the information directions of the Queensland Government.

3.3 Precedence within the Information principles

In certain circumstances, the principles may compete with each other, e.g. balancing the principle that information is 'Transparent' against security (see 'Trustworthy') will require interpretation on the part of the user. There is no precedence defined in the principles. This means that resolving competing principles will require considering the specific circumstances and objectives of the particular initiative in the context of the full set and intent of the principles balanced against risk, the projected business outcome and service deliverables. A determination can then be made as to the most appropriate direction to take in the particular circumstance.

Agencies are encouraged to document issues in specific circumstances, such as competing principles, so they can then be used as input to the regular review of the agency policies. This documentation can also inform further development of the principles, ensuring their continued relevance as part of effective governance and good practice.

3.4 Overall hierarchy of QGEA principles

The QGEA Framework supports the notion that principles can be declared for any context within the overall QGEA. That is, principles can be defined at many levels – from the overarching level in the form of these QGEA principles through to principles for a layer, slice, individual domain or group of domains. Essentially, this can provide a hierarchy of principles that provide increasingly detailed reference points and context to address specific problems not otherwise covered by QGEA strategies, policies, positions and Information Standards.

Therefore, the *QGEA Information principles* supplement the *QGEA Foundation principles*.

Appendix A Structure of QGEA Information principles

Principles are key elements of the QGEA and can be applied at various contexts. To allow other contributors and agencies to formulate principles, Table 1 below outlines the structure used by QGCIO to define a principle. This approach is based on The Open Group's Architecture Framework (TOGAF) definition of principles[5].

Element	Definition
The Principle	The principle should both represent the essence of the rule as well as be easy to remember. Principles should commence with a state in a single word (where possible) the value or belief that is the focus of the principle. In developing principles, the following guidance applies: • Specific technology platforms should not be mentioned in the name or statement of a principle. • Do not use ambiguous words in the name or statement such as: *support*, *open*, *consider* or *avoid*. • Be careful with *manage(ment)*, and look for unnecessary adjectives and adverbs.
Rationale	Highlight the business benefits of adhering to the principle, using business terminology. Point to the similarity of information and technology principles with the principles governing business operations. Describe the relationship to other principles and the intentions regarding a balanced interpretation. Describe situations where one principle would be given precedence or carry more weight than another for making a decision.
Key Implications	Highlight the requirements, both for the business and ICT, for carrying out the principle – in terms of resources, costs, and activities/tasks. It will often be apparent that current systems, standards, or practices would be incongruent with the principle upon adoption. The impact to the business and consequences of adopting a principle should be clearly stated. The reader should readily discern the answer to: "How does this affect me?" It is important not to oversimplify, trivialise, or judge the merit of the impact. Some of the implications will be identified as potential impacts only and may be speculative rather than fully analysed. Implications should be stated in present tense.

Table 1: Elements of the QGEA Information Principles

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[5] For information on the use of principles within TOGAF see the Architecture Development Method at www.togaf.com