ACT AUDITOR–GENERAL'S REPORT

DIGITAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT

REPORT NO. 11 / 2021

ACT Audit Office

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The Speaker
ACT Legislative Assembly
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Dear Madam Speaker

I am pleased to forward to you a Performance Audit Report titled 'Digital Records Management' for tabling in the Legislative Assembly pursuant to Subsection 17(5) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* and relevant professional standards including *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*.

Yours sincerely

Michael Harris
Auditor-General
18 November 2021

The ACT Audit Office acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and pays respect to the elders; past, present and future. The Office acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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SUMMARY

The *Territory Records Act 2002* provides the framework for the recordkeeping activities of ACT government directorates and agencies. It defines a record as 'information created and kept, or received and kept, as evidence and information by a person in accordance with a legal obligation or in the course of conducting business'. It includes information in written, electronic or any other form.

The purpose of a record is to document actions and decisions to allow for transparency and accountability. Sound recordkeeping practices allow ACT Government directorates and agencies to undertake activities efficiently and effectively by having information, data and knowledge easily accessible by ACT Public Service staff.

Planning for a whole-of-government electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) has been underway, in some form, since 2011. In 2018, the ACT Government commenced the first major initiative for the implementation of a whole-of-government EDRMS. This audit examines the arrangements for the planning, implementation and achievement of the four expected deliverables of the whole-of-government initiative. The audit also examines the activities of three directorates and their transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS.

Conclusions

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EDRMS

Planning for a whole of government electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) commenced in 2011. The *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report outlined a high-level plan for improved digital records management practices and the use of shared platforms across the ACT Public Service. Although there was slow progress on the pathway in the first five years, the 2015 *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* established a clear way forward, and thereafter the pace of EDRMS uptake and consolidation has accelerated.

In 2018 the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget* initiative sought to 'set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS'. Three years into the initiative, three of its four deliverables have made good progress. Ninety-two percent of the additional users envisaged at the outset of the initiative are now using one of the two endorsed EDRMS (Objective and TRIM). Another key component of the initiative, the consolidation of users into whole-of-government EDRMS, has been successful with respect to Objective but less so for TRIM. A whole-of-government TRIM platform is now in widespread use although this has been accompanied by increased use of stand-alone TRIM platforms. A strategy for the next phase in the EDRMS pathway has been established, but the development of a comprehensive and sustainable funding model for digital records management remains unresolved.

The rollout and consolidation of whole-of-government EDRMS has been supported by improved governance and administrative arrangements including the establishment of whole-of-government oversight entities, the provision of advice and support and the promulgation of policies and procedures. While these governance and administrative arrangements have been established, it is difficult to assess the impact of the arrangements on whole-of-government EDRMS implementation due to a lack of documentation regarding planning and decision making. The establishment of an EDRMS performance framework, which would provide assurance on the implementation of whole-of-government EDRMS, could be expected to enhance transparency and accountability, and ultimately inform future investment and management effort.

EDRMS IMPLEMENTATION IN DIRECTORATES

Each of the three directorates considered as part of the audit, the Community Services Directorate, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, have demonstrated improved digital record-keeping practices between 2018 and 2021, although not to the full extent envisaged in 2018. Each directorate has planned for, and implemented, digital record-keeping initiatives specific to their needs and circumstances.

The Community Services Directorate has substantially increased its number of stand-alone TRIM EDRMS users but systems consolidation has not taken place. Furthermore, the objective of digitising 161,000 files is also unlikely to be achieved by June 2022. Nevertheless, in March 2020 the Directorate effectively adapted its *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and there has been a substantial increase in the number of staff using both the directorate's stand-alone and whole-of-government versions of the TRIM EDRMS.

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has exceeded its target number of users migrating to the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS although this has happened more slowly than originally expected. The Directorate has also achieved a degree of systems consolidation, as intended by the 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget* initiative.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate made early progress in encouraging and supporting its staff to migrate to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS in 2016-17. The directorate subsequently managed its EDRMS activities as a component of its preparations for an Activity Based Work environment and move to the new Civic office building in March 2021. The directorate has surpassed its target, and made a significant contribution of more than 1000 new EDRMS users, to the 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget* initiative target of 5,200 additional whole-of-government EDRMS users.

Key findings

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EDRMS	Paragraph
An August 2011 *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report prepared for the Territory Records Office outlined a high-level plan for the implementation of digital recordkeeping across all areas of the ACT Government. The Pathway Report documented the 'current state' of digital recordkeeping in the ACT Government and the issues and barriers to the successful implementation of digital recordkeeping across agencies. At the same time the ACT Government's *Strategic Plan for ICT 2011-15* sought to promote whole-of-government thinking and enhance value to the community through the Government's use of ICT. The ICT Strategic Plan established an aim for the ACT Public Service to develop its information management practices within shared ICT platforms across whole-of-government, which was a departure from existing practice at the time which was for systems planning and implementation to be agency-led. The ICT Strategic Plan anticipated consideration of whole-of-government needs and benefits in any new systems.	2.11
On 5 August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *Digital Record Keeping Policy for the ACTPS*. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy, which is applicable to all ACT Government entities that are subject to the *Territory Records Act 2002,* is the first whole-of-government statement of policy on digital recordkeeping. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy outlined an intention for the ACT Public Service to adopt a 'digital first' approach to recordkeeping and for digital recordkeeping to be considered in all ICT systems. It does not identify or mandate the use of specific system(s).	2.19
In August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board endorsed a business case to establish the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project). The Pilot Project sought to 'set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS'. The Pilot Project had a clearly identified rationale and deliverables and provided a sound basis for testing the practicality of the policy intent of the *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS*. The governance arrangements for the delivery of the Pilot Project were effective. Roles and responsibilities were established, and project oversight was achieved by an effective Project Board. A timely project outcome was achieved. The resulting final report detailed the outcomes of the project against its objectives, lessons that were learnt and a set of recommendations. The recommendations provided a sound basis to progress a whole-of-government approach to digital recordkeeping.	2.38
In May 2016 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *ACT Government Policy on the Selection and Implementation of EDRMS Capabilities.* The policy confirmed TRIM and Objective as the preferred whole-of-government EDRMS. The policy requires decision-makers to take the two preferred platforms into account when making EDRMS decisions and the cost implications of any proposed alternative to the systems. The policy, drafted during the Pilot Project, provided the first statement of	2.47

policy regarding which EDRMS platform(s) would be the focus for consolidating use in the future. The 2016 policy overcame a significant barrier to making progress on the whole-of-government EDRMS pathway first proposed in 2011, i.e. articulating a formal position on pre-existing and future EDRMS platforms.

Key whole-of-government EDRMS governance developments were planned and implemented in the period 2016 to 2018. These include the *Whole of Government EDRMS System Administration and Governance Policy*, which was endorsed by the Project Board in October 2016 as an overarching policy for the administration of the whole-of-government EDRMS. The policy articulated roles and responsibilities in relation to the support for, and administration and governance of, the whole-of-government EDRMS including more centralised support from Shared Services. The policy also describes various governance arrangements for the technical operation of the two endorsed whole-of-government EDRMS, such as access controls, account creation and deletion processes; information security requirements; and records management principles including classification and disposal schedules. These governance developments provided further momentum to the whole-of-government EDRMS approach. | 2.60

Within two years of the completion of the Pilot Project, the number of whole-of-government TRIM users more than doubled from 450 to 1,012. This was accompanied by greater awareness of whole-of-government aims, policies and practices relating to EDRMS. By 2018 progress along the pathway to whole-of-government EDRMS consolidation was accelerating. | 2.65

A specific outcome of the 2015 Pilot Project was the establishment of the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group for the provision of strategic and technical oversight and advice in achieving whole-of-government EDRMS consolidation. Both the Committee (with its strategic purpose) and the Working Group (with its technical advisory purpose) were constituted as intended and provided the potential for improved oversight and coordination. However, both were slow to become established, met less frequently than originally intended, and did not explore all aspects within their scope. In the first two years of their operation their full potential to drive whole-of-government EDRMS was not realised. | 2.79

The commitment to transitioning ACT Public Service staff in the major administrative areas into an Activity Based Work environment, and the consolidation of up to 3,200 employees into accommodation at Dickson and Civic, became significant drivers of change for whole-of-government EDRMS since 2016. These initiatives have increased the priority of digital recordkeeping, and of designing and implementing whole-of-government EDRMS. | 2.85

In June 2018 the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was announced. The initiative seeks to 'complete the rollout of digital record-keeping systems across agencies to improve data accessibility and retrieval, and to generate efficiencies in records management'. A January 2018 business case for the initiative identified a total cost of $26.2 million, of which $22.1 million was expected to be offset 'by savings within Directorates'. With a net cost of $4.1 million, | 2.102

the initiative's four deliverables provide a clear focus and purpose that enhances understanding and accountability. The initiative represents a major whole-of-government endeavour involving technical, procedural, and cultural change over a four-year period that is likely to affect, at least in some way, the majority of office-based staff working in the ACT Public Service.

The *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was envisaged to be implemented as a centrally administered project by Shared Services, with oversight by the Digital Records Governance Committee. In November 2018 the terms of reference of the Committee were revised to give it an explicit role for the oversight of the project, including through review and approval of project documentation. Following the announcement of the initiative in June 2018, 12 months elapsed before a draft Project Plan was produced; there was no further supporting documentation that identified when and how the migration of users would occur across divisions, business units, functions or teams. Committee minutes do not show that it was aware of, or interested in, supporting project plans for the implementation of the initiative or providing authorisation or approval of project management and project delivery activities. There was an absence of an appropriate level of accountability and transparency in the management and delivery of the project.

2.118

The Digital Records Governance Committee has been active on a quarterly basis with the exception of the first eight months of 2020 when there were no meetings of the committee. A review of the actions and achievements of the Committee against its terms of reference shows that most terms of reference were addressed at least to some extent (i.e. seven of nine of the selected terms of reference assessed). For two areas of business, relating to developing and approving a 'System Security Plan' and 'appropriate EDRMS disaster recovery arrangements', there was no evidence of discussion at the committee meetings. The level of assurance the committee seeks and receives over the rate of whole-of-government EDRMS system expansion, and the level of system and user effectiveness is low, due in in part because no system-wide progress monitoring framework has been established. There is a significant risk that the committee is not in a position to know the pace of transition, nor whether the initiative's key objectives are likely to be accomplished (e.g. that all office-based staff would be EDRMS enabled and active users) by June 2022.

2.126

The first deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for the 'capacity for 5,200 additional staff to use the ACTPS whole-of-government digital recordkeeping system'. Good progress has been made on this deliverable in its first three years. As at 30 June 2021 there were 6,484 users of the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms, which compares to a milestone (interim) target of 7,027 (based on an adjusted initial baseline of 2,702). Notwithstanding the take-up of whole-of-government EDRMS, by June 2021 there were also more users of stand-alone TRIM versions. By June 2021 there were 2,483 users of stand-alone TRIM versions, which compares to a figure of 1,922 at the outset of the initiative. The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have noticeably decreased the number of users of stand-alone TRIM versions. The Education Directorate has performed particularly well and decommissioned its stand-alone TRIM version in June 2021.

2.147

The number of active EDRMS users is a useful indicator of the implementation of whole-of-government EDRMS but does not provide information or evidence of the extent to which whole-of-government EDRMS platforms duplicate or displace prior recordkeeping activity. During this audit records managers commented on the marked reduction in the creation of hardcopy files, and a rapid transition to digital approval and handling procedures, primarily due to the sudden and unprecedented rollout of remote working across the ACT Public Service. This was subsequently accompanied by major office moves in Civic and Dickson involving most directorates. There is no established EDRMS performance framework that informs the monitoring of progress beyond the number of users migrating to EDRMS platforms. Such a framework should address the wider realisation of benefits as referenced in the 2018 business case.

2.152

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding arrangement that supports the rollout of the whole-of-government EDRMS is a major component of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. While some progress has been made in evolving funding arrangements for developing digital records management capabilities and particularly for the uptake of whole-of-government EDRMS platforms a comprehensive funding model on which to base centralised funding appropriation has not been achieved. Shared Services advised 'a Central Recurrent Funding model is yet to be developed for the Digital Records Support area of records services and still may be some years away. The current environment is very fluid and will need to wait until there is a stability in core user numbers once a level of maturity has been reached in each of the directorates'.

2.156

The second deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the preparation of a strategy to guide future actions to improve the functionality of the two endorsed EDRMS, has been achieved with the finalisation of the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* by the Territory Records Office in April 2020. The strategy details the current state, findings, challenges and frustrations about the operation of the whole-of-government EDRMS and outlines a high-level 'vision' or 'future state' for whole-of-government information management, expressed in eight principles. The strategy does not suggest a specific technology solution but it states that any future technology should be considered against the principles. The strategy makes six recommendations. In September 2020 the Territory Records Office advised the Digital Records Governance Committee that it intends to develop 'a workplan over the next two to five years to look at improving people and technical capability as well as engendering cultural change'.

2.166

The third deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for assistance to be provided to directorates moving to the Dickson and City office blocks in 2020 in order to manage their existing paper records prior to moving. Activities to assist directorates commenced in April 2019 and were overseen by the Territory Records Office. A Territory Records Office Records Transition Team, established in February 2019, was in high demand in 2019 in supporting agency and directorate staff preparing to move offices.

2.175

The fourth deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative is the digitisation of 161,000 case files held by the Community Services Directorate. Progress towards the digitisation of client files has been made. By February 2020, 16,000 files had been digitised and the project was on track to complete 60,000 files within the available resources and timeframe. However, the total figure of 60,000 files falls well short of the original aim of this deliverable to digitise 161,000 files as outlined in the *Digitising Government Records* budget initiative. With respect to the project's secondary aim of providing a model for approaching and implementing the digitisation of large volumes of diverse legacy paperwork, it is apparent that the project to date has been effective in providing many learning opportunities, but these have not been consolidated into a model.

2.181

EDRMS IMPLEMENTATION IN DIRECTORATES

Paragraph

In 2018, the Community Services Directorate's recordkeeping practices included use of hardcopy client files, as well business systems which were not necessarily designed to meet the requirements of holding records in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*. As part of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the Community Services Directorate received $2.374 million in funding for activities to digitise the 161,000 casefiles that it had in storage. Planning for these activities was finalised in 2019, with the establishment of the directorate's *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project. The project's five core components included activities to support the digitisation of the case files and in so doing to provide a model for wider applicability in the ACT government for digitising large volumes of paper files economically.

3.15

The project management and governance arrangements for the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project, as outlined in the January 2019 project plan, were largely effective. These arrangements included the establishment of the *Go Digital Steering Committee*, the preparation of detailed project delivery schedules including milestones, the identification of risks and issues, reporting requirements and the preparation of change management and control procedures. One weaker aspect of the project was the *Go Digital Steering Committee*'s oversight and authorisation of revisions to the project and its implementation. Better documentation of these changes to the project and its parameters would improve accountability and transparency for the delivery of a major component of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative*.*

3.27

A major change to the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was signalled after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The need for expediency led to the development of a *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan, the primary purpose of which was to support the widespread use of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM (i.e., not the whole-of-government TRIM version) by all staff needing remote access to records. There was inadequate documentation associated with the *Go Digital Steering Committee's* formal authorisation and approval of this major departure, but it is clear that the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was able to adapt to accommodate the rapidly changing circumstances of work practices in the Community Services Directorate in 2020. The March 2020 *Go Digital Fast Track* revised project responded effectively to immediate needs.

3.40

Go Digital Steering Committee records indicate that progress towards four of the eight outcomes of the revised *Go Digital Fast Track* project has been achieved, including the digitisation of 60,000 casefiles. However, it is unlikely that the original outcome of the digitisation of 161,000 casefiles will be achieved. It is unclear what is intended for the residual un-digitised 100,000 files.

3.46

The shift in priorities of the Community Services Directorate through the *Go Digital Fast Track* project, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen a substantial increase in the number of staff using both the directorate's stand-alone and whole-of-government versions of the TRIM EDRMS. The increase in active users indicates that the revised priority, outlined in the *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan, of enabling directorate staff to work from home or within an Activity Based Work (office-based) environment has been achieved. One negative aspect to the directorate's revised EDRMS priorities in 2019 and 2020 is that there is further work to do to consolidate TRIM use within the whole-of-government TRIM platform. This may occur when the timing is more opportune. Accordingly, the Community Services Directorate has not to date made as significant a contribution to the whole-of-government EDRMS goal of 5,200 users by June 2022 as was originally envisaged.

3.54

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has had a form of Objective in use since 2003. In December 2017 it was estimated that approximately 250 staff across a range of business units were familiar with using Objective. A stand-alone version of TRIM was also used by approximately 150 staff to manage ministerial correspondence. In December 2017, planning commenced for the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project*. The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified three components: the rollout of Objective to an additional 600 users across the directorate; the implementation of a Ministerial Module to manage ministerial correspondence; and a business process review of ministerial correspondence and cabinet business across the directorate. These components provide a discrete, timely and practical focus, which improve the prospects of successful implementation as the components address whole-of-government EDRMS aims while simultaneously addressing directorate-specific goals.

3.62

The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) effectively articulated a high-level assessment of the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's 'current state' and 'future state' for its whole-of-government EDRMS activities. The Project Plan effectively outlined the project objectives that were intended to be achieved through the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the rollout of Objective to the corporate areas of the directorate. The stated project objectives included the creation of efficiencies in the ministerial processes and other corporate areas, the reduction of costs associated with hardcopy paper file management, increased transparency of information across the directorate and the alignment of recordkeeping practices with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

3.68

The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified the governance arrangements for the project, including roles and responsibilities for implementation and oversight. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's Chief Operating Officer (COO) Leadership Group and Executive Board had explicit oversight responsibilities and two governance groups were established

3.77

specifically for the project: the Project Steering Committee and the Objective Working Group. The Objective Working Group was active and involved in a range of activities that supported the project, including meeting with business units to assess and document business units' transition requirements.

Progress has been made for each of the three objectives outlined in the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) in the 2018 to 2021 period*.* A review of the ministerial business process was completed in July 2018, when a report was provided to the directorate detailing its analysis. Progress for the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the wider rollout of Objective has also been made with the Objective rollout being completed in 28 business units by July 2020, at which point the rollout was continuing in the remaining 18 business units.

3.88

Since 1 July 2018, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has increased the number of users of the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS by 724, thereby exceeding its target of 600 new users. The rollout and ongoing use of the Ministerial Module has also seen a reduction in the number of users of the stand-alone version of TRIM to manage ministerial correspondence, with the number of active users in the stand-alone version of TRIM falling from 154 to 64 by 30 June 2021. Systems consolidation is occurring in the directorate, in line with whole-of-government EDRMS expectations. The directorate also provided a substantial contribution in user numbers towards the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, 724 towards the 5,200 target, with one year remaining for the project.

3.98

The transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS commenced in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate during the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project*, with three of the seven pilot sites selected for the project being within the directorate. Building on the work that was completed during the project, in June 2016 the directorate commenced planning for the migration of its other business units to the whole-of-government EDRMS TRIM platform. In planning for the transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS, the directorate identified that digital record management practices varied considerably across the directorate. Variability was both in the practices and in the technology adopted by business units, with multiple stand-alone versions of TRIM, as well as Objective EDRMS being used. Planning documentation prepared in July 2016 indicates that the directorate planned for the transition of the majority of its staff to the whole-of-government TRIM but would also support the continued use of Objective in business units where it was well established. This approach acknowledged that the individual needs of the business units and their prior investment in technology, practice and procedures is an important consideration in building EDRMS capability.

3.112

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's transition to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS was managed by the directorate's Corporate division, with further oversight provided by the directorate's Executive Management Group in 2017 and 2018, and the Senior Executive Group in 2019 and 2020. Key activities were initially scheduled around each business unit's readiness to transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS. By 2019 the transition was managed as a 'business as usual' activity alongside other day-to-day operational management

3.125

matters within the units themselves rather than as a discrete 'top-down' project. This change in management emphasis reflects the change in priority due to the need to support staff relocating, and subsequently working in a 'paper lite' and Activity Based Work environment.

In January 2017 the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate planned for 652 users to be transitioned to the whole-of-government EDRMS within a two-year timeframe. An extended timeframe was agreed, in accordance with the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. Between July 2018 and March 2021, the directorate added 847 users to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS and a further 357 users to the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS, thus surpassing initial targets. The directorate has also made progress towards reducing the number of stand-alone TRIM versions it has within the directorate with the number of users within the stand-alone versions decreasing from 346 in December 2019 to 132 in June 2021.

3.146

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1	STANDALONE TRIM INSTANCES

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, through the Digital Records Governance Committee, should agree a strategy with directorates and agencies for the migration of standalone TRIM versions to the whole of government TRIM.

RECOMMENDATION 2	EDRMS PERFORMANCE

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, through the Digital Records Governance Committee, should develop a performance framework for the implementation of EDRMS across ACT Government directorates and agencies. The performance framework should focus on the achievement and realisation of benefits associated with EDRMS implementation and inform the monitoring of progress beyond the number of users migrating to EDRMS platforms.

RECOMMENDATION 3	EDRMS FUNDING

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, through the Digital Records Governance Committee, should review and evaluate the funding arrangements and determine if a central recurrent funding model for the whole-of-government EDRMS is appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 4	DIGITISATION OF HARDCOPY FILES

The Community Services Directorate should:

a) identify and document the outcome of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative goal of digitalising 161,000 hardcopy files; and

b) if the estimated outcome does not meet the business requirements of the Directorate, prepare a strategy to complete the digitisation.

RECOMMENDATION 5	MODEL FOR THE DIGITISATION OF HARDCOPY FILES

The Community Services Directorate, in conjunction with the Digital Records Governance Committee, should:

a) review and evaluate the outcome of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative; and

b) finalise the secondary aim of the initiative and prepare a model that can be used across ACT Government directorates and agencies for the digitisation of hardcopy files.

Agencies' responses

In accordance with subsection 18(2) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Community Services Directorate and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate were provided with:

- a draft proposed report for comment. All comments were considered and required changes were reflected in the final proposed report; and

- a final proposed report for further comment.

No comments were provided for inclusion in this Summary chapter.

1 INTRODUCTION

Recordkeeping

1.1   Sound recordkeeping is a fundamental element of good governance.

1.2   For the purposes of the ACT Public Service, a record is the evidence of business activity, i.e. the actions and decisions of ACT Government agencies. Records also:

- drive collaboration and communication;

- preserve knowledge for reference and re-use by the community and government;

- provide the foundation for sustainable and effective products and services;

- outline responsibilities;

- support decision-making;

- document rights and entitlements;

- make up the corporate memory of an organisation; and

- provide stakeholders with transparency around, and accountability for, government operations.[1]

1.3   Sound recordkeeping practices are needed to support the ACT Government's *Open Government* commitment. The commitment, first announced by the Chief Minister in June 2011, states that information should be managed to allow:

- transparency in process and information;

- participation by citizens in the governing process; and

- public collaboration with citizens.

Territory requirements

1.4   The *Territory Records Act 2002* provides the framework for the recordkeeping activities of ACT Government directorates and agencies. The Territory Records Office, a function within the Chief Minister, Treasury Economic Development Directorate, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the *Territory Records Act 2002* and providing policy leadership to the ACT Public Service on better practice records management.

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[1]   Territory Records Office: *Standard for Records, Information and Data* (25 July 2016).

1.5   The *Territory Records Act 2002* refers to the *Australian Standard on Records Management* (AS ISO15489), which defines a record as:

> … recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

1.6   The Director of Territory Records, in accordance with section 18 of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, approves standards which apply to 'all ACT Government employees: full-time and part-time staff, volunteers, contractors and outsourced providers'. The standards require employees to establish and maintain appropriate records, information and data, and apply appropriate access, control, storage and destruction practices. The standards also require ACT Government agencies to strategically manage records by developing a records management program and promulgating policy, supporting procedures and guidelines.

Recordkeeping functions

1.7   Directorates and agencies are responsible for the management of their records, in whatever form they take. The *Territory Records Act 2002* requires entities to implement policies and procedures that ensure the requirements of the Act are being met.

1.8   While many directorates and agencies have a records management team, including a designated Records Manager, all employees are required to create, maintain and secure records in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002* as part of their day-to-day responsibilities.

1.9   The Records Services Team within Shared Services provides services and support to ACT Government agencies to manage their records.[2]

Digital recordkeeping

1.10   Nearly all ACT Government records are originated electronically, i.e. they are created in an IT-based digital format. As with paper records, digital records need to be maintained in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002.* The Director of Territory Records' standards do not differentiate between digital and non-digital records, except with respect to metadata.

ACT Digital Recordkeeping Policy

1.11   In August 2015, the ACT Government's first digital recordkeeping policy was approved. The *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACT* states:

> … (t)o support open government initiatives in the digital age, ACT government agencies must take steps to move their recordkeeping into the digital environment through the adoption of systems that support the sharing of information across government and with the broader

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2   Shared Services is a business unit within the Commercial Service and Infrastructure Group of the Treasury division of Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. For ease of reference 'Shared Services' is used in this report.

community, while protecting the essential evidence of ACT Government actions in the short and long term.

1.12 The necessity of such a policy is reflected a year later in the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project Final Report* (October 2016), which observed:

> … transition to digital records management has been historically slow in the ACT Government and a clear pathway is needed for an effective transition.

Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS)

1.13 Digital records can be stored in a variety of systems and media, including on shared network and local drives and in the business systems in which the record was created, e.g. within an email application, case management system or customer relationship management database. However, storing files in these systems means that it is unlikely that the records can be managed in a manner that would satisfy the basic requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002*. For example, file structures, naming conventions, access controls, audit trails and the metadata behind these digital records in these systems are unlikely to be satisfactory.

1.14 On the other hand, an electronic document and record management system (EDRMS) provides a major advantage in that its functionality lends itself to satisfying the requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002.* An EDRMS provides all the building blocks to enable full compliance with the Act, when configured and utilised appropriately. It exploits metadata particularly effectively.

1.15 When an EDRMS is established as an organisation-wide platform it also has the potential to provide a range of other advantages with regards to deriving value from the information contained in the EDRMS. For the purposes of the ACT Public Service as a whole, this value can arise from:

- an interoperability dividend, since public servants are able to carry their EDRMS capabilities across to other teams on transfer and when collaborating;

- information discovery, since organisation-wide searching is more practicable;

- accessibility, since information retrieval is enabled regardless of the physical location of records;

- process design, since continuity with one EDRMS platform enables business processes to incrementally evolve and result in improved outcomes;

- security and veracity, since the EDRMS is able to identify a record as the definitive record, which assists when working in an operating environment where accountability and authorisation are paramount; and

- workflow management and the ability to collaborate within a widely shared and familiar platform.

1.16 These advantages have the potential to provide public services more efficiently and effectively.

Introduction of whole-of-government EDRMS policy

1.17   In May 2016 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the Government's first whole-of-government EDRMS policy: *ACT Government Policy of Selection of Implementation of EDRMS Capabilities* (the Policy). The Policy articulates the ACT Government's 'policy relating to the selection and implementation of EDRMS by its directorates and agencies'.

1.18   The aim of the Policy is to reduce the costs associated with directorates and agencies implementing their own versions of an EDRMS. The premise of the Policy is that significant costs associated with both implementing and maintaining EDRMS software and developing staff capability could be reduced if there was to be system consolidation, i.e. if a limited number of EDRMS were to be endorsed for use.

1.19   To achieve this, the Policy identifies Objective and TRIM as the two official whole-of-government EDRMS:

> For the purpose of providing a digital recordkeeping capability, the ACT Government has two official applications, Objective and … TRIM.

1.20   The Policy also indicates that any proposals for digital recordkeeping capability other than the whole-of-government Objective and TRIM EDRMS platforms need to be considered and approved by a whole-of-government Digital Records Governance Committee.

Objective and TRIM

1.21   The two EDRMS platforms that were selected for whole-of-government use in 2015 had been in use across ACT Government directorates and agencies for some time. The use of Objective[3] dated back to 2003; it has in the past been used principally by planning and regulatory services functions in the ACT Government. TRIM[4] was introduced in 2009 and was principally used as a workflow tool for managing Cabinet, ministerial and sensitive records, with tracking, security and digital authorisation being its primary advantages. By 2016 sixteen different, stand-alone versions of TRIM were in use across ACT Government directorates and agencies.

1.22   A whole-of-government TRIM platform is to be distinguished from the stand-alone versions of TRIM in use across ACT Government directorates and agencies. The whole-of-government platform has a standardised configuration that is designed to accommodate the addition of new teams and functions. The whole-of-government platform also supports

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[3]   Objective is the name of a company (Objective AU) that specialises in digital software particularly for government application. In the context of this report, and for ease of reference, Objective refers to Objective Enterprise Content Management, an EDRMS.

[4]   In the context of this report, and for ease of reference, the term TRIM refers to Micro Focus Content Manager (CM), an EDRMS. It was formerly known as HP Records Manager (HP RM8) and before that as HP TRIM or just TRIM. CM is a government-based enterprise content management system designed to help government agencies, regulated industries and global organisations manage their business content from creation to disposal.

system-wide functionality such as access, discovery and collaboration. The stand-alone TRIM versions do not perform these functions.

Whole-of-government digital recordkeeping activity

1.23   The concept of a whole-of-government EDRMS has been considered for some time, with the concept first being envisaged for ACT Government agencies in 2011. More recently, two significant initiatives were established to progress the whole-of-government approach to digital recordkeeping and use of EDRMS.

1.24   From October 2015 to October 2016 the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project) was undertaken. Part of the rationale for the Pilot Project was:

> Digital recordkeeping practices across the ACTPS vary considerably in scope and quality, and are often far from best-practice. There are a number of digital recordkeeping initiatives planned or in progress, with varying uniformity and based solely on immediate business needs. … This project will set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS.[5]

1.25   At the completion of the Pilot Project, a report was prepared making 15 recommendations. The Pilot Project report also outlined possible governance arrangements for a whole-of-government EDRMS such as policies and procedures, oversight committees, standard configurations and roles and responsibilities.

1.26   The Pilot Project was the ACT Government's first initiative that aimed to establish a model to guide the implementation of a whole-of-government EDRMS. The governance arrangements that were established from this project have significantly influenced the implementation of the whole-of-government Objective and TRIM since 2016.

Budget initiative: Better Government: Digitising Government Records

1.27   In June 2018 the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was announced. The January 2018 business case for the initiative acknowledged:

> The ACTPS is only part of the way through the transition to digital recordkeeping.

1.28   The January 2018 business case identified:

> A complete transition to reliable, authoritative digital recordkeeping systems is an increasingly urgent requirement to support digital government and service delivery. Access to up to date, authoritative digital records is vital to support a flexible, agile workforce in an activity based working environment.
>
> …
>
> The ACTPS is only part of the way through the transition to digital recordkeeping. While digital records systems have been embraced by some parts of government, others struggle to identify and prioritise funding for digital transition when they are yet to realise its benefits. When parts of government remain outside the system the benefits of whole of government digital

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[5]   *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability* - Project Plan (undated).

recordkeeping cannot be fully realised, as opportunities to share and reuse information across government are reduced.

1.29   The project outlined four deliverables relating to the delivery of digital recordkeeping functionality across whole-of-government, including:

- **Digital recordkeeping functionality:** deployment of EDRMS capability to up to 8,500 staff across the ACT Public Service, and centralised recurrent funding for records management;

- **Digital records integration strategy:** development of a long-term strategy to deliver improved functionality for, and greater efficiencies in, ACTPS EDRMS;

- **Preparing for activity-based working:** delivery of advice and services to ACT Government business units on how to address their existing holdings of paper documents in preparation for the transition to activity-based working, particularly for the new ACT Government office accommodation; and

- **Realising digital efficiencies for clients:** digitisation of 161,000 Community Services Directorate case files and other records.

1.30   The 2015 Pilot Project and the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative are the most influential activities undertaken for the purpose of developing whole-of-government EDRMS technology and capability in the ACT Public Service in the last five years.

Directorate level initiatives

1.31   Three directorates were selected for consideration as part of the audit to assess planning and implementation activities for a whole-of-government EDRMS at an agency or divisional level, including how whole-of-government policies and initiatives influenced the EDRMS rollout in different settings.

1.32   The audit considered the activities of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Community Services Directorate and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate. These directorates were selected as each directorate was at a different stage of implementation, had a different EDRMS legacy to build on, and faced different challenges and issues that needed close consideration.

1.33   Considerations for inclusion in the audit were:

- **Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate**: the directorate supported multiple stand-alone TRIM versions and was principally focused on transitioning to the whole-of-government TRIM for its EDRMS. However, some business units were also using Objective EDRMS. The directorate's transition to EDRMS had commenced early relative to other directorates as part of the Pilot Project and had progressed significantly since the Pilot's completion.

- **Community Services Directorate**: the directorate was also a user of stand-alone TRIM versions and was provided with discrete funding as part of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative to digitise 161,000 casefiles and begin the transition to the whole-of-government TRIM.

- **Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate**: the directorate aimed to transition away from the stand-alone TRIM platform and consolidate its EDRMS needs within the Objective platform.

1.34   Chapter 3 of this report describes and assesses the implementation activities of these three directorates.

Audit objective and scope

Audit objective

1.35   The objective of the audit is to assess the effectiveness of ACT Government agencies' transition to the whole-of-government electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS).

Audit scope

1.36   The audit considered the activities of ACT Government agencies in transitioning to the two preferred whole-of-government EDRMS, including:

- the arrangements for the implementation and operation of the whole-of-government EDRMS (TRIM and Objective), including:
  – governance arrangements established for the operation of the systems; and
  – initiatives and support provided to agencies to assist with the transition to the systems.

- the arrangements in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Community Services Directorate and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate for the transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS including:
  – processes for identifying requirements for the transition to the systems;
  – governance arrangements for the directorates' implementation of the systems including transition schedules, risk and issues logs, oversight committees, monitoring and reporting; and
  – evaluation of the transition post implementation (where applicable).

1.37   The audit did not consider the merits of the ACT Public Service Strategic Board's decision to implement whole-of-government EDRMS or the selection and the procurement of the two systems that have been identified for implementation. The audit also did not consider the technical suitability of the two systems.

1.38   The audit timeframe is defined as the period from the commencement of the whole-of-government EDRMS Pilot Project in 2015 to June 2021.

Audit criteria, approach, and method

Audit criteria

1.39   To form a conclusion against the objective, the following criteria were used:

- **Criterion 1 -** Have effective arrangements been established for the implementation of the whole-of-government EDRMS?

- **Criterion 2** - Have directorates effectively planned for the transition to a whole-of-government EDRMS?

- **Criterion 3** - Have directorates effectively transitioned to a whole-of-government EDRMS?

1.40   Sub-criteria for each criterion are presented in Appendix A.

1.41   The audit criteria are built on good governance principles, as established in the ANAO better practice guides for *Public Sector Governance* (2014) and *Successful Implementation of Policy Initiatives* (2014) and the ACT Government's *Strengthening Performance and Accountability: A Framework for the ACT Government* (January 2019).

Audit approach and method

1.42   The audit approach and method consisted of:

- interviews with key staff within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's Corporate division, Territory Records Office, Shared Services, and within selected agencies;

- identifying and reviewing documentation for the implementation of the whole-of-government EDRMS;

- identifying and reviewing relevant documentation for the operation of the whole-of-government EDRMS including the policies and procedures, terms of reference for committees and working groups, meeting minutes and outputs from committees and working groups; and

- identifying and reviewing information and documentation for the implementation of an EDRMS, including transition schedules, risks and issues logs, terms of reference for oversight committees and progress reporting.

1.43   The audit was performed in accordance with *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*. The audit adopted the policy and practice statements outlined in the Audit Office's Performance Audit Methods and Practices (PAMPr) which is designed to comply with the requirements of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* and *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*.

1.44   In the conduct of this performance audit the ACT Audit Office complied with independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements.

EDRMS learnings

1.45   To inform an understanding of EDRMS a literature review was undertaken. A key source of better practice in developing an understanding has been the National Archives of Australia publication *Implementing an EDRMS (Key Considerations, Checklist and Lessons from Agencies)* (2011). Australian National Audit Office Report No 10 of 2015-16 *Records Management in Health* was also informative in that it addressed the issue of whether the Commonwealth Department of Health's project planning and governance facilitated the implementation of the TRIM EDRMS.

1.46   The literature review indicates the following challenges are commonplace in an EDRMS rollout in a government context:

- striking the right balance between user/stakeholder customisation and requiring uniformity (that enables system-wide advantages);

- striking the right balance between displacing, and building on, existing technologies and practices;

- ensuring access is not overly restricted (for the purposes of protecting confidentiality of information) as this risks hampering wider access for intra and inter-agency discovery, sharing and collaboration;

- improving the quality and standardisation of metadata;

- investing in behavioural as well as technological change in order to move beyond simply replacing one library system (e.g. email, network drives) with another (EDRMS);

- addressing the issue of access to infrequently used legacy documentation that is either not digitised, or is digitised but does not conform to EDRMS configuration requirements; and

- evolving funding models that support and incentivise EDRMS.

2 WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EDRMS

2.1 This chapter considers key steps in the ACT Government's pathway to whole-of-government EDRMS between 2011 and 2021. Particular attention is given to the 2015 *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project), the resulting development of whole-of-government governance structures for EDRMS and the 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, a four-year initiative that aims to facilitate EDRMS for all 8,500 office-based staff of the ACT Public Service.

Summary

Conclusions

Planning for a whole of government electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) commenced in 2011. The *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report outlined a high-level plan for improved digital records management practices and the use of shared platforms across the ACT Public Service. Although there was slow progress on the pathway in the first five years, the 2015 *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* established a clear way forward, and thereafter the pace of EDRMS uptake and consolidation has accelerated.

In 2018 the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget* initiative sought to 'set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS'. Three years into the initiative, three of its four deliverables have made good progress. Ninety-two percent of the additional users envisaged at the outset of the initiative are now using one of the two endorsed EDRMS (Objective and TRIM). Another key component of the initiative, the consolidation of users into whole-of-government EDRMS, has been successful with respect to Objective but less so for TRIM. A whole-of-government TRIM platform is now in widespread use although this has been accompanied by increased use of stand-alone TRIM platforms. A strategy for the next phase in the EDRMS pathway has been established, but the development of a comprehensive and sustainable funding model for digital records management remains unresolved.

The rollout and consolidation of whole-of-government EDRMS has been supported by improved governance and administrative arrangements including the establishment of whole-of-government oversight entities, the provision of advice and support and the promulgation of policies and procedures. While these governance and administrative arrangements have been established, it is difficult to assess the impact of the arrangements on whole-of-government EDRMS implementation due to a lack of documentation regarding planning and decision making. The establishment of an EDRMS performance framework, which would provide assurance on the implementation of whole-of-government EDRMS, could be expected to enhance transparency and accountability, and ultimately inform future investment and management effort.

Key findings

	Paragraph
An August 2011 *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report prepared for the Territory Records Office outlined a high-level plan for the implementation of digital recordkeeping across all areas of the ACT Government. The Pathway Report documented the 'current state' of digital recordkeeping in the ACT Government and the issues and barriers to the successful implementation of digital recordkeeping across agencies. At the same time the ACT Government's *Strategic Plan for ICT 2011-15* sought to promote whole-of-government thinking and enhance value to the community through the Government's use of ICT. The ICT Strategic Plan established an aim for the ACT Public Service to develop its information management practices within shared ICT platforms across whole-of-government, which was a departure from existing practice at the time which was for systems planning and implementation to be agency-led. The ICT Strategic Plan anticipated consideration of whole-of-government needs and benefits in any new systems.	2.11
On 5 August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *Digital Record Keeping Policy for the ACTPS*. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy, which is applicable to all ACT Government entities that are subject to the *Territory Records Act 2002,* is the first whole-of-government statement of policy on digital recordkeeping. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy outlined an intention for the ACT Public Service to adopt a 'digital first' approach to recordkeeping and for digital recordkeeping to be considered in all ICT systems. It does not identify or mandate the use of specific system(s).	2.19
In August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board endorsed a business case to establish the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project). The Pilot Project sought to 'set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS'. The Pilot Project had a clearly identified rationale and deliverables and provided a sound basis for testing the practicality of the policy intent of the *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS*. The governance arrangements for the delivery of the Pilot Project were effective. Roles and responsibilities were established, and project oversight was achieved by an effective Project Board. A timely project outcome was achieved. The resulting final report detailed the outcomes of the project against its objectives, lessons that were learnt and a set of recommendations. The recommendations provided a sound basis to progress a whole-of-government approach to digital recordkeeping.	2.38
In May 2016 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *ACT Government Policy on the Selection and Implementation of EDRMS Capabilities.* The policy confirmed TRIM and Objective as the preferred whole-of-government EDRMS. The policy requires decision-makers to take the two preferred platforms into account when making EDRMS decisions and the cost implications of any proposed alternative to the systems*.* The policy, drafted during the Pilot Project, provided the first statement of policy regarding which EDRMS platform(s) would be the focus for consolidating use in the future. The 2016 policy overcame a significant barrier to making progress on	2.47

the whole-of-government EDRMS pathway first proposed in 2011, i.e. articulating a formal position on pre-existing and future EDRMS platforms.

Key whole-of-government EDRMS governance developments were planned and implemented in the period 2016 to 2018. These include the *Whole of Government EDRMS System Administration and Governance Policy*, which was endorsed by the Project Board in October 2016 as an overarching policy for the administration of the whole-of-government EDRMS. The policy articulated roles and responsibilities in relation to the support for, and administration and governance of, the whole-of-government EDRMS including more centralised support from Shared Services. The policy also describes various governance arrangements for the technical operation of the two endorsed whole-of-government EDRMS, such as access controls, account creation and deletion processes; information security requirements; and records management principles including classification and disposal schedules. These governance developments provided further momentum to the whole-of-government EDRMS approach.

| 2.60 |

Within two years of the completion of the Pilot Project, the number of whole-of-government TRIM users more than doubled from 450 to 1,012. This was accompanied by greater awareness of whole-of-government aims, policies and practices relating to EDRMS. By 2018 progress along the pathway to whole-of-government EDRMS consolidation was accelerating.

| 2.65 |

A specific outcome of the 2015 Pilot Project was the establishment of the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group for the provision of strategic and technical oversight and advice in achieving whole-of-government EDRMS consolidation. Both the Committee (with its strategic purpose) and the Working Group (with its technical advisory purpose) were constituted as intended and provided the potential for improved oversight and coordination. However, both were slow to become established, met less frequently than originally intended, and did not explore all aspects within their scope. In the first two years of their operation their full potential to drive whole-of-government EDRMS was not realised.

| 2.79 |

The commitment to transitioning ACT Public Service staff in the major administrative areas into an Activity Based Work environment, and the consolidation of up to 3,200 employees into accommodation at Dickson and Civic, became significant drivers of change for whole-of-government EDRMS since 2016. These initiatives have increased the priority of digital recordkeeping, and of designing and implementing whole-of-government EDRMS.

| 2.85 |

In June 2018 the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was announced. The initiative seeks to 'complete the rollout of digital record-keeping systems across agencies to improve data accessibility and retrieval, and to generate efficiencies in records management'. A January 2018 business case for the initiative identified a total cost of $26.2 million, of which $22.1 million was expected to be offset 'by savings within Directorates'. With a net cost of $4.1 million, the initiative's four deliverables provide a clear focus and purpose that enhances understanding and accountability. The initiative represents a major whole-of-

| 2.102 |

government endeavour involving technical, procedural, and cultural change over a four-year period that is likely to affect, at least in some way, the majority of office-based staff working in the ACT Public Service.

The *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was envisaged to be implemented as a centrally administered project by Shared Services, with oversight by the Digital Records Governance Committee. In November 2018 the terms of reference of the Committee were revised to give it an explicit role for the oversight of the project, including through review and approval of project documentation. Following the announcement of the initiative in June 2018, 12 months elapsed before a draft Project Plan was produced; there was no further supporting documentation that identified when and how the migration of users would occur across divisions, business units, functions or teams. Committee minutes do not show that it was aware of, or interested in, supporting project plans for the implementation of the initiative or providing authorisation or approval of project management and project delivery activities. There was an absence of an appropriate level of accountability and transparency in the management and delivery of the project.

2.118

The Digital Records Governance Committee has been active on a quarterly basis with the exception of the first eight months of 2020 when there were no meetings of the committee. A review of the actions and achievements of the Committee against its terms of reference shows that most terms of reference were addressed at least to some extent (i.e. seven of nine of the selected terms of reference assessed). For two areas of business, relating to developing and approving a 'System Security Plan' and 'appropriate EDRMS disaster recovery arrangements', there was no evidence of discussion at the committee meetings. The level of assurance the committee seeks and receives over the rate of whole-of-government EDRMS system expansion, and the level of system and user effectiveness is low, due in in part because no system-wide progress monitoring framework has been established. There is a significant risk that the committee is not in a position to know the pace of transition, nor whether the initiative's key objectives are likely to be accomplished (e.g. that all office-based staff would be EDRMS enabled and active users) by June 2022.

2.126

The first deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for the 'capacity for 5,200 additional staff to use the ACTPS whole-of-government digital recordkeeping system'. Good progress has been made on this deliverable in its first three years. As at 30 June 2021 there were 6,484 users of the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms, which compares to a milestone (interim) target of 7,027 (based on an adjusted initial baseline of 2,702). Notwithstanding the take-up of whole-of-government EDRMS, by June 2021 there were also more users of stand-alone TRIM versions. By June 2021 there were 2,483 users of stand-alone TRIM versions, which compares to a figure of 1,922 at the outset of the initiative. The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have noticeably decreased the number of users of stand-alone TRIM versions. The Education Directorate has performed particularly well and decommissioned its stand-alone TRIM version in June 2021.

2.147

The number of active EDRMS users is a useful indicator of the implementation of whole-of-government EDRMS but does not provide information or evidence of the extent to which whole-of-government EDRMS platforms duplicate or displace prior recordkeeping activity. During this audit records managers commented on the marked reduction in the creation of hardcopy files, and a rapid transition to digital approval and handling procedures, primarily due to the sudden and unprecedented rollout of remote working across the ACT Public Service. This was subsequently accompanied by major office moves in Civic and Dickson involving most directorates. There is no established EDRMS performance framework that informs the monitoring of progress beyond the number of users migrating to EDRMS platforms. Such a framework should address the wider realisation of benefits as referenced in the 2018 business case.

2.152

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding arrangement that supports the rollout of the whole-of-government EDRMS is a major component of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. While some progress has been made in evolving funding arrangements for developing digital records management capabilities and particularly for the uptake of whole-of-government EDRMS platforms a comprehensive funding model on which to base centralised funding appropriation has not been achieved. Shared Services advised 'a Central Recurrent Funding model is yet to be developed for the Digital Records Support area of records services and still may be some years away. The current environment is very fluid and will need to wait until there is a stability in core user numbers once a level of maturity has been reached in each of the directorates'.

2.156

The second deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the preparation of a strategy to guide future actions to improve the functionality of the two endorsed EDRMS, has been achieved with the finalisation of the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* by the Territory Records Office in April 2020. The strategy details the current state, findings, challenges and frustrations about the operation of the whole-of-government EDRMS and outlines a high-level 'vision' or 'future state' for whole-of-government information management, expressed in eight principles. The strategy does not suggest a specific technology solution but it states that any future technology should be considered against the principles. The strategy makes six recommendations. In September 2020 the Territory Records Office advised the Digital Records Governance Committee that it intends to develop 'a workplan over the next two to five years to look at improving people and technical capability as well as engendering cultural change'.

2.166

The third deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for assistance to be provided to directorates moving to the Dickson and City office blocks in 2020 in order to manage their existing paper records prior to moving. Activities to assist directorates commenced in April 2019 and were overseen by the Territory Records Office. A Territory Records Office Records Transition Team, established in February 2019, was in high demand in 2019 in supporting agency and directorate staff preparing to move offices.

2.175

The fourth deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative is the digitisation of 161,000 case files held by the Community Services Directorate. Progress towards the digitisation of client files has been made. By February 2020, 16,000 files had been digitised and the project was on track to complete 60,000 files within the available resources and timeframe. However, the total figure of 60,000 files falls well short of the original aim of this deliverable to digitise 161,000 files as outlined in the *Digitising Government Records* budget initiative. With respect to the project's secondary aim of providing a model for approaching and implementing the digitisation of large volumes of diverse legacy paperwork, it is apparent that the project to date has been effective in providing many learning opportunities, but these have not been consolidated into a model.

2.181

Whole-of-government plans for digital recordkeeping

2.2   The February 2011 *Governing the City State, One ACT Government - One ACT Public Service, ACTPS Final Report* by Allan Hawke set out the benefits of a single ACTPS agency under a single Chief Executive and Head of the ACTPS, which would *inter alia*;

> … give impetus to alignment of information systems, and other whole of government projects relating to records and document management …

Digital Recordkeeping Pathway (2011)

2.3   In August 2011 the *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report (the Pathway Report) was prepared for the Territory Records Office. The report outlined a high-level plan (a 'pathway') for the implementation of digital recordkeeping across all areas of the ACT Public Service.

2.4   The Pathway Report consolidated the findings and recommendations of three reviews of whole-of-government activities that considered elements of digital recordkeeping:

- the ACT Audit Office's *Records Management in ACT Government Agencies* performance audit report (June 2008);

- *Review of the Operation of the Territory Records Act 2002* by Paul Macpherson (February 2010)*;* and

- *Governing the City State, One ACT Government - One ACT Public Service, ACTPS Final Report* by Allan Hawke (February 2011).

2.5   The Pathway Report documented the 'current state' of digital recordkeeping in the ACT Government, and the issues and barriers to the successful implementation of digital recordkeeping across agencies. The report noted that issues and barriers included:

- a lack of whole-of-government ICT strategic planning, which limited agencies from adopting a whole-of-government solution for digital recordkeeping;

- a low level of expertise in digital recordkeeping in agencies;

- a focus on paper-based records management by agencies; and

- the lack of a model for whole-of-government archiving of digital records.

2.6   The Pathway Report also documented the desired 'future state' of digital recordkeeping across the ACT Government, which was expressed in 'two core principles':

1. Authentic and reliable digital records of government business need to exist; and

2. Government information (contained in digital records) needs to be found and used for as long as required.

2.7   The Pathway Report proposed a 'pathway', including a number of objectives and activities, to achieve these two principles.

ACT Government's *Strategic Plan for ICT 2011-15*

2.8   The ACT Government's *Strategic Plan for ICT 2011-15* sought to promote whole-of-government thinking and enhance value to the community through the Government's use of ICT. The purpose of the plan was to set:

> … the ACT Government's direction to focus our ICT investment on five key objectives which aim to make the relationship between the Community and its Government easier and more collaborative, while managing our financial and energy resources even more closely.

2.9   The *Strategic Plan for ICT 2011-15* established a set of governing principles for ACT Government ICT systems, including that ICT systems be 'shared wherever possible across Government' and 'acquired on the basis of value for money and total cost of ownership and be accessible to the ACT Government as a whole'.

2.10   The strategy emphasised the importance of shared systems and shared solutions across Government, which was a departure from predominantly agency led ICT systems planning and implementation, particularly in relation to digital records management systems.

2.11   An August 2011 *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report prepared for the Territory Records Office outlined a high-level plan for the implementation of digital recordkeeping across all areas of the ACT Government. The Pathway Report documented the 'current state' of digital recordkeeping in the ACT Government and the issues and barriers to the successful implementation of digital recordkeeping across agencies. At the same time the ACT Government's *Strategic Plan for ICT 2011-15* sought to promote whole-of-government thinking and enhance value to the community through the Government's use of ICT. The ICT Strategic Plan established an aim for the ACT Public Service to develop its information management practices within shared ICT platforms across whole-of-government, which was a departure from existing practice at the time which was for systems planning and implementation to be agency-led. The ICT Strategic Plan anticipated consideration of whole-of-government needs and benefits in any new systems.

Progressing the Digital Recordkeeping Pathway

2.12   In February 2015 the Territory Records Office was seeking to build and support whole-of-government digital recordkeeping approaches through the finalisation of:

> … the business case for a digital recordkeeping deployment project for the Government's consideration in the 2015-16 budget process. This would be a staged rollout of an EDRMS across selected agencies, using existing systems such as TRIM or Objective.

2.13   On 5 August 2015, the ACTPS Strategic Board considered and approved two related agenda items on the topic of digital recordkeeping:

- a *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS* (the Digital Recordkeeping Policy); and

- a pilot project, the *One ACTPS Digital Record Keeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project).

2.14   The Digital Recordkeeping Policy and the Pilot Project provided the basis for efforts aimed at improving whole-of-government digital recordkeeping understanding and capabilities between 2015 and 2018.

Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS

2.15   The *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS* (Digital Recordkeeping Policy) references the 2011 *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report. The purpose of the Digital Recordkeeping Policy is identified as the 'ACTPS's commitment to supporting open and accountable government within a 'One ACTPS' framework, by developing and maintaining systems that support digital recordkeeping'. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy emphasises the importance of secure, accessible, and shared digital recordkeeping systems in a 'one ACTPS model':

> Additionally, in the one ACTPS model, a primary requirement is the accessibility and exchange of information across Directorates.

> To support open government initiatives in the digital age, ACT government agencies must take steps to move their recordkeeping into the digital environment through the adoption of systems that support the sharing of information across government and with the broader community, while protecting the essential evidence of ACT Government actions in the short and long term.

2.16   The Digital Recordkeeping Policy, which is stated as applying to all ACT Government entities subject to the *Territory Records Act 2002*, outlined three specific policy statements:

> The ACTPS adopts a 'digital first' approach to recordkeeping

> Recordkeeping in the ACTPS is compliant with relevant standards, regardless of format

> Digital recordkeeping is considered in all ICT systems

2.17 The Digital Recordkeeping Policy emphasises that the majority of information that is generated or received by the ACT Government is already in a digital format and should remain so. The policy also notes that:

> Not all business systems need to be able to keep records. Systems that do not comply with recordkeeping standards must have the capability of exporting records and their metadata to other systems that can appropriately manage them. Printing and filing records in paper files is no longer an acceptable solution to inadequate systems design.

2.18 The Digital Recordkeeping Policy does not specify any particular recordkeeping system but simply refers to systems needing to be compliant with recordkeeping standards and if not, that records should be exported:

> … to one of the dedicated electronic document and records management systems currently in use in the ACTPS.

2.19 On 5 August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *Digital Record Keeping Policy for the ACTPS*. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy, which is applicable to all ACT Government entities that are subject to the *Territory Records Act 2002,* is the first whole-of-government statement of policy on digital recordkeeping. The Digital Recordkeeping Policy outlined an intention for the ACT Public Service to adopt a 'digital first' approach to recordkeeping and for digital recordkeeping to be considered in all ICT systems. It does not identify or mandate the use of specific system(s).

One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project

2.20 On 5 August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board endorsed a business case prepared by the Territory Records Office to establish the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project).

2.21 The Pilot Project was not a specific budget initiative but was provided with $375,000 from another project examining activity-based work practices. Resourcing the Pilot Project was estimated to require two full-time equivalent staff and $115,000, principally for licensing and IT support.

Pilot Project aims and objectives

2.22 A draft project plan was prepared to guide the activities of the Pilot Project. The draft project plan noted that, similar to issues raised in the 2011 *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway* report, there was considerable variability in digital recordkeeping practices across ACT Government directorates:

> Digital recordkeeping practices across the ACTPS vary considerably in scope and quality, and are often far from best-practice. There are a number of digital recordkeeping initiatives planned or in progress, with varying uniformity and based solely on immediate business needs. While taken individually each of these initiatives may have merit, the total benefit to the ACTPS is less than the sum of its parts, and may constitute a further fracturing of recordkeeping practices.

2.23   The draft project plan identified that the Pilot Project would aim to establish arrangements to address this variability:

> This project will set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS.

2.24   The draft project plan referred to two EDRMS already in use in ACT Government agencies (TRIM and Objective). The project plan stated that the project would focus on the deployment of TRIM only as a whole-of-government EDRMS, since Objective was described as:

> ... well managed and is therefore out of scope except with respect to the governance and configuration framework.

2.25   To test the feasibility of the arrangements the Pilot Project was expected to deploy TRIM to approximately 75 users across eight ACT Government directorate business areas.

2.26   The draft project plan identified eight objectives of the Pilot Project, including:

- establishing a framework for the cohesive and effective governance of electronic document records management systems (EDRMS) across the ACTPS;

- creating a standard EDRMS configuration, focused on TRIM and informed by Objective EDRMS, to ensure quality and promote interoperability across otherwise stand-alone EDRMS versions; and

- increasing the number of staff across the ACTPS with skills in implementing, supporting, and using EDRMS.

Project activities and timeframes

2.27   The Pilot Project comprised three stages to be delivered between October 2015 and October 2016; analysis, implementation and reporting. The project plan detailed timings and listed the activities to be undertaken for each stage.

Project implementation and oversight roles and responsibilities

2.28   The following roles were specified in the draft project plan:

- a Project Board;

- a project manager;

- a project technical lead;

- a project assurance function; and

- a project technical reference group.

2.29   The roles, as provided for in the project plan, provide a basis for ensuring the project was well supported, although limited detail was provided on the precise responsibilities of all

the specified roles. Minutes from the Project Board meetings indicate that the roles specified in the project plan were established and were active for the duration of the project.

Project Board progress monitoring

2.30   The project plan required the Project Board to monitor the progress of the Pilot Project and that agendas and minutes be created for each meeting.

2.31   The Project Board met six times during the Pilot Project, with the first meeting held in December 2015. Minutes from the six meetings indicate that:

- a wide range of topics were considered, including the conduct of the project and strategic issues such as the pilot project's intersections with other projects, funding arrangements and governance document preparation;

- membership was mostly consistent throughout the project;

- risks were identified and mitigation strategies prepared;

- emerging technological issues were addressed; and

- outputs of the project were reported and were endorsed by the Project Board.

2.32   Meeting minutes indicate the Project Board functioned in accordance with the intentions identified in the project plan. The Project Board received information in relation to the carriage of the project and its challenges and achievements and provided feedback and guidance.

Pilot Project completion

2.33   The Pilot Project concluded in October 2016. A final report was prepared and reviewed by the Project Board and subsequently endorsed by the ACTPS Strategic Board. The report detailed the outcomes of the project and lessons learnt and documented issues that required further consideration. In this respect the Pilot Project (and the Project Board) fulfilled its primary purpose in a timely and efficient manner.

2.34   The report reiterated findings from previous reports on the topic of digital recordkeeping, including that:

- the transition to digital records management had been historically slow in the ACT Government and a clear pathway was needed for an effective transition;

- the benefits of digital recordkeeping were well known and provide a solution to managing information in a way that meets various legal and regulatory requirements, including consistency across ACT Government directorates; and

- digital recordkeeping is a key enabler of activity-based working, which the ACT Government intended to transition to, by reducing reliance on paper files, thus creating a more mobile public service.

2.35   For the first time, the goal of enabling an activity-based work environment was identified as a factor in implementing EDRMS plans.

2.36   The report emphasised the importance of establishing:

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the operation of whole-of-government EDRMS; and

- a funding model to support a centrally supported model for whole-of-government EDRMS.

2.37   The final report is action oriented with respect to these points. It makes 15 recommendations with the aim of establishing and planning for the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to digital records management. The recommendations sought a consolidation of whole-of-government effort through:

- the adoption of a whole-of-government EDRMS model, including development of a policy position (Recommendations 1, 2 and 3);

- centralised support, to be provided for the whole-of-government EDRM systems by one team within Shared Services, with funding arrangements and cost models to be reviewed to reflect a whole-of-government approach (Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 13); and

- a governance model to be established for the whole-of-government system that includes defined roles and responsibilities and the establishment of working groups and committees for the oversight and management of the whole-of-government EDRMS (Recommendations 7, 11, 12, 14, and 15).

2.38   In August 2015 the ACTPS Strategic Board endorsed a business case to establish the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* (the Pilot Project). The Pilot Project sought to 'set up a governance framework and a best practice method to provide consistency and quality to the management of digital recordkeeping systems, and cohesion and efficiency to digital recordkeeping initiatives across the ACTPS'. The Pilot Project had a clearly identified rationale and deliverables and provided a sound basis for testing the practicality of the policy intent of the *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS*. The governance arrangements for the delivery of the Pilot Project were effective. Roles and responsibilities were established, and project oversight was achieved by an effective Project Board. A timely project outcome was achieved. The resulting final report detailed the outcomes of the project against its objectives, lessons that were learnt and a set of recommendations. The recommendations provided a sound basis to progress a whole-of-government approach to digital recordkeeping.

ACT Government Digital Strategy 2016-2019

2.39   The conclusion of the Pilot Project coincided with the publication of *the ACT Government Digital Strategy 2016-2019*. The purpose of the strategy was:

> … to clearly express the ACT Government's intentions and create the impetus and architecture for fully digitised services and technology platform renovation.

2.40   In alignment with the Pilot Project final report, the strategy referenced a 'whole-of-government document and records management systems' project. Appendix 1 of the strategy described a range of 'key ACT Government change projects and initiatives' that are 'in-flight or under consideration', including an EDRMS project that will:

> … result in a cohesive whole-of-government digital recordkeeping platform, increased recordkeeping efficiency and compliance, and support greater value creation from government information.

2.41   The strategy does not provide any further detail on the proposed project such as timings or deliverables.

Whole-of-government EDRMS activities (2016 to 2018)

2.42   The following section considers whole-of-government EDRMS activities in the period 2016 to 2018, including:

- the establishment and development of a whole-of-government EDRMS policy;

- support and centralised funding for EDRMS; and

- whole-of-government EDRMS governance arrangements.

Establishment of whole-of-government EDRMS policy

2.43   The 2015 *Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS* was not specific or directive as to what system(s) should be adopted as the whole-of-government platform. By 2016, there were two established EDRMS platforms already in use (TRIM and Objective). The Pilot Project confirmed that both had the potential to become preferred whole-of-government EDRMS. In 2016 patterns of uptake of the two EDRMS platforms reflected agencies' specific needs and decision making over the preceding seven years in the case of TRIM, and twelve years in the case of Objective. This resulted in concentrations of either TRIM or Objective users in certain teams and directorates. These concentrations reflect substantial prior investment in working practices, systems and cultural change.

2.44   A key outcome of the Pilot Project was the early development of a statement of policy proposing an ACTPS-wide preference for specific EDRMS. In May 2016 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *ACT Government Policy on the Selection and Implementation of EDRMS Capabilities.* This policy, for the first time in the ACT Public Service, confirmed two specific EDRMS:

> For the purpose of providing a digital record keeping capability, the ACT Government has two official applications, Objective and [TRIM]. They are considered equally fit for purpose as EDRMS.

> This policy acknowledges that new EDRMS capabilities will become available over time. New capabilities will be considered in the context of the total cost of ownership to the ACT Government, not just the individual business unit or the initial capital costs associated with implementation.

2.45   The policy requires directorates' decision-making to take into account the two preferred EDRMS platforms and whole-of-government cost implications of any proposed alternative to the two systems.

2.46   Subsequent policies reaffirmed this policy position. For example, the *Whole of Government EDRMS Change Management Policy and Procedures* (August 2016) refers to the:

> … two officially endorsed Whole of Government (WhoG) Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS).

2.47   In May 2016 the ACTPS Strategic Board approved the *ACT Government Policy on the Selection and Implementation of EDRMS Capabilities.* The policy confirmed TRIM and Objective as the preferred whole-of-government EDRMS. The policy requires decision-makers to take the two preferred platforms into account when making EDRMS decisions and the cost implications of any proposed alternative to the systems. The policy, drafted during the Pilot Project, provided the first statement of policy regarding which EDRMS platform(s) would be the focus for consolidating use in the future. The 2016 policy overcame a significant barrier to making progress on the whole-of-government EDRMS pathway first proposed in 2011, i.e. articulating a formal position on pre-existing and future EDRMS platforms.

Centralised support and funding

Support

2.48   Proposed centralised support arrangements, including roles and responsibilities for various groups, were outlined in the *Whole of Government EDRMS System Administration and Governance Policy*, which was endorsed by the Pilot Project Board in October 2016.

2.49   Recommendation 5 of the Final Report for the Pilot Project sought to transition various teams in Shared Services that provided digital records services, into the one Digital Records Team. The April 2017 minutes of the Digital Records Capability Working Group note that the team had been established and that the team provides the:

> … day to day and customer support functions in addition to strategy, design and implementation aspects of the [whole-of-government EDRMS].

Funding

2.50   The Final Report for the Pilot Project noted that funding arrangements can have a significant impact on the uptake of the whole-of-government EDRMS. Two funding concepts were described in the October 2016 Final Report.

Per user fee-for-service model

2.51   Recommendation 9 of the Final Report for the Pilot Project proposed a $780 per annum fee per user to meet the costs of centrally provided EDRMS support. The fee was to be implemented for the 2016-17 financial year and the amount was to be reviewed for the 2017-18 year. The 'per user' fee was calculated using a model containing fixed and variable cost components. The fee was to be recovered via quarterly billing in arrears.

Appropriation model

2.52   The final Project Board minutes of 25 October 2016 refer to the ACTPS Strategic Board providing 'in-principle' support for a revised 'EDRMS funding model' that would appropriate funding direct to Shared Services ICT:

> … the allocation of [Government Payment for Outputs] funding to support a centralised administration area has been approved in concept by the Strategic Board, pending the submission of a full business case and review by the two committee/groups for coverage.

2.53   This funding approach is for a wider funding model that would also include other records management-related activities, e.g., handling, storage, archiving, and system support and design. This proposal was identified as providing a more efficient way of recovering the cost of Shared Services' provision of services to directorates, than a 'per user' based fee for service model.

Progressing funding models

2.54   Referring to a 'per user' based fee for service model, the December 2017 minutes of the Digital Records Capability Working Group state:

> … the cost model was projected to be $780. The feedback from directorates was that this was too expensive. Record Services was required to recover its costs, and only use resources it could charge for. The model is now $400 per head across every dataset, effective 1 January 2018. This figure has gone to directorate CFOs, and most seem happy about it.

2.55   A review of Digital Records Capability Working Group meeting minutes for the period 2016 to 2018 shows that the details of an appropriation-based funding model were not finalised or agreed to. The topic remained a 'live' issue in 2018. The 24 September 2018 minutes state:

> Centralised recurrent funding for records management, rather than the current fee for service arrangement, will allow for more strategic, whole of government management of the ACT's digital and paper records. Details for this model are currently being worked out and will come into effect in the 2019-20 financial year.

Whole-of-government EDRMS governance arrangements

2.56   The *Whole of Government EDRMS System Administration and Governance Policy* was endorsed by the Project Board in October 2016 as an overarching policy for the administration of the whole-of-government EDRMS. The purpose of the policy is to articulate roles and responsibilities in relation to the support for, and administration and governance of, the whole-of-government EDRMS, including:

- a Digital Records Governance Committee;[6]

- a Digital Records Capability Working Group;

- a Digital Records Team within the Partnership Services Branch of Shared Services;

- a Manager position within a Records Services team;

- Shared Services ICT (Technical Services Delivery and ICT Contracts and Licensing);

- the Territory Records Office; and

- Directorate staff, including Principal Officers, Record Managers, Ministerial Unit Managers, supervisors and users.

2.57   With the exception of the Digital Records Capability Working Group, which was established as a result of the policy, the other entities had already been established but in other forms. For example, the Digital Records Governance Committee was formerly the Project Board of the Pilot Project. The Committee's responsibilities were expanded beyond the Pilot Project and its conclusion to focus on whole-of-government arrangements. Similarly, the Digital Records Team within Shared Services was previously two separate teams that were brought together under one manager.

2.58   The *Whole of Government EDRMS System Administration and Governance Policy* also describes various governance arrangements for the technical operation of the two endorsed whole-of-government EDRMS, such as access controls, account creation and deletion processes; information security requirements; and records management principles including classification and disposal schedules.

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[6]   Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate documentation uses the terms 'governance committee' and 'governing committee'. The committee's terms of reference refer to 'the Digital Records Governance Committee' (December 2017, November 2018).

2.59   Work undertaken during the Pilot Project also produced a number of other proposed policies, committee arrangements and specifications. These included:

- a standard configuration for TRIM;

- a roles and responsibilities matrix for the whole-of-government EDRMS;

- terms of reference for the Digital Records Governance Committee and its subordinate Digital Records Capability Working Group; and

- a *Whole of Government EDRMS Change Management Policy.*

2.60   Key whole-of-government EDRMS governance developments were planned and implemented in the period 2016 to 2018. These include the *Whole of Government EDRMS System Administration and Governance Policy*, which was endorsed by the Project Board in October 2016 as an overarching policy for the administration of the whole-of-government EDRMS. The policy articulated roles and responsibilities in relation to the support for, and administration and governance of, the whole-of-government EDRMS including more centralised support from Shared Services. The policy also describes various governance arrangements for the technical operation of the two endorsed whole-of-government EDRMS, such as access controls, account creation and deletion processes; information security requirements; and records management principles including classification and disposal schedules. These governance developments provided further momentum to the whole-of-government EDRMS approach.

Whole-of-government EDRMS achievements (2016 to 2018)

2.61   An EDRMS-related learning that was identified following the establishment of Access Canberra in December 2014, was that the bringing together of multiple business units each with a prior background in using an EDRMS platform does not necessarily provide a sound basis for system consolidation. This is because the conventions and practices of separate business units' use of EDRMS had developed differently.

2.62   The first whole-of-government designed and deployed EDRMS was based on the TRIM platform and was established during the latter stages of the Pilot Project. The effectiveness of the whole-of-government EDRMS can be seen as an outcome of the Pilot Project and its resulting recommendations to:

- influence subsequent system design and support;

- increase the uptake and utilisation of either of the two preferred EDRMS platforms (i.e. Objective and TRIM); and

- prevent the proliferation of alternative platforms where Objective and TRIM were otherwise viable options.

2.63   A review of the records of the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group provides evidence of the progress made at the time.

System consolidation achievements

2.64   Various system consolidation achievements were reported to the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group including:

- an increase in the number of whole-of-government TRIM users, from an estimated 450 in October 2016 to 892 in September 2017 and 1,012 by September 2018;

- an increase in the use of whole-of-government TRIM in accordance with agreed whole-of-government policies and procedures, providing potential for improved interoperability between teams and functions;

- an increase in awareness across directorates of the need to justify records management systems decision making in the context of whole-of-government expectations; and

- the absence of requests for the committee to consider alternative EDRMS platforms.

2.65   Within two years of the completion of the Pilot Project, the number of whole-of-government TRIM users more than doubled from 450 to 1,012. This was accompanied by greater awareness of whole-of-government aims, policies and practices relating to EDRMS. By 2018 progress along the pathway to whole-of-government EDRMS consolidation was accelerating.

Whole-of-government EDRMS coordination and oversight achievements

Digital Records Governance Committee

Purpose

2.66   The terms of reference for the Digital Records Governance Committee, dated 6 December 2017, identify it as the 'appointed business owner of the ACT Government's EDRMS capabilities'. This is distinct from being a business owner of an ICT system; 'EDRMS capabilities' signals the importance of human as well as technological resources. The terms of reference identify the committee as providing:

> … strategic direction for the ongoing management of, and investment in, the ACT Government's digital recordkeeping capabilities. The DRGC is responsible for ensuring digital recordkeeping capabilities … support the transformation of business processes in line with the strategic vision of the ACT Government's Digital Strategy.

2.67   At a more detailed level this is stated as the responsibility to 'build, maintain and promote Government EDRMS capabilities' including:

- ensuring EDRMS investments represent 'best value at the whole-of-government level';

- establishing a working group which 'oversees operation and administration';

- reviewing all EDRMS proposals and high-level risk change requests;

- endorsing the System Security Plan; and

- referring matters to other forums.

Membership

2.68   The terms of reference specify the membership of the Digital Records Governance Committee as comprising a representative of:

- the senior executive of the lead directorate for whole-of-government EDRMS, i.e., the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate;

- Shared Services ICT and Records Services;

- a directorate using TRIM; and

- a directorate using Objective.

Committee activities

2.69   The terms of reference specify that the Digital Records Governance Committee is to 'meet at least twice per year or more frequently if required'. The Digital Records Governance Committee's inaugural meeting was held on 24 October 2017. Only one other meeting was held in the period 2016 to 2018, on 1 November 2017. The committee did not convene again until March 2019.

2.70   A major item for discussion of the Digital Records Governance Committee in the 2016 to 2018 period was the concept brief for a 2018-19 EDRMS strategic planning proposal. There was discussion of both whole-of-government TRIM and Objective EDRMS.

2.71   At its first meeting following the conclusion of the Pilot Project, the Digital Records Governance Committee did not focus on or discuss the Pilot Project and its recommendations or outcomes. An action item arising from the 24 October 2017 meeting was for the 'secretariat to re-table the final report of the digital records pilot project for next committee meeting'. However, there was no indication that the Final Report or its recommendations were discussed at the next meeting on 22 March 2019. This suggests that the Pilot Project and its recommendations or outcomes did not receive ongoing or sustained follow-up and consideration.

Digital Records Capability Working Group

Purpose

2.72   According to the *Whole of Government Electronic and Records Management System Administration and Governance Policy* the purpose of the Digital Records Capability Working Group is to support the Digital Records Governance Committee. The Policy notes that the Working Group is responsible for:

- Providing advice, and where appropriate endorsing, governance arrangements and recordkeeping standards that are to be applied to the WhoG EDRMS applications (i.e. configuration standards).
- Overseeing the operation of the WhoG EDRMS Change Management Policy.

2.73   According to its terms of reference the working group is responsible for '… overseeing the operation of the WhoG EDRMS'.

Membership

2.74   The terms of reference state that the Digital Records Capability Working Group will consist of:

- the Manager, Records Services;
- Shared Services ICT advisors and managers;
- the Director, Territory Records; and
- directorate representatives.

2.75   The terms of reference allow for each directorate to nominate one member and notes that each representative should possess the following knowledge:

- 'an understanding of digital recordkeeping practices, including the Principles and Guidelines issued by the Territory Records Office';
- 'an understanding of system administration principles for EDRMS'; and
- 'an ability to assess business requirements and value for money considerations to determine the best fit solution for the ACT Government as a whole'.

Working Group activities

2.76   The Digital Records Capability Working Group was required to meet on a quarterly basis. This requirement was not met; it first met in April 2017 and met on a further two occasions in the period 2016 to 2018.

2.77   Apart from the infrequency of meetings, minutes of the Group's meetings indicate that, while there was significant deliberation about various issues, there was no follow up regarding the outcomes of these discussions. The 'Other Business' agenda item accounted

for a considerable amount of each meeting's discussion. While issues were raised about operational matters, the detail of how these issues were to be addressed was not reported.

2.78   The minutes of the three meetings reviewed do not demonstrate how the Digital Records Capability Working Group was addressing the majority of its responsibilities as defined by its terms of reference.

2.79   A specific outcome of the 2015 Pilot Project was the establishment of the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group for the provision of strategic and technical oversight and advice in achieving whole-of-government EDRMS consolidation. Both the Committee (with its strategic purpose) and the Working Group (with its technical advisory purpose) were constituted as intended and provided the potential for improved oversight and coordination. However, both were slow to become established, met less frequently than originally intended, and did not explore all aspects within their scope. In the first two years of their operation their full potential to drive whole-of-government EDRMS was not realised.

Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget initiative (2018)

Activity Based Work

2.80   Following the conclusion of the Pilot Project in October 2016, a year elapsed before the Digital Records Governance Committee convened. In October 2017 it was apparent that preparations for an Activity Based Work environment within the ACT Public Service, already underway and a driver of the 'paper lite' office working environment for administrative functions, was becoming more pressing ahead of the consolidation of up to 3,200 ACT Public Service employees into accommodation at Dickson and Civic.[7]

2.81   The *Key Design Principles for ACTPS Activity Based Work Environments* policy document, endorsed by the ACTPS Strategic Board in October 2017, identified principles 'designed to provide guidance to directorates with respect to implementing [Activity Based Work] in new, existing or temporary office accommodation'. One of the 21 principles outlined in the policy document is that:

> EDRMS will be made available to all staff transitioning to [Activity Based Work], to eliminate paper reliance and paper-based recordkeeping to as great an extent as possible.

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[7]   This excludes large numbers of frontline staff in health and education. By 2018 the number of staff in administrative functions and likely to be subject to ABW policy was 8,500.

2.82   These principles were reinforced in the *Designated Activity Based Work Environment Policy.* The policy, dated 24 May 2019, provides further detail and expectations for moving to an Activity Based Work environment. Two of the 18 principles identified in the policy relate to making EDRMS available to staff:

> 16. Every individual will be issued with the equipment, technology and storage necessary for them to operate effectively in an ABW environment, including:
>
> …
>
>> - Access to an Electronic Document Record Management System (EDRMS).
>
> …
>
> 17. Team storage requirements will be designed to complement the implementation of a WHoG EDRMS which reduces but does not eliminate the ACT Government's reliance on paper. Teams transitioning into ABW should conduct a thorough review of their physical materials with a view toward reducing their physical storage footprint in accordance with records management standards and guidelines.

Legacy paper documents

2.83   By the beginning of 2017 'paper lite', if not 'paper free', was already an established objective in shaping new office accommodation. The Under Treasurer's advice to the Select Committee on Estimates in February 2017 was that:

> We are very much aiming to have [the new office accommodation] as an IT-enabled, no paper as far as possible building … and better use of space. That is going to mean more IT mobile devices and those sorts of things. I think that will produce a better environmental outcome in total, although we will require a bigger investment in IT to make that happen.

2.84   In addition to the requirement for new Dickson and Civic office-based staff to be able to work in an Activity Based Work environment (up to 3,200 ACT public servants), a significant challenge was identified as to what to do with legacy paperwork residing in offices soon to be vacated. For example, the basement 'cages' at the Nara Building in Civic were reported to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's Executive Management Group in July 2018 to hold 20,000 to 30,000 files. These files would need sentencing (if not done already), and archiving or destruction, irrespective of whether they were digitised and secured within an EDRMS. The Community Service Directorate, some of whose staff were also to be moving into the new Civic office building scheduled for October 2020, identified a large volumes of hardcopy files, including 161,000 off-premises case files and 200,000 Housing ACT files.

2.85   The commitment to transitioning ACT Public Service staff in the major administrative areas into an Activity Based Work environment, and the consolidation of up to 3,200 employees into accommodation at Dickson and Civic, became significant drivers of change for whole-of-government EDRMS since 2016. These initiatives have increased the priority of digital recordkeeping, and of designing and implementing whole-of-government EDRMS.

Development of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative (2018)

2.86   On 5 June 2018 the Government announced, as part of its investment in the Territory's digital and physical infrastructure, the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative:

> The Government will complete the rollout of digital record-keeping systems across agencies to improve data accessibility and retrieval and to generate efficiencies in records management. The cost of this initiative is partially offset by contributions from directorates' existing resources. The efficiencies are expected to be achieved by reducing physical storage costs associated with the existing paper records system.

2.87   A January 2018 business case for the initiative identified a total cost of $26.2 million, of which $22.1 million was expected to be offset by savings within Directorates from potential future efficiency savings from improved recordkeeping (e.g. reduction in storage costs).[8] The net cost of the initiative was therefore $4.1 million.

Business case

2.88   The January 2018 business case for the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative identified that the 'whole-of-government initiative would deliver benefits across all the directorates'. The business case brought together 'three separate electronic document and records management systems business cases' prepared by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Community Services Directorate. At the Concept Brief stage the Budget Committee of Cabinet decided that the three separate business cases 'should be combined to come forward as one proposal for one whole of government system that all directorates are required to use'.

2.89   The following four 'deliverables' were specified in the January 2018 business case:

- capacity for an additional 5,200 staff to use the ACTPS whole of government digital recordkeeping system. This would be achieved through a new appropriation to Shared Services of $874,000;

- a longer-term strategy to 'further enhance the functionality of this system and realise further savings through cloud and [Software as a Service] delivery'.[9] This would be achieved through a new appropriation to the Territory Records Office of $218,000;

- support for office accommodation savings in the Activity Based Working environment, by providing a team to help business units appropriately manage paper documents

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8   According to background documentation for the initiative, the ACTPS was reported to spend more than $3 million per year on the storage and management of paper records, some of which could be obviated by improved use of EDRMS. The extent and timing of savings was not provided.

9   Software as a Service (SaaS) is a model where access to software, which is hosted on external infrastructure maintained by the supplier, is provided on a subscription basis.

before office relocations. This would be achieved through a new appropriation to the Territory Records Office of $853,000; and

- the digitisation of 161,000 Community Services Directorate case files, 'delivering long-term savings in document storage and handling, and establishing a model for adoption by other Directorates'. This would be achieved through a new appropriation to the Community Services Directorate of $2.164 million.

2.90   The January 2018 business case emphasised the value of sharing information, in addition to the potential for efficiency savings from storing and retrieving information differently, as a further rationale for making further progress with digital recordkeeping:

> The ACTPS is only part of the way through the transition to digital recordkeeping. While digital records systems have been embraced by some parts of government, others struggle to identify and prioritise funding for digital transition when they are yet to realise its benefits. When parts of government remain outside the system the benefits of whole of government digital recordkeeping cannot be fully realised, as opportunities to share and reuse information across government are reduced.

Additional staff in the ACTPS whole-of-government digital recordkeeping system (first deliverable)

2.91   According to the January 2018 business case the majority of the total gross cost for the initiative related to the first deliverable, i.e. 'completing the rollout of digital recordkeeping functionality to desk-based and mobile public servants' although the cost of this component 'is fully offset by resulting efficiencies in agencies'.

2.92   The January 2018 business case identified timeframes for the deployment of whole-of-government EDRMS to 5,200 new ACT Public Service users as shown in Table 2-1. The additional 5,200 users were expected to take the total number of whole-of-government EDRMS users across the ACT Public Service to 8,500, which was an estimate based on 'data about ACTPS staff classification groupings in the 2017 State of the Service report and an analysis of Human Resources/ACT Property Group data about the physical location and administrative function of staff'. The estimate recognised that staff that carried out tasks 'in the field' and other staff that primarily interacted with business-specific systems such as 'case management or financial systems' would have less need for access to a whole-of-government EDRMS.

Table 2-1   Timing for the addition of new users to the whole-of-government EDRMS

Financial Year	New Users
2018-19	875
2019-20	1,725
2020-21	1,725
2021-22	875
Total	**5,200**

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on the January 2018 business case for the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative.

2.93   The January 2018 business case estimated that there were 3,300 ACT Public Service staff already using at least one of the two specified EDRMS platforms as at the commencement of the initiative on 1 July 2018, and that about 60 per cent were whole-of-government Objective EDRMS users. The initiative was intended to support 4,260 ACTPS staff in their uptake of the whole-of-government TRIM platform and 940 staff in their uptake of the Objective system.

2.94   A review of Shared Services billing data as at 30 June 2018 shows that, in addition to existing whole-of-government EDRMS (TRIM and Objective) system use, a further 1,922 staff were using a stand-alone version of TRIM, specific to their business unit, division or directorate.

Identification of a project to research and define a preferred position

2.95   The June 2018 Budget papers identify an intention to 'complete the rollout of digital record-keeping systems across agencies' but the January 2018 business case notes:

> Mandating a choice of a single system at this time may not be the most cost-effective approach, and would require an open procurement process before a single provider could be determined. It would also entail a significant change management component to transition staff from one existing system to another, as well as costs to migrate data from one system to another and to reintegrate other ICT systems that currently interface with existing records software.

2.96   Accordingly, the January 2018 business case proposed 'the establishment of a project to research and define the ACTPS's preferred position' and that this 'would provide an accountable, evidence-based approach to identifying the most cost-effective method to achieve a unified digital records framework'.

2.97   The January 2018 business case indicates that the proposed initiative envisaged a substantial growth in the number of staff using either one or both of the two whole-of-government EDRMS (i.e., TRIM and Objective), and that a significant proportion of that growth would arise from staff no longer using a stand-alone TRIM EDRMS. The business case makes reference to 'all current [TRIM] users [to] move to WhoG' in the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, i.e. the 1,922 stand-alone TRIM users would stop using a stand-alone version of TRIM in favour of one or other of the two whole-of-government EDRMS. This is significant as the 'per user' cost assumptions in the business case differ significantly depending on whether the user:

- is a new user of EDRMS (i.e., a net increase in users, and an additional licence and support cost); or

- changes from being a stand-alone TRIM user to being a whole-of-government EDRMS user (i.e., no net increase in users, and no additional licence and support cost).

- the 'per user' cost modelling maxima and minima are vastly different depending on the level of substitution that occurs.

Funding model 2018

2.98   One issue that was unresolved in the Pilot Project and in the succeeding two years was the establishment of a funding model for the management of EDRMS between Shared Services and the directorates. The January 2018 business case referred to the need for revision to the existing funding arrangements, which were based on a user fee-for-service model , since this model was asserted to:

- be inefficient; and

- provide a disincentive for directorates to migrate their recordkeeping practices into a whole-of-government EDRMS environment because costs are incurred before benefits are realised (e.g., benefits such as efficiency in directorates' use of resources, directorate responsivity and ACTPS interoperability gains).

2.99   The January 2018 business case proposed a 'no net cost to ACT Government' solution, to be achieved through a redirection of appropriation from directorates to Shared Services based on directorates' whole-of-government EDRMS user numbers and other invoice-able services. The business case stated:

> … This component does not involve additional funding but centralises, in Shared Services (a function of CMTEDD), payments currently made by agencies on an invoiced, fee-for-service basis.

2.100   Along with an increase in the number of office-based staff using the two preferred whole-of-government EDRMS to 8,500 by June 2022, there was a commitment to develop a funding model that would inform 'centralised recurrent funding for records management' which would accommodate the anticipated level of growth in user numbers in the period of the initiative.

2.101   The solution proposed through the January 2018 business case was fourfold:

- provide an incentive to directorates through a zero-user charge (i.e., a fee waiver) for the first year of a new user to a whole-of-government EDRMS (estimated to require $2.64 million over the four years);

- review and recalculate the existing annual EDRMS user fee-for-service charge;

- design and ultimately implement a wider funding model that enables Shared Services to centrally appropriate $21.48 million for records management services, including EDRMS, according to a range of activity-based cost drivers which would replace the pre-existing fee-for-service and invoicing model; and

- appropriate $874,000 in additional funding as part of the 2018 budget initiative for certain record management services to support the whole-of-government records management effort, particularly in relation to staff movements into new office space and the development of Activity Based Work practices.

2.102   In June 2018 the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was announced. The initiative seeks to 'complete the rollout of digital record-keeping systems

across agencies to improve data accessibility and retrieval, and to generate efficiencies in records management'. A January 2018 business case for the initiative identified a total cost of $26.2 million, of which $22.1 million was expected to be offset 'by savings within Directorates'. With a net cost of $4.1 million, the initiative's four deliverables provide a clear focus and purpose that enhances understanding and accountability. The initiative represents a major whole-of-government endeavour involving technical, procedural, and cultural change over a four-year period that is likely to affect, at least in some way, the majority of office-based staff working in the ACT Public Service.

Implementation of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* initiative

2.103   The January 2018 business case noted the emphasis on the centralisation of management oversight and resources:

> The Territory Records Office and Shared Services would develop a timetable for transition of business areas to the central system in consultation with Directorates. The project would be delivered by Shared Services in consultation with the Territory Records Office. It would be overseen by the Digital Records Governance Committee, which was established during the 2016 pilot project, and would report regularly to the Strategic Board.

2.104   The January 2018 business case anticipated the first deliverable, the completion of the whole-of-government EDRMS rollout, would be achieved as a discrete, centrally administered project with the following features:

- a project board, i.e. the Digital Records Governance Committee;

- a sponsoring and oversighting entity, the ACTPS Strategic Board;

- a project manager, i.e. the digital records team within the Partnership Services Branch of Shared Service; and

- a timetable developed by the project manager for the migration of all business areas.

2.105   The business case also included a matrix that outlined the respective roles and responsibilities of the directorates, the Territory Records Office, the Digital Records Governance Committee and Shared Services ICT for the four deliverables.[10] Of major importance is the Digital Records Governance Committee, which is referred to as 'accountable' for two of the four deliverables.

Digital Records Governance Committee oversight of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative (2018)

2.106   Following the Government's announcement of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative in June 2018, the Digital Records Governance Committee revised its terms of reference. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in

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[10]   According to the business case, the first deliverable comprises two 'components': Digital recordkeeping functionality (i.e. EDRMS rollout) and the Centralised recurrent funding for records management model.

paragraph 2.67, the committee's November 2018 revised terms of reference include responsibility 'for overseeing the implementation of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative' and:

- approving project documentation;

- overseeing the development of the EDRMS Future Strategy;

- monitoring the work of the activity based working Records Advice team; and

- ensuring appropriate EDRMS disaster recovery arrangements are in place.

2.107   This was to be achieved by an increase in committee meeting frequency to four times a year.

Project governance

2.108   Notwithstanding the project governance arrangements that were established, there was no evidence that a disciplined, centrally administered project management approach was agreed to or implemented.

2.109   A draft Project Plan and related project management documents were produced. A Digital Records Governance Committee briefing ahead of the 7 June 2019 meeting identified:

> [Officer] has been appointed as the dedicated project manager for the EDRMS component of the budget initiative. The [officer] has developed a draft Project Plan, Change Management Plan, Communication Plan, and Risk and Issues Register, which are provided for the Committee's approval.

2.110   The draft Project Plan documented the objectives, descriptions of current and future state and benefits, scope and approach, high level phasing, milestones, deliverables and dependencies, stakeholders, governance and risk management arrangements for the project. However, there was no further documentation supporting the draft Project Plan that identified when and how the migration of users would occur across divisions, business units, functions or teams.

2.111   There is no evidence that the Digital Records Governance Committee reviewed, approved or otherwise authorised the draft Project Plan and related documentation. In this respect, the Digital Records Governance Committee did not fulfil the 'approving project documentation' aspect of its terms of reference. Subsequent Digital Records Governance Committee meeting minutes and other documentation do not refer to the draft Project Plan and related documentation.

2.112   Notwithstanding that the Digital Records Governance Committee did not formally authorise the project, a Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate official advised that the Project Plan and related documentation, as submitted to the committee, was 'in place' and that there was 'no other overarching project plan':

> Although the minutes of that meeting don't capture a formal agreement to the project plan, neither do they indicate a discussion that the plan wasn't accepted. The plan, a communications plan, project schedule, change management plan, risk register and issues register were all submitted to the committee (all attached).

Of course, this does leave the status of the project planning documents in doubt for audit purposes. However, the project manager continued with the project on the basis that the plan was in place, and no other overarching project plan document was established, and so those documents remain the relevant sources for many of your questions.

Project implementation

2.113 Digital Records Governance Committee minutes do not show that it was aware of, or interested in, supporting project plans for the implementation of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. Nor was the committee providing authorisation or approval of project management and project delivery activities.

2.114 With respect to the implementation of the initiative, a Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate official advised:

> It is also important to note that much of the detailed planning needs to happen in Directorates to ensure that it is aligned to their business requirements and resource availability. While the central project Shared Services planning was put in place to kick the project off, it is to a large extent overtaken by individual project plans.

2.115 By June 2019 the relocation of up to 3,200 staff at the Dickson and Civic government offices had become a major driver of EDRMS transition, according to Digital Records Governance Committee minutes in 2019 and 2020. Progressing the third deliverable, particularly around dealing with paper files and paper-based business practices of relocating directorates, became an immediate priority.

2.116 The Digital Records Governance Committee has received frequent briefings on EDRMS transitioning activities at the level of the team, business unit, function, and directorate since June 2019. Shared Services produced a series of particularly useful twice-monthly narrative reports in 2019 containing updates on records processing and the deployment status covering all involved directorates. Good progress was reported as being made. Despite the absence of a centrally planned and administered approach under the guidance of the Committee, the initiative was being implemented via devolved planning and implementation.

2.117 Digital Records Governance Committee minutes from 29 September 2020 show that a centrally prepared and oversighted implementation plan was still viewed as advantageous to the committee's oversighting remit and was sought by one of its members:

> [A committee member] asked for an overarching schedule of the rollout plan and the directorate project plans, so the committee is across it and [is able to] give guidance where needed.

2.118 The *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was envisaged to be implemented as a centrally administered project by Shared Services, with oversight by the Digital Records Governance Committee. In November 2018 the terms of reference of the Committee were revised to give it an explicit role for the oversight of the project, including through review and approval of project documentation. Following the announcement of the initiative in June 2018, 12 months elapsed before a draft Project Plan was produced; there was no further supporting documentation that identified when and

how the migration of users would occur across divisions, business units, functions or teams. Committee minutes do not show that it was aware of, or interested in, supporting project plans for the implementation of the initiative or providing authorisation or approval of project management and project delivery activities. There was an absence of an appropriate level of accountability and transparency in the management and delivery of the project.

Other Digital Records Governance Committee activities

2.119   The Digital Records Governance Committee has been active on a quarterly basis with the exception of the first eight months of 2020 when there were no meetings of the committee.

2.120   Officials provided different perspectives of the effect of the disruption in 2020 to ways of working and changes to business objectives (due to bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic). One official advised that:

> … EDRMS deployment has had to take something of a back seat during the various emergencies the ACT has responded to since Christmas 2019. This has meant that project delivery and monitoring has slowed during this period.

2.121   However, at the first committee meeting of 2020 on 29 September 2020 one committee member noted:

> … circumstances have caused an uptake [in] digital records in the past six months that would normally have taken five years.

2.122   One business item that received attention at the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group in 2019 was a review of TRIM administration conducted by iCognition in 2018-19 and reported on in July 2019. The report made 44 recommendations whose implementation received close attention from the committee and the working group and the supporting officials.

2.123   Table 2-2 shows the actions and achievements of the Digital Records Governance Committee against its terms of reference. The table indicates most terms of reference were addressed at least to some extent (i.e. seven of nine of the selected terms of reference assessed). For two areas of business, relating to developing and approving a 'System Security Plan' and 'appropriate EDRMS disaster recovery arrangements', there was no evidence of discussion at the committee meetings. In its response to the draft proposed report the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate advised that broader disaster recovery arrangements were in place for Shared Services.

Table 2-2   Analysis Digital Records Governance Committee activities against its terms of reference

Selected terms of reference (version year)	Whether addressed and how
The responsibility to 'build, maintain and promote Government EDRMS capabilities' (2017)	**Yes**. Much of the Committee's work has been establishing the framework and ensuring harmonisation and consolidation.
Ensuring EDRMS investments represent 'best value at the whole of government level' (2017)	**Yes**. The nature and timing of EDRMS investments in various directorates have been discussed.

Selected terms of reference (version year)	Whether addressed and how
Establishing a working group which 'oversees operation and administration (2017)	**Yes**. The Digital Records Capability Working Group was established.
Reviewing all EDRMS proposals and high-level risk change requests (2017)	**Yes**. The Committee has discussed EDRMS proposals made by agencies.
Endorsing the System Security Plan (2017)	**No**. There is no evidence that the Committee has endorsed any System Security Plan.
Referring matters to other forums (2017)	**Yes**. The Committee has referred, and received, matters to and from the ACTPS Strategic Board.
Overseeing the development of the EDRMS Future Strategy (2018)	**Yes**. From 22 March 2019 onwards the Committee has received briefings, and a strategy was presented on 29 September 2020.
Monitoring the work of the activity based working Records Advice team (2018)	**Yes**. There has been much discussion about Civic and Dickson related office moves and Activity Based Working arrangements. A learnings paper was also provided on 1 December 2020.
Ensuring appropriate EDRMS disaster recovery arrangements are in place (2018)	**No**. There is no evidence that the Committee has considered disaster recovery arrangements for EDRMS.

Source: Audit Office, based on a review of Digital Records Governance Committee papers (October 2017 to February 2021)

2.124   The Digital Records Governance Committee has logged discussion points that need resolving via an 'Action' and 'Follow up' process, and this has included tracking the progress of reviews and recommendations such as the 2019 iCognition review. However, the level of assurance the committee seeks and receives over the rate of whole-of-government EDRMS system expansion, and the level of system and user effectiveness is low. This is in part because no system-wide progress monitoring framework has been established. The development of the 'EDRMS Future Strategy' has the potential to address this shortcoming, including a committee-endorsed commitment to a 'future state' and its benefits, and a means to evaluate impact.

2.125   Much of the Digital Records Governance Committee's discussions, according to minutes, are briefings from areas within ACT Government on progress. There is evidence of effective information sharing with the potential for better coordination and harmonisation of whole-of-government effort. However, there is limited evidence that the committee has been influential over the decision making of directorates, e.g. with respect to the scale or timing of each directorate's EDRMS rollout program. The committee set the policy framework and monitored the progress of directorates' efforts, but did so in an ad hoc way, and without the benefit of a framework for monitoring progress.

2.126   The Digital Records Governance Committee has been active on a quarterly basis with the exception of the first eight months of 2020 when there were no meetings of the committee. A review of the actions and achievements of the Committee against its terms of reference shows that most terms of reference were addressed at least to some extent (i.e. seven of nine of the selected terms of reference assessed). For two areas of business, relating to developing and approving a 'System Security Plan' and 'appropriate EDRMS disaster

recovery arrangements', there was no evidence of discussion at the committee meetings. The level of assurance the committee seeks and receives over the rate of whole-of-government EDRMS system expansion, and the level of system and user effectiveness is low, due in in part because no system-wide progress monitoring framework has been established. There is a significant risk that the committee is not in a position to know the pace of transition, nor whether the initiative's key objectives are likely to be accomplished (e.g. that all office-based staff would be EDRMS enabled and active users) by June 2022.

Reporting on the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative

2.127 According to the January 2018 business case and June 2018 announcement for the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the initiative was due to conclude by 30 June 2022. No records or reports to the Digital Records Governance Committee provide any form of assessment of progress with respect to all four deliverables. Accordingly, the Audit Office reviewed documentation in order to assess progress made over the first three years of the four-year timeframe of the initiative.

EDRMS capacity for 5,200 additional staff (first deliverable)

2.128 The first deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for the 'capacity for 5,200 additional staff to use the ACTPS whole-of-government digital recordkeeping system'. It was understood that there were 3,300 ACT Public Service employees already using one of the two endorsed EDRM systems as at June 2018. The budget initiative aimed to:

> … deploy these systems to an additional 5,200 staff by the end of 2021-22.

User data and establishing a baseline

2.129 In order to review progress of this component of the initiative, the Audit Office obtained Shared Services billing data relating to the number of users of whole-of-government EDRMS across the directorates. This approach was on the understanding that the activity level of EDRMS on each user account is closely scrutinised by individual directorates as it directly equates to costs through the pre-existing fee-for-service model, and that underutilised accounts are often suspended so that costs are not incurred unnecessarily. Billing data provides a reliable measure of system uptake, and at least a minimum level of use, rather than data solely focused on the creation of user accounts.

2.130 Shared Services ICT billing data indicates that the total number of ACTPS employees using one of the two endorsed systems as at 30 June 2018 was 2,702, and not 3,300 as per the January 2018 business case. Billing data also shows that there were a further 1,922 standalone TRIM users.

2.131   Table 2-3 shows the number of additional users expected to be added over the four-year period of the initiative against the assumed baseline of 3,300 and the adjusted baseline of 2,702 (as represented by Shared Services billing data obtained by the Audit Office).

Table 2-3   Baseline and additional capacity June 2018 to June 2022

Capacity aim (additional 5,200)	30 June 2018	30 June 2019	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022
Additions by year end	0	875	1,725	1,725	875
Total capacity (assumed baseline)	3,300	4,175	5,900	7,625	8,500
Total capacity (baseline adjusted)	2,702	3,577	5,302	7,027	7,902

Source: Audit Office, based on the January 2018 business case for the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative and Shared Services billing data (June 2021)

Delivery targets and reporting

2.132   The January 2018 business case estimated that the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS was to be deployed to 940 users and the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS to 4,260 users. The estimates for the specific systems are principally based on the number of staff moving into the Dickson and City office blocks, with the documentation noting that the majority of staff in the Dickson office block will be users of Objective while the City office block users will be users of TRIM.

2.133   In 2019, planning work had commenced for the deployment of the whole-of-government EDRMS to a further 5,200 staff. The planning work was documented in a draft Project Plan (June 2019), which outlined an approach to deploying EDRMS to staff moving into the new Dickson and City Office blocks by February and October 2020 respectively and deploying EDRMS to staff in other directories by the end of 2021. This would meet the timeframe established in the January 2018 business case, which anticipated EDRMS deployment to all 5,200 staff across government to be completed by the end of the 2021-22 financial year.

2.134   Digital Records Governance Committee documentation indicates that it was being provided with updates on the rollout. Updates to the committee included:

> … rollout to 75 Economic Development staff is underway, with another 375 from other areas of CMTEDD. (22 March 2019 meeting)

> … preparation for Directorates moving to the Dickson office block is on track … (7 June 2019 meeting)

> Numbers (TRIM Users) are steadily increasing and are now approaching 1200. The rollout to Economic Development is nearly complete, and the Treasury Economic and Financial Group rollout is beginning, with 40-50 users to be deployed to in the first stage. (7 June 2019 meeting)

> … provided the TRIM update: We are currently oversubscribed in TRIM licences due to the way the keys had been managed in the past. We own 4,055 licences across government but are consuming about 4,900. A Request for Quote has been sent to … purchase an additional 1,000 licences to address the debt. (29 September 2020 meeting)

2.135 While Digital Records Governance Committee documentation and status reports prepared by Shared Services indicate that progress was being made by specific business units, functions and directorates, it is difficult to determine from these documents whether all activities relating to the EDRMS rollout across the ACT Public Service were resulting in the level of growth necessary to meet the deliverable's target of capacity for 5,200 users by June 2022. It is also not clear:

- which of the two endorsed whole-of-government EDRMS platforms was contributing the new users; and

- whether whole-of-government TRIM user numbers were growing at the same time as stand-alone TRIM user accounts were reducing. If this were the case it would also substantially contribute to the overall aim of system consolidation.

Whole-of-government EDRMS take-up

2.136 Data obtained from Shared Services ICT provides details on the number of active user accounts within each of the two endorsed whole-of-government systems at the end of each quarter for the purposes of billing.[11]

2.137 Figure 2-1is based on data for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2021. It compares 'active' and 'billed' user accounts in each quarter for the two approved whole-of-government EDRMS platforms against rollout targets for each year. Baseline-adjusted targets are used for the purpose of this analysis, using an initial baseline figure of 2,702, as outlined in Table 2-3.

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[11] Active: another dataset of 'user accounts created' for the period 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2021 identifies that there were 350 TRIM and 545 Objective user accounts that were considered to be inactive or unallocated. This represents approximately 17 per cent of the new user accounts created. Billing data reflects active user numbers only.

Figure 2-1   **Whole-of-government EDRMS (TRIM and Objective) active users (July 2017 to June 2021)**
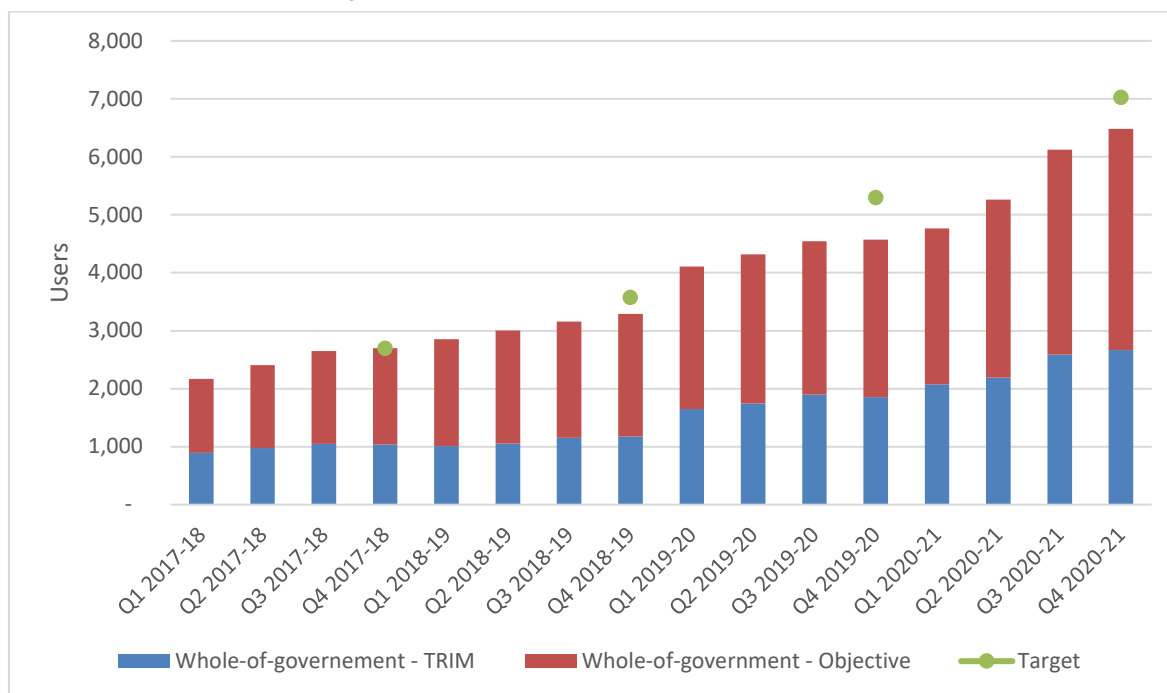
Source: Audit Office, based on the January 2018 business case for the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative and Shared Services billing data (June 2021)

2.138   Figure 2-2 shows that there has been a substantial increase in the number of active users in whole-of-government EDRMS in the first three years of the initiative, based on Shared Services billing data. As at 30 June 2021 there were 6,484 users of the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms. This compares to a milestone (interim) target of 7,027 (based on an adjusted initial baseline of 2,702) or 7,625 (based on the assumed initial baseline of 3,300). This indicates that the rollout had reached 92 per cent of the targeted number of system users by 30 June 2021 (based on an adjusted initial baseline of 2,702).

2.139   The rate of quarterly increase in the number of users of the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms indicates the rate of uptake has been particularly marked from the second quarter of 2020-21. This aligns with the main period of office relocation and working from home arrangements related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.140   With respect to the two EDRMS and their respective share of the whole-of-government EDRMS roll-out, it is noted that whole-of-government TRIM users were expected to account for 82 per cent of the increase in whole-of-government EDRMS use but according to billing data, whole-of-government TRIM users accounted for 41 per cent of the increase, and Objective the other 59 per cent. The increase in the number of Objective users and their share of the total number of the two whole-of-government EDRMS is well beyond initial expectations. The increase in the number of Objective users accounts for the majority of overall EDRMS increase, and not 18 per cent as expected in the business case.

Use of TRIM as a stand-alone EDRMS

2.141 The data shown in Figure 2-2 does not include users of stand-alone versions of TRIM. The *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was also intended to support the migration of ACT public servants from stand-alone versions of TRIM to the whole-of-government TRIM version, i.e., to achieve EDRMS platform consolidation (as opposed to platform proliferation). Figure 2-3 shows the number of whole-of-government EDRMS users and the number of stand-alone versions of TRIM.

Figure 2-2   Whole-of-government EDRMS (TRIM and Objective) and stand-alone TRIM active users between 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2021
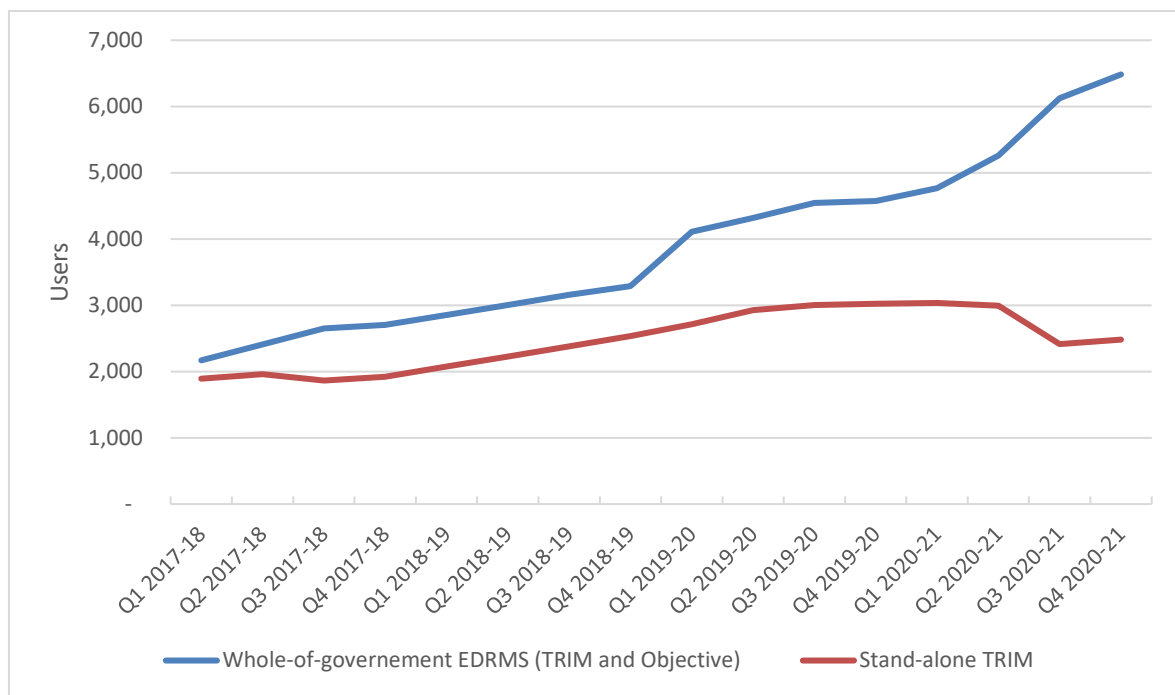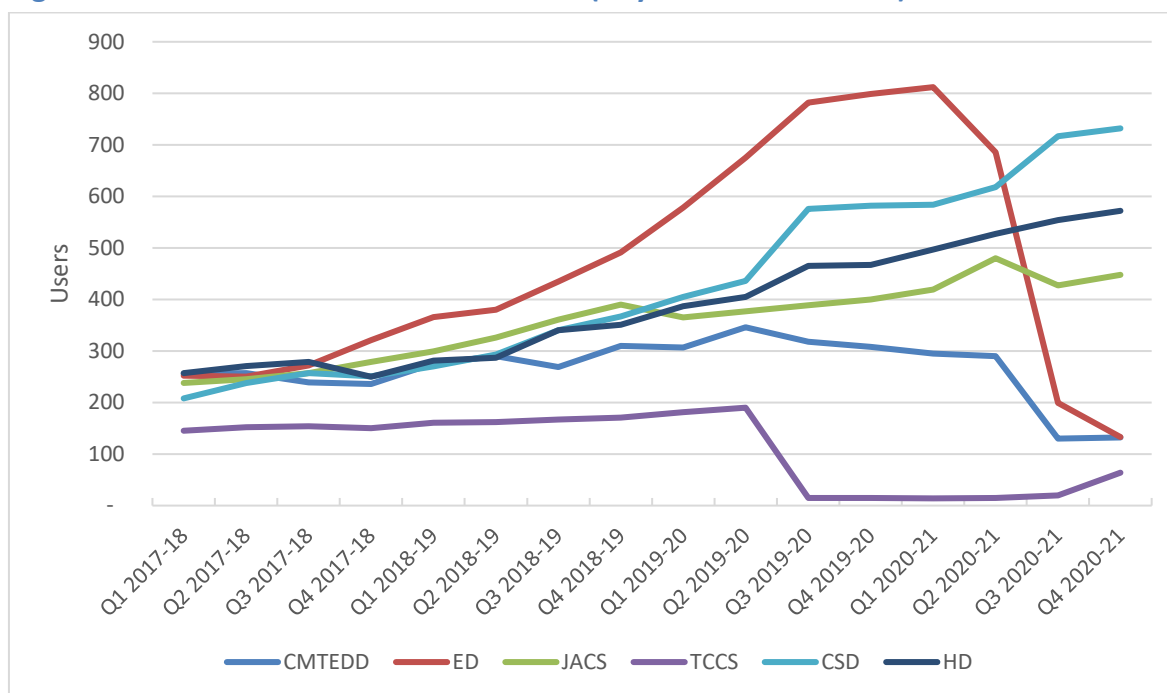

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services billing data (June 2021)

2.142 Figure 2-2 shows that the number of users in stand-alone TRIM systems increased along with the increase in the overall number of users in the two whole-of-government EDRMS for most of the four-year period to June 2021. In the most recent two quarters (January to June 2021), the number of users in stand-alone TRIM systems decreased (to 2,413 and 2,483 respectively) but remains above the number (1,922) at the outset of the initiative (1 July 2018).

2.143 Figure 2-3 shows the number of stand-alone TRIM users across the directorates in the period between July 2017and June 2021.

Figure 2-3   Stand-alone TRIM active users (July 2017 to June 2021)

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services billing data (June 2021)

Note: CMTEDD: Chief Ministers, Treasury and Economic Development; ED: Education Directorate, JACS: Justice and Community Safety, TCCS: Transport Canberra and City Services, CSD: Community Services Directorate, HD: Health Directorate

2.144   A review of the number of stand-alone TRIM users across the directorates shows three directorates account for the increase in user numbers in their respective stand-alone TRIM versions in the four years from July 2017 to June 2021: the Community Services Directorate; the Health Directorate; and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. Of these three, the Community Services Directorate's stand-alone TRIM user number increase was the largest. This is consistent with the directorate's strategic decision, acknowledged and endorsed in March 2019 by the Digital Records Governance Committee, to postpone moving to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS (refer to paragraph 3.29).

2.145   The number of users of stand-alone TRIM versions has reduced for three directorates in the last four years: the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate; the Education Directorate; and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.[12] Of these three, the Education Directorate's stand-alone TRIM user number decrease was the largest. The number of users within Transport Canberra and City Services' stand-alone TRIM version has reduced overall over the four-year period, but has increased in the last quarter of 2020-21.

2.146   A notable case is the Education Directorate. The Education Directorate's TRIM use increased substantially between the first quarter of 2017-18 and the first quarter of 2020-21.

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[12]   Analysis includes the users of stand-alone TRIM versions of the ACT Government's seven directorates as at 1 July 2017. The Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate did not have any stand-alone versions of TRIM. Also, the analysis does not include users of TRIM versions within the Canberra Institute of Technology, Land Development Agency or the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Thereafter the number of users decreased rapidly, and the Education Directorate's stand-alone TRIM version was decommissioned by June 2021. The directorate's reduction in its stand-alone TRIM user numbers in 2020-21 is consistent with its increase in whole-of-government TRIM use in 2020-21 and indicates a high degree of substitution has occurred. This is a very positive outcome in terms of the overall aim of EDRMS consolidation.

2.147 The first deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for the 'capacity for 5,200 additional staff to use the ACTPS whole-of-government digital recordkeeping system'. Good progress has been made on this deliverable in its first three years. As at 30 June 2021 there were 6,484 users of the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms, which compares to a milestone (interim) target of 7,027 (based on an adjusted initial baseline of 2,702). Notwithstanding the take-up of whole-of-government EDRMS, by June 2021 there were also more users of stand-alone TRIM versions. By June 2021 there were 2,483 users of stand-alone TRIM versions, which compares to a figure of 1,922 at the outset of the initiative. The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Education Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have noticeably decreased the number of users of stand-alone TRIM versions. The Education Directorate has performed particularly well and decommissioned its stand-alone TRIM version in June 2021.

RECOMMENDATION 1	STANDALONE TRIM INSTANCES

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, through the Digital Records Governance Committee, should agree a strategy with directorates and agencies for the migration of standalone TRIM versions to the whole of government TRIM.

Whole-of-government EDRMS roll-out and its impact on digital record-keeping

2.148 The growth in the number of active EDRMS users is a useful proxy indicator and a first step in achieving the level of transition to digital record-keeping as envisaged in the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. However, the data does not necessarily show whether:

- licensed users, once trained and inducted into the system, use the specified EDRMS;

- licensed users adopt and use the specified system in addition to pre-existing systems thus creating duplication of effort; and

- licensed users use the capabilities of one or both systems in a manner that delivers the intended value adding benefits, as referred to in paragraph 2.90.

2.149 The risk of users not using the specified EDRMS platform is largely addressed by directorates' oversight of the usage levels of the accounts for which they are charged a fee-for-service. For example, case studies in Chapter 3 indicate that directorates are adept at running system reports on aspects such as login episodes, in part to confirm levels of system use.

2.150 The extent to which whole-of-government EDRMS platforms duplicate or displace prior recordkeeping activity is more difficult to ascertain. During the course of this audit records managers commented on the marked reduction in the creation of hardcopy files, and a rapid transition to digital approval and handling procedures, primarily due to the sudden and unprecedented rollout of remote working in the ACT Public Service. This was subsequently accompanied by major office moves in Civic and Dickson involving most directorates, and particularly the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and Community Services Directorate.

2.151 With respect to whether the systems are delivering added value, there are documented references since the project's commencement that acknowledge that:

- the realisation of longer-term benefits from the rollout of the whole-of-government EDRMS has not been a priority in the last 18 months; and

- there is a risk of overstating the extent of potential productivity gains, and these should not be expected to be realised in the short term.

2.152 The number of active EDRMS users is a useful indicator of the implementation of whole-of-government EDRMS but does not provide information or evidence of the extent to which whole-of-government EDRMS platforms duplicate or displace prior recordkeeping activity. During this audit records managers commented on the marked reduction in the creation of hardcopy files, and a rapid transition to digital approval and handling procedures, primarily due to the sudden and unprecedented rollout of remote working across the ACT Public Service. This was subsequently accompanied by major office moves in Civic and Dickson involving most directorates. There is no established EDRMS performance framework that informs the monitoring of progress beyond the number of users migrating to EDRMS platforms. Such a framework should address the wider realisation of benefits as referenced in the 2018 business case.

RECOMMENDATION 2   EDRMS PERFORMANCE

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, through the Digital Records Governance Committee, should develop a performance framework for the implementation of EDRMS across ACT Government directorates and agencies. The performance framework should focus on the achievement and realisation of benefits associated with EDRMS implementation and inform the monitoring of progress beyond the number of users migrating to EDRMS platforms.

Funding Component

2.153 Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding arrangement that supports the rollout of the whole-of-government EDRMS is a major component of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. The matter had been raised, but not

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resolved, in the 2015 to 2018 period. The January 2018 business case included four principal elements, specifically:

* the fee waiver for new whole-of-government EDRMS users;

* a review and recalculation of the existing annual EDRMS user fee-for-service charge, identified as $800 per Objective user and $426 per whole-of-government TRIM user in 2018-19;

* the design and implementation of a comprehensive funding model; and

* a new appropriation of $874,000 for certain record management services.

2.154   Shared Services advised that all of the elements had been achieved except for the design and implementation of a comprehensive funding model. In this respect:

* a 12-month fee waiver up to the budgeted limit of $2.636 million had been applied to new users in 2019-20 and 2020-21. Due to the higher number of new Objective users as opposed to TRIM users, the fund was exhausted in the first two years and therefore a pro rata waiver was provided to 4,795 new users.[13] The cost of the waiver has been met by the reprioritisation of directorates' appropriation;

* the pre-existing funding model has been recalculated. Fee-for-service charges have risen 2.5 per cent between 2019-20 and 2020-21; and

* the new appropriation is funding additional records management staff.

2.155   With respect to the design and implementation of a comprehensive funding model, Shared Services officials advised that a compromise had been reached, whereby a recurrent funding model has been implemented for some components of physical (paper) records management such as file and mail management, while other aspects, such as file creation, storage, and destruction, remain billable services. Furthermore:

> … a Central Recurrent Funding model is yet to be developed for the Digital Records Support area of records services and still may be some years away. The current environment is very fluid and will need to wait until there is a stability in core user numbers once a level of maturity has been reached in each of the directorates, even then there may still need to be a variable billing component with user fluctuation.

2.156   Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding arrangement that supports the rollout of the whole-of-government EDRMS is a major component of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. While some progress has been made in evolving funding arrangements for developing digital records management capabilities and particularly for the uptake of whole-of-government EDRMS platforms a comprehensive funding model on which to base centralised funding appropriation has not been achieved. Shared Services advised 'a Central Recurrent Funding model is yet to be developed for the Digital Records Support area of records services and still may be some years away. The

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[13]   The budget had been constructed on the basis that more TRIM users would come on board than Objective users. By the end of 2021, the reverse was the case. The Objective fee for service charge was modelled on $800 per user. The TRIM fee-for-service change was modelled on $426 per user.

current environment is very fluid and will need to wait until there is a stability in core user numbers once a level of maturity has been reached in each of the directorates'.

RECOMMENDATION 3	**EDRMS FUNDING**

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, through the Digital Records Governance Committee, should review and evaluate the funding arrangements and determine if a central recurrent funding model for the whole-of-government EDRMS is appropriate.

Long-term strategy to further enhance the functionality of the EDRMS (second deliverable)

2.157   The second deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative is the preparation of a strategy to guide future actions to improve the functionality of the two endorsed EDRMS. The January 2018 business case identified a need for the two endorsed EDRMS to be integrated with each other as well as with other business systems that are being used by directorates.

2.158   In April 2020, the Territory Records Office finalised the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy.* The Digital Records Governance Committee received a briefing on the strategy at its meeting in September 2020.

2.159   The purpose of the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* is to articulate:

> … what whole-of-government digital information and records management should look like now and in the future … [and the] identification of available options to 'join-up' the two existing EDRMS used across ACT Government, such as through a shared interface and enterprise search capabilities.

2.160   The *ACT Government information and Records Management Strategy* reinforces the importance of improving information search, retrieval and authentication, and of 'shared interface solutions and enterprise search capabilities' that overcome the risk of needing to rely on the uniform use of certain endorsed platforms. One particular finding referred to in the strategy identifies the potential gains from improved 'discovery' of information and confirmation of its currency:

> ACT Public Servants spend a large amount of time searching for information and records from disparate sources e.g., EDRMS, share drive or SharePoint. They may waste time in not finding the information or records they are looking for, or being unable to establish the reliability, authenticity or currency of information, and being unable to verify at what stage in the process an event has taken place. Almost 60 per cent of staff spend more than three hours per week searching for information — equivalent to over $157 million dollars per year in staff time.

2.161   The *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* details the current state, findings, challenges, and frustrations about the operation of the whole-of-government EDRMS. The *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy*

also outlines a high-level 'vision' or 'future state' for whole-of-government information management, expressed in eight principles. The principles are shown in Figure 2-4.

Figure 2-4   Whole-of-government Information Management Strategy principles

Source: Territory Records Office, *ACT Government information and Records Management Strategy*

2.162   With respect to the work necessary to integrate the two whole-of-government EDRMS, the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* states that activity has commenced with potential vendors to identify a suitable technology solution to achieve integration. The strategy does not suggest a specific technology solution, but it states that any future technology should be considered against the principles shown in Figure 2-4. The strategy states:

> Deciding which … technologies to use should be guided by this strategy's findings and principles … One of the principles identified is to manage information and records in a minimum of systems. … After evaluating and selecting an appropriate system for enterprise search, the ACTPS should consider using that system's capability to automate common business processes, improve the management of information and records in legacy systems and automate records disposal, managing records by stealth.

2.163   The *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* makes six recommendations relating to:

- improving understanding of records management in the ACT Public Service;

- planning for the treatment of information and records in accordance with their value; and

- improving incentives for whole of government projects.

2.164   The *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* and its recommendations do not address how improvement in the use of EDRMS can be measured.

2.165 The September 2020 Digital Records Governance Committee received a verbal update on the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* from the Territory Records Office that it is intending to develop 'a workplan over the next two to five years to look at improving people and technical capability as well as engendering cultural change'.

2.166 The second deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the preparation of a strategy to guide future actions to improve the functionality of the two endorsed EDRMS, has been achieved with the finalisation of the *ACT Government Information and Records Management Strategy* by the Territory Records Office in April 2020. The strategy details the current state, findings, challenges and frustrations about the operation of the whole-of-government EDRMS and outlines a high-level 'vision' or 'future state' for whole-of-government information management, expressed in eight principles. The strategy does not suggest a specific technology solution but it states that any future technology should be considered against the principles. The strategy makes six recommendations. In September 2020 the Territory Records Office advised the Digital Records Governance Committee that it intends to develop 'a workplan over the next two to five years to look at improving people and technical capability as well as engendering cultural change'.

Preparing for Activity Based Work (third deliverable)

2.167 The third deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative is for assistance to be provided to directorates moving to the Dickson and City office blocks in 2020 in order to manage their existing paper records prior to moving. The January 2018 business case stated:

> … the Civic and Dickson government office accommodation provides a further impetus to complete the rollout of EDRMS capability to staff. These buildings are being fitted out on the basis of a 'paper-lite', activity based working arrangement, which will not be able to be fully realised without access to robust EDRMS capabilities. The physical move of staff will also necessitate decision-making about existing holdings of paper material in their offices. This proposal provides for a temporary project team which would assist relocating business units to responsibly address existing paper documents in association with the move to new office accommodation.

2.168 Overseen by the Territory Records Office, activities to assist directorates commenced in April 2019 according to the first status report prepared in May 2019. Status reports indicate that:

- a Territory Records Office-based Records Transition Team, established in February 2019, was in high demand in 2019 in supporting agency and directorate staff preparing to move offices;

- the activities were initially focused on the directorates and agencies that were relocating to the Dickson office block; and

- by June 2019 activities had commenced for directorates that were relocating to the City office block.

2.169   Status reports provided to the Digital Records Governance Committee state directorates and business units moving to the new office blocks would be the main priority. Activities included:

- identifying paper records stored in offices;

- developing action plans to determine activities to process paper records;

- sentencing records; and

- transferring paper files to offsite storage if required or destroying.

2.170   The status reports provide narrative detailing activities and the timings of activities. However, in the absence of a schedule or a plan overviewing all impacted agencies, directorates, and divisions, it is difficult to determine how the Digital Records Governance Committee purposefully assessed progress in accordance with its terms of reference. A more readily accessible pictogram-based progress 'dashboard' was developed and utilised by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's Corporate division for oversighting the directorate's preparedness for the office move (refer to Figure 3-6).

2.171   A report prepared for the ACTPS Strategic Board in February 2020 identified, four months before the occupancy date of the Dickson office building, that:

> … the Territory Records Office view is that there is likely to be insufficient time to ready business units for the move if agencies do not allocate additional resources to the preparation of their paper holdings. This can present significant risks to ACT Government records.

2.172   From March 2020 unforeseeable changes to working practices took place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials advised that the large percentage of office-based staff continuing to work from home between March 2020 and March 2021 became a new priority for records management and technical support.

2.173   In December 2020 a paper was prepared for the ACTPS Strategic Board that reflected on lessons learned from the move into the Dickson office block in readiness for the City office block move including:

> … what we've learned during COVID in terms of the functionality of document sharing and how we satisfy our records management.

2.174   In June 2021 the Head of Service announced that work was underway by the ACTPS Strategic Board to further develop flexible work opportunities for the ACT Public Service workforce building on achievements since March 2020. Three of the six identified enablers (Physical space, Tools, Capability) directly rely on the effective rollout of whole-of-government EDRMS.

2.175   The third deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative was for assistance to be provided to directorates moving to the Dickson and City office blocks in 2020 in order to manage their existing paper records prior to moving. Activities to assist directorates commenced in April 2019 and were overseen by the Territory Records Office. A Territory Records Office Records Transition Team, established in

February 2019, was in high demand in 2019 in supporting agency and directorate staff preparing to move offices.

Digitisation of 161,000 Community Services Directorate case files (fourth deliverable)

2.176   The fourth deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative is the digitisation of 161,000 case files held by the Community Services Directorate. Documentation states that the preservation of these files is particularly important within the context of the Royal Commission into Institutional Reponses to Child Sexual Abuse and the handling of claims under the redress scheme. Paper files contain diverse, non-typical record formats:

> … [including photographs], medical records, keys, as well as traditional formats that have significant characteristics such as highlighting, carbon copies, plans, handwriting …

2.177   A secondary purpose of this deliverable is to provide 'a proven model for digitising high-volume, high-use case files, beginning with the Community Services Directorate'.

2.178   A review of minutes from the Community Services Directorate's *Go Digital Steering Committee* (established to oversee the implementation of the directorate's *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project) shows that progress towards the digitisation of client files was being made. The February 2020 steering committee minutes identified that 16,000 files had been digitised and the project was on track to complete 60,000 files within the available resources and timeframe. However, the total figure of 60,000 files falls well short of the original aim of this deliverable to digitise 161,000 files as outlined in the *Digitising Government Records* budget initiative.

The proven model

2.179   Reports on the Community Service Directorate's learnings and a proposed model approach for other entities within the ACT Government were prepared and discussed by the *Go Digital Steering Committee* at its meetings on 15 August 2019 and 27 February 2020. These reports include:

- a 'lessons learnt' Pilot Report relating to the Quality, Complaints and Regulation branch (February 2020);

- a 'Proof of Concept' report relating to large volume offsite digitisation (February 2020); and

- a case study on all stages of the project to be completed at the end of the project.

2.180   Of the two completed 'lessons learnt' reports, *Go Digital Steering Committee* minutes do not identify how learnings were disseminated, other than to guide offsite digitisation tender requirements.

2.181   The fourth deliverable of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative is the digitisation of 161,000 case files held by the Community Services Directorate. Progress towards the digitisation of client files has been made. By February 2020, 16,000

files had been digitised and the project was on track to complete 60,000 files within the available resources and timeframe. However, the total figure of 60,000 files falls well short of the original aim of this deliverable to digitise 161,000 files as outlined in the *Digitising Government Records* budget initiative. With respect to the project's secondary aim of providing a model for approaching and implementing the digitisation of large volumes of diverse legacy paperwork, it is apparent that the project to date has been effective in providing many learning opportunities, but these have not been consolidated into a model.

RECOMMENDATION 4	DIGITISATION OF HARDCOPY FILES

The Community Services Directorate should:

a)   identify and document the outcome of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative goal of digitalising 161,000 hardcopy files; and

b)   if the estimated outcome does not meet the business requirements of the Directorate, prepare a strategy to complete the digitisation.

RECOMMENDATION 5	MODEL FOR THE DIGITISATION OF HARDCOPY FILES

The Community Services Directorate, in conjunction with the Digital Records Governance Committee, should:

a)   review and evaluate the outcome of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative; and

b)   finalise the secondary aim of the initiative and prepare a model that can be used across ACT Government directorates and agencies for the digitisation of hardcopy files.

3   EDRMS IMPLEMENTATION IN DIRECTORATES

3.1   This chapter considers the activities of the Community Services Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and their response to directorate-specific and whole-of-government digital records management priorities between 2018 and 2021. Each directorate's governance arrangements and planning and implementation activities are considered as well as any outcomes that have been achieved. In 2021 all three directorates have EDRMS users of:

- stand-alone TRIM platforms;

- the whole-of-government TRIM platform; and

- the whole-of-government Objective platform.

Summary

Conclusion

Each of the three directorates considered as part of the audit, the Community Services Directorate, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, have demonstrated improved digital record-keeping practices between 2018 and 2021, although not to the full extent envisaged in 2018. Each directorate has planned for, and implemented, digital record-keeping initiatives specific to their needs and circumstances.

The Community Services Directorate has substantially increased its number of stand-alone TRIM EDRMS users but systems consolidation has not taken place. Furthermore, the objective of digitising 161,000 files is also unlikely to be achieved by June 2022. Nevertheless, in March 2020 the Directorate effectively adapted its *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and there has been a substantial increase in the number of staff using both the directorate's stand-alone and whole-of-government versions of the TRIM EDRMS.

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has exceeded its target number of users migrating to the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS although this has happened more slowly than originally expected. The Directorate has also achieved a degree of systems consolidation, as intended by the 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget* initiative.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate made early progress in encouraging and supporting its staff to migrate to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS in 2016-17. The directorate subsequently managed its EDRMS activities as a component of its preparations for an Activity Based Work environment and move to the new Civic office building in March 2021. The directorate has surpassed its target, and made a significant contribution of more

than 1000 new EDRMS users, to the 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records Budget* initiative target of 5,200 additional whole-of-government EDRMS users.

Key findings

In 2018, the Community Services Directorate's recordkeeping practices included use of hardcopy client files, as well business systems which were not necessarily designed to meet the requirements of holding records in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*. As part of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the Community Services Directorate received $2.374 million in funding for activities to digitise the 161,000 casefiles that it had in storage. Planning for these activities was finalised in 2019, with the establishment of the directorate's *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project. The project's five core components included activities to support the digitisation of the case files and in so doing to provide a model for wider applicability in the ACT government for digitising large volumes of paper files economically.

3.15

The project management and governance arrangements for the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project, as outlined in the January 2019 project plan, were largely effective. These arrangements included the establishment of the *Go Digital Steering Committee*, the preparation of detailed project delivery schedules including milestones, the identification of risks and issues, reporting requirements and the preparation of change management and control procedures. One weaker aspect of the project was the *Go Digital Steering Committee*'s oversight and authorisation of revisions to the project and its implementation. Better documentation of these changes to the project and its parameters would improve accountability and transparency for the delivery of a major component of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative.

3.27

A major change to the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was signalled after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The need for expediency led to the development of a *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan, the primary purpose of which was to support the widespread use of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM (i.e., not the whole-of-government TRIM version) by all staff needing remote access to records. There was inadequate documentation associated with the *Go Digital Steering Committee's* formal authorisation and approval of this major departure, but it is clear that the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was able to adapt to accommodate the rapidly changing circumstances of work practices in the Community Services Directorate in 2020. The March 2020 *Go Digital Fast Track* revised project responded effectively to immediate needs.

3.40

Go Digital Steering Committee records indicate that progress towards four of the eight outcomes of the revised *Go Digital Fast Track* project has been achieved, including the digitisation of 60,000 casefiles. However, it is unlikely that the original outcome of the digitisation of 161,000 casefiles will be achieved. It is unclear what is intended for the residual un-digitised 100,000 files.

3.46

The shift in priorities of the Community Services Directorate through the *Go Digital Fast Track* project, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen a substantial increase in the number of staff using both the directorate's stand-alone and whole-of-government versions of the TRIM EDRMS. The increase in active users indicates that the revised priority, outlined in the *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan, of enabling directorate staff to work from home or within an Activity Based Work (office-based) environment has been achieved. One negative aspect to the directorate's revised EDRMS priorities in 2019 and 2020 is that there is further work to do to consolidate TRIM use within the whole-of-government TRIM platform. This may occur when the timing is more opportune. Accordingly, the Community Services Directorate has not to date made as significant a contribution to the whole-of-government EDRMS goal of 5,200 users by June 2022 as was originally envisaged.

3.54

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has had a form of Objective in use since 2003. In December 2017 it was estimated that approximately 250 staff across a range of business units were familiar with using Objective. A stand-alone version of TRIM was also used by approximately 150 staff to manage ministerial correspondence. In December 2017, planning commenced for the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project*. The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified three components: the rollout of Objective to an additional 600 users across the directorate; the implementation of a Ministerial Module to manage ministerial correspondence; and a business process review of ministerial correspondence and cabinet business across the directorate. These components provide a discrete, timely and practical focus, which improve the prospects of successful implementation as the components address whole-of-government EDRMS aims while simultaneously addressing directorate-specific goals.

3.62

The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) effectively articulated a high-level assessment of the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's 'current state' and 'future state' for its whole-of-government EDRMS activities. The Project Plan effectively outlined the project objectives that were intended to be achieved through the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the rollout of Objective to the corporate areas of the directorate. The stated project objectives included the creation of efficiencies in the ministerial processes and other corporate areas, the reduction of costs associated with hardcopy paper file management, increased transparency of information across the directorate and the alignment of recordkeeping practices with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

3.68

The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified the governance arrangements for the project, including roles and responsibilities for implementation and oversight. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's Chief Operating Officer (COO) Leadership Group and Executive Board had explicit oversight responsibilities and two governance groups were established specifically for the project: the Project Steering Committee and the Objective Working Group. The Objective Working Group was active and involved in a range of activities that supported the project, including meeting with business units to assess and document business units' transition requirements.

3.77

Progress has been made for each of the three objectives outlined in the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) in the 2018 to 2021 period*. A review of the ministerial business process was completed in July 2018, when a report was provided to the directorate detailing its analysis. Progress for the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the wider rollout of Objective has also been made with the Objective rollout being completed in 28 business units by July 2020, at which point the rollout was continuing in the remaining 18 business units.

3.88

Since 1 July 2018, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has increased the number of users of the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS by 724, thereby exceeding its target of 600 new users. The rollout and ongoing use of the Ministerial Module has also seen a reduction in the number of users of the stand-alone version of TRIM to manage ministerial correspondence, with the number of active users in the stand-alone version of TRIM falling from 154 to 64 by 30 June 2021. Systems consolidation is occurring in the directorate, in line with whole-of-government EDRMS expectations. The directorate also provided a substantial contribution in user numbers towards the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, 724 towards the 5,200 target, with one year remaining for the project.

3.98

The transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS commenced in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate during the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project*, with three of the seven pilot sites selected for the project being within the directorate. Building on the work that was completed during the project, in June 2016 the directorate commenced planning for the migration of its other business units to the whole-of-government EDRMS TRIM platform. In planning for the transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS, the directorate identified that digital record management practices varied considerably across the directorate. Variability was both in the practices and in the technology adopted by business units, with multiple stand-alone versions of TRIM, as well as Objective EDRMS being used. Planning documentation prepared in July 2016 indicates that the directorate planned for the transition of the majority of its staff to the whole-of-government TRIM but would also support the continued use of Objective in business units where it was well established. This approach acknowledged that the individual needs of the business units and their prior investment in technology, practice and procedures is an important consideration in building EDRMS capability.

3.112

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's transition to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS was managed by the directorate's Corporate division, with further oversight provided by the directorate's Executive Management Group in 2017 and 2018, and the Senior Executive Group in 2019 and 2020. Key activities were initially scheduled around each business unit's readiness to transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS. By 2019 the transition was managed as a 'business as usual' activity alongside other day-to-day operational management matters within the units themselves rather than as a discrete 'top-down' project. This change in management emphasis reflects the change in priority due to the need to support staff relocating, and subsequently working in a 'paper lite' and Activity Based Work environment.

3.125

In January 2017 the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate planned for 652 users to be transitioned to the whole-of-government EDRMS within a two-year timeframe. An extended timeframe was agreed, in accordance with the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. Between July 2018 and March 2021, the directorate added 847 users to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS and a further 357 users to the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS, thus surpassing initial targets. The directorate has also made progress towards reducing the number of stand-alone TRIM versions it has within the directorate with the number of users within the stand-alone versions decreasing from 346 in December 2019 to 132 in June 2021.

3.146

Community Services Directorate

3.2   In 2018 the Community Services Directorate records management environment was principally a combination of:

- a Child and Youth Record Information System (CYRIS) used by Child and Youth Protection Services. The system was designed to provide *Territory Records Act 2002* compliance through integration with TRIM;

- digitised executive and ministerial records created, accessed and work-flowed within a stand-alone TRIM system (i.e. an EDRMS designed to provide *Territory Records Act 2002* compliance);

- other business systems that were not specifically designed to be *Territory Records Act 2002* compliant for recordkeeping purposes;

- undigitised paper files that were relied upon for operational needs by frontline services; and

- a large volume of legacy paper documentation (and other records according to the definition under the *Territory Records Act 2002*) stored off-premises. This included 161,000 files that were the subject of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, and a further 200,000 Housing ACT files in storage.

3.3   By 2018, the Community Services Directorate's stand-alone TRIM platforms were relatively mature, but TRIM was not essential for day-to-day operations for most of the directorate's 975 staff.[14] The directorate's TRIM platform had initially been established in 2009 and by 2018 contained an estimated 500,000 records. By 2018 TRIM was accessed by approximately 250 users. Figure 3-1 shows staff's usage of TRIM in 2017, based on the number of login episodes.

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[14]   Full time equivalents (FTE), *State of the Service Report* 2019-20, December 2020.
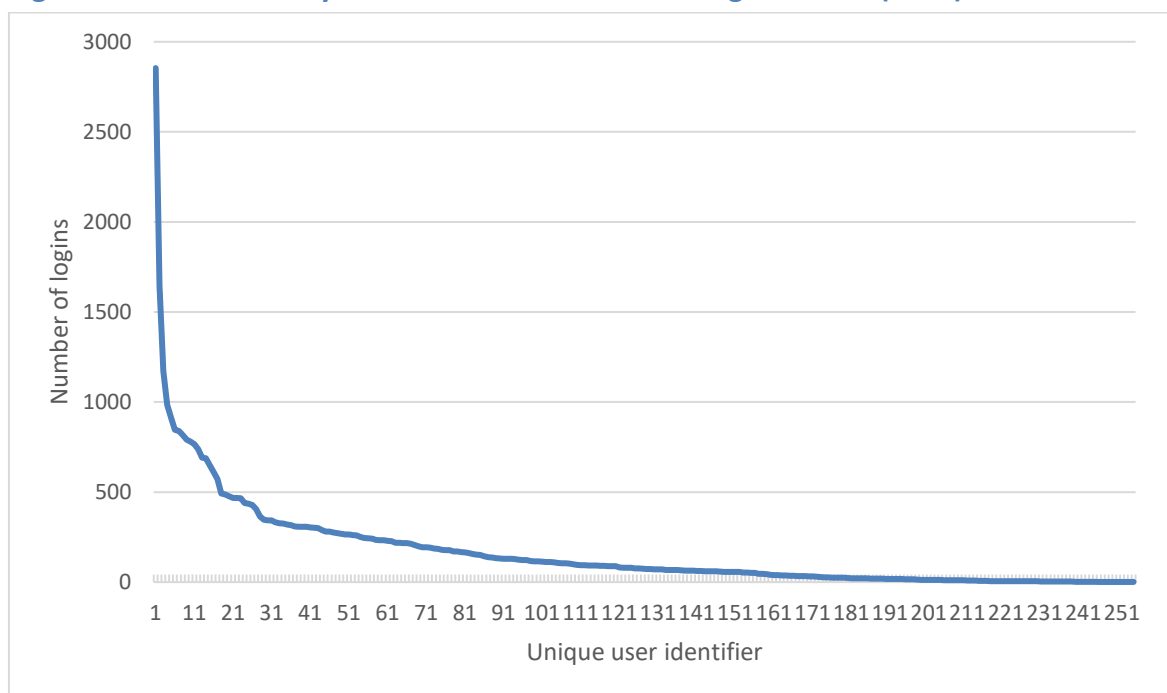
Source: Audit Office, based on Community Services Directorate data

3.4   Figure 3-1 shows that the use of TRIM by Community Services Directorate staff varied significantly. In 2017 there were 254 licensed users of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM versions. Of these users, the median number of login episodes was 74 over the 55-week period, i.e. the average user (based on a median value) logged in 1.3 times a week. Forty-seven of the 254 users (19 per cent) logged in on average once a day. This indicates less than 5 percent of staff (47 of 975) relied on TRIM for their daily work tasks.

3.5   Not known for certain in 2018 was the breadth and nature of paper files that were stored off-premises (refer to paragraph 2.84) and any expectations about how they were to be digitised, including what paper files were already sentenced, and where they were sentenced, and what volume could be destroyed rather than digitised. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this report, the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative included a specific deliverable for the Community Services Directorate to digitise 161,000 case files.

Current state, future state and benefits

3.6   In January 2019, the Community Services Directorate finalised the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project plan. The stated objective of the project is to:

> … realise efficiencies for CSD by digitising files stored off premise, digitising files stored in house, appraising and redesigning work processes for administrative tasks and moving towards all records being managed and accessible from a whole-of-government solution.

Efficiencies and savings

3.7   The project plan for the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project emphasises efficiencies and the generation of savings. It further clarifies what is meant by 'efficiencies' as:

> … realising digital efficiencies for clients, by digitising 161,000 Community Services case files. This work will enable longer-term savings in the cost of storage of paper records and provides a model for similar savings to be achieved in other parts of government.

3.8   The Community Services Directorate's *2018-19 Budget Statement* identified three years of expenditure on the initiative totalling $2.576 million and a fourth year (2021-22) where a $202,000 saving was estimated to be achieved.

Digitisation and EDRMS

3.9   Digitising the volume of records anticipated by the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project is not necessarily reliant on an EDRMS. Digitising records provides the basis for an alternative storage and retrieval system to a paper-based system, and potentially for savings, but not necessarily within an EDRMS.

3.10   Planning for digital records management activities within the Community Services Directorate in 2018 extended beyond the digitisation of off-premises stored paper-based records. It included the directorate's preparatory work for a whole-of-government EDRMS migration of the directorate's staff and records.

3.11   The Community Services Directorate's planning was informed by whole-of-government aims relating to:

- Activity Based Work, as expressed in the directorate's *Towards 2020 initiative* and the ACT Government's *Workforce Transformation Program*;

- consolidation of Government office accommodation, principally at Dickson and Civic, as outlined in the *Government Accommodation Project*; and

- digitally enabling staff in accordance with whole-of-government digital and EDRMS policies, as described in Chapter 2 of this report.

3.12   The Directorate's intended actions in relation to these aims aligned with the first and third deliverables of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative:

- capacity for an additional 5,200 staff to use the ACTPS whole of government digital recordkeeping system. Some of these staff would be Community Services Directorate staff; and

- support for office accommodation savings arising from the Activity Based Work environment, by providing a Territory Records Office team to help business units appropriately manage paper documents before office relocations. This would include the relocation of Community Services Directorate staff from its 11 Moore Street, Civic offices in 2020.

3.13   The *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project addresses a significantly wider range of objectives than the digitisation of 161,000 files, and the development of a model for large volume digitisation and generating savings from a reduced need for physical archiving services. The finalised project plan for the initiative outlined five core components:

> …   1. digitisation of physical files
>
> 2. digitisation of physical files held onsite
>
> 3. analysis and/or redesign of identified impaired/paper-based administrative processes
>
> 4. CSD records compliance review
>
> 5. planning for a move to a single EDRMS solution for CSD records.

3.14   The project plan also notes that the last component relates to a whole-of-government solution and not a directorate-specific one:

> … this project will see the development of plans to move the whole of the Directorate to the all-of-government records management solutions.

3.15   In 2018, the Community Services Directorate's recordkeeping practices included use of hardcopy client files, as well business systems which were not necessarily designed to meet the requirements of holding records in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*. As part of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, the Community Services Directorate received $2.374 million in funding for activities to digitise the 161,000 casefiles that it had in storage. Planning for these activities was finalised in 2019, with the establishment of the directorate's *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project. The project's five core components included activities to support the digitisation of the case files and in so doing to provide a model for wider applicability in the ACT government for digitising large volumes of paper files economically.

Go Digital! project management and governance arrangements

3.16   A suite of records prepared at the time of the January 2019 project plan attest to the Community Services Directorate's intention to manage the five components of the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project as a discrete project, with oversight, direction and accountability coming from a *Go Digital Steering Committee*.

3.17   At the project's initiation in December 2018, key aspects of the directorate's project management approach to the initiative were defined, including:

- the oversighting and authorising functions of the *Go Digital Steering Committee*;

- project scheduling, milestones and timelines. For example, the project anticipated off-premises digitisation to be complete by February 2020 and the directorate's move to a single EDRMS to be complete by November 2020;

- reporting requirements, and risk management; and

- change management and control procedures.

3.18   These aspects of governance were largely established and applied for the purpose of the project.

3.19   There is little evidence of the *Go Digital Steering Committee*'s approval and sign-off of substantive changes to the project and its implementation. Key changes to the project and its implementation resulted from changing directorate priorities, relating to learnings from the project and to office relocation, as well as changes relating to employees' working environment in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Key changes to the project between January 2019 and December 2020 related to:

- the directorate's approach to its existing stand-alone EDRMS and to whole-of-government EDRMS;

- the number of off-premises files capable of being digitised;

- the emphasis on the project as a model for wider applicability across Government; and

- timeframes.

3.20   Further details of the changes are provided in paragraphs 3.28 to 3.40. The reasons for the changes to the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project and its implementation are well documented and were clearly articulated to the *Go Digital Steering Committee.* However, there is little evidence of the Committee's approval and sign-off of the changes via an agreed, revised project plan. Major changes over the life of the four-year project should have been expected, acknowledged and responded to through the approval of revised plans. This would have facilitated more effective monitoring of progress, ensured clarity as to where to focus effort, as well as accountability for the delivery of project activities and outcomes.

Benefits

3.21   In the January 2019 project plan and accompanying documentation, a good level of consideration was given to specifying benefits, and their measurement, while acknowledging limitations:

> The measurements are limited to the data currently available, such as current benchmarking exercises, TRIM data, and existing stockpiles. In future, it is anticipated that other benefit measures will be developed, and baseline data established.

Risk Management

3.22   One particular strength of the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was its approach to risk management. The project benefited from a process of risk identification and discussion at *Go Digital Steering Committee* meetings and the management and resolution of risks through a continuously updated risk log. Risk items were articulated well, and meaningful corrective actions proposed and assigned. Identified risks were closed as appropriate on the risk log.

Monitoring budget and deliverables

3.23   *Go Digital Steering Committee* meeting minutes refer to a regular 'Dashboard' item in which the progress of deliverables, risks and issues are discussed. The Directorate's finance team regularly provides analysis of project costs which are reconciled to project records.

Audit and review activity

3.24   The Community Services Directorate's audit and review committee approved the conduct of an internal audit of the implementation of *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* pilot activity in the Quality, Complaints and Regulation (QCR) branch of the directorate. The QCR branch provided a good basis for examining digitisation and the uptake of EDRMS, because the branch was not a pre-existing directorate TRIM user.

3.25   The June 2020 final audit report identified challenges and learnings in a timely way for other branches and divisions in the directorate to inform their preparations for moving offices and for working within an Activity Based Work environment.

3.26   A widespread practice, encouraged by the Territory Records Office, is for records managers to self-assess their own directorate's 'recordkeeping maturity' using the seven principles that comprise the standard outlined in the *Territory Records Act 2002*. While three principles (i.e., the Describe, Retain, and Access principles) all refer to 'EDRMS', the assessment tool does not ask the assessor to differentiate recordkeeping systems and capabilities in a digital environment from those in a non-digital environment. The Community Services Directorate self-assessment recognised the significant limitations in how its IT-based business systems were set up:

> **In development** [level one of four maturity levels]: There is still more to work to be done to ensure those business systems that create and capture records are configured appropriately to meet recordkeeping requirements ('OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DESCRIBE PRINCIPLE')

3.27   The project management and governance arrangements for the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project, as outlined in the January 2019 project plan, were largely effective. These arrangements included the establishment of the *Go Digital Steering Committee*, the preparation of detailed project delivery schedules including milestones, the identification of risks and issues, reporting requirements and the preparation of change management and control procedures. One weaker aspect of the project was the *Go Digital Steering Committee*'s oversight and authorisation of revisions to the project and its implementation. Better documentation of these changes to the project and its parameters would improve accountability and transparency for the delivery of a major component of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative.

Go Digital! delivery and revisions to its goals

3.28   Within three months of the initiation of the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project, a major revision to its scope was proposed by the Community Services Directorate to the whole-of-government Digital Records Governance Committee.

System consolidation

3.29   The whole-of-government preference, as discussed at the Digital Records Governance Committee, was for the Community Services Directorate to migrate its existing stand-alone TRIM system data and users to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS in 2019. A March 2019 business case, prepared by the Community Services Directorate for the Digital Records Governance Committee, considered three scenarios, and identified the directorate's preferred position to migrate its data and users in late 2020:

> This business case seeks support from the Governance Committee for CSD to continue to use [the stand-alone] CSD TRIM as its core records management solution, until late 2020.
>
> CSD TRIM is functioning within the organisation as a records management solution for physical and digital records. This proposal does not seek to enhance EDRMS capabilities, however the volume of records managed in the instance will increase due to the digitisation project.
>
> By enabling a migration in 2020, CSD and the Government, can better manage the risks to CSD records that a rushed migration would otherwise entail.

3.30   The directorate's position was influenced by its understanding of weaknesses in the existing data sets:

> CSD TRIM has numerous instances of 'dirty data', i.e. data that has errors. These errors include records duplication, identification number duplication, incorrect sentencing (which can affect the archival record as well as illegal record disposal), uncoupling, incorrect description and non-compliant record types. CSD, working with their storage supplier, recently undertook an audit to identify these issues and have instigated a clean-up for records stored in CSD TRIM. Dirty data carries risk, especially of non-access. Migrating dirty data does not just transfer the risk to the new application, it increases it.

3.31   The Digital Records Governance Committee respected the Community Services Directorate's preferred position. This is a good example of moderation and coordination between whole-of-government and directorate preferences, noting that the delay would still enable the directorate to achieve the original 2018 to 2022 timeframe of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative.

Project scope reduction

3.32   The Community Services Directorate's preference to delay its migration to the whole-of-government EDRMS in late 2020 was reflected in its project risk log and a proposed revision to the scope of the project in February 2020.

3.33   Two high-rated risks in the log relate to the proposed transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS. In August 2019 the following high-rated risk was added to the log:

> Risk: Complexity of CSD migration into WhoG EDRMS is much higher than anticipated
>
> Source: Capability, timeframes & costs of migration are currently unspecified but likely to be beyond existing resources to enable CSD to migrate within project timeframes
>
> Impact: The project is unable to complete key milestones within time and budget

3.34 In December 2019, a second high-rated risk was added to the log:

> Risk: Transition to the WHOG EDRMS
>
> Source: Communication plan and meetings CSD were not overly confident into the moving to the new dataset. Also, comes down to resources, staff, and permissions on what CSD staff have in the dataset to be able to do their duties.
>
> Impact: Resourcing and staff would need to be involved to migrate metadata and images into the WHOG dataset with consultation and mapping. Potential loss of data and images.

3.35 By February 2020, approximately a year after the initiation of the project, a revised project plan was discussed and approved by the Community Services Directorate's *Go Digital Steering Committee.* The committee minutes reflect a major adjustment to the scope of the project:

> …There are now only 8 stages rather than 10. We have removed the move to the EDRMS and records compliance.

3.36 The *Go Digital Steering Committee* approved the removal of the actions relating to 'moving towards all records being managed and accessible from a whole-of-government solution'.

Project scope broadened: Go Digital Fast Track

3.37 By the end of March 2020, another major change to the scope of the project was signalled. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 the need for expediency led to the development of a *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan. The *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan proposed to continue the digitisation of the large volume of legacy documentation and commence an 'on-demand' digitisation service for documentation in current use. However, the primary purpose of the fast-track project was to support the widespread use of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM (i.e., not the whole-of-government TRIM version) by all staff needing remote access to records:

> Go Digital was deemed a critical project – the outputs of the project would assist CSD staff to access and use information digitally, enabling work from home.

3.38 There is no evidence that the *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan was approved or actioned by the *Go Digital Steering Committee*, but the minutes of the next meeting on 25 August 2020 state:

> Due to Covid-19 pandemic, project was put on to focus on setting up and training staff to use TRIM
>
> Organise access to TRIM, staff training on TRIM and looking into reducing costs of storage …

3.39 The *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan prioritised the aim of achieving wider usage of the Community Services Directorate's pre-existing stand-alone TRIM system, rather than a migration of pre-existing directorate TRIM data and newly digitised content to the whole-of-government TRIM platform. This is a significant departure from the project's initial intentions, but one that was building on an established platform. The approach also provided the greatest level of control and certainty over outcomes during the uncertain work environment and the widespread practice of remote working in 2020.

3.40   A major change to the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was signalled after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The need for expediency led to the development of a *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan, the primary purpose of which was to support the widespread use of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM (i.e., not the whole-of-government TRIM version) by all staff needing remote access to records. There was inadequate documentation associated with the *Go Digital Steering Committee's* formal authorisation and approval of this major departure, but it is clear that the *Go Digital! Realising Digital Efficiencies for CSD* project was able to adapt to accommodate the rapidly changing circumstances of work practices in the Community Services Directorate in 2020. The March 2020 *Go Digital Fast Track* revised project responded effectively to immediate needs.

Project achievements

Digitisation

3.41   The *Go Digital!* project plan of January 2019 and the business case of March 2019 referred to the broad aim of concluding all the Community Services Directorate's off-premises digitisation within two years.[15] The expectation was that a contracted provider would assist to achieve this and would focus on an estimated 161,000 paper documents. This would represent approximately 67 per cent of the project's total costs. Digitised documents would be incorporated into the directorate's stand-alone TRIM system in the first instance. An unspecified number of on-premises documents were also expected to be digitised by directorate staff and incorporated into the directorate's pre-existing TRIM system.

3.42   A number of implementation issues emerged in 2019, which were identified as part of the pilot phase of the project prior to engaging an external large-volume digitisation provider. For example, *Go Digital Steering Committee* minutes report:

- a lack of pre-determined access controls for 55,000 (client and HR) files to be brought into TRIM, thereby affecting the rate of in-house digitisation;

- no classification data attached to 300,000 documents to be brought into TRIM;

- a lack of clear rules on identifying the authoritative record amongst a number of copies; and

- insufficient and inaccurate historical metadata to enable sentencing and destruction.

3.43   By May 2019 a *Go Digital Steering Committee* member commented:

> We are creating a lot of fixes for problems we didn't know existed, BUT we are glad to have found the problems this early on.

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[15] 'Off-premises' is a term used by the Community Services Directorate, which differentiates between records held in storage as opposed to those records held at its office at 11 Moore Street.

3.44 By August 2019, the *Go Digital Steering Committee* discussed delays in completing the 'proof of concept' stage and in preparing the procurement documentation for the external supplier for the digitisation services. By February 2020, off-premises digitisation was reported to be 'going well' with 1,200 files being digitised per week, while in-house digitisation was around 100 files per week. A total of 16,000 files were reported to have been digitised and teams were reported to be on track to complete a total of 60,000 within the available resources and timeframe. However, committee members cast doubt on the achievability of the original objective of digitising 161,000 off-premises records:

> The business case originally stated 161,000 but this was never going to happen. Bear in mind that the purpose of Go Digital is to act as a Proof of Concept (POC) and produce blueprints for the [whole-of government].

3.45 By August 2020 *Go Digital Steering Committee* records identify that four of the revised eight stages of the project, including the key activity of digitising 60,000 files, had been completed.

3.46 *Go Digital Steering Committee* records indicate that progress towards four of the eight outcomes of the revised *Go Digital Fast Track* project has been achieved, including the digitisation of 60,000 casefiles. However, it is unlikely that the original outcome of the digitisation of 161,000 casefiles will be achieved. It is unclear what is intended for the residual un-digitised 100,000 files.

Transition to EDRMS

3.47 In accordance with the *Go Digital Fast Track* project, the revised priority for the Community Services Directorate was the transition of staff to the directorate's stand-alone TRIM platform and preparation for the office move and introduction of an Activity Based Work environment from October 2020.

3.48 Figures 3-2 to 3-4 show various aspects of Community Services Directorate usage of EDRMS:

- Figure 3-2 - user accounts created for the directorate's whole-of-government TRIM system;

- Figure 3-3 - the number of users of the directorate's stand-alone Objective system (this relates to Housing ACT staff); and

- Figure 3-4 – the number of users of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM system.

Figure 3-2 **Community Services Directorate whole-of-government EDRMS TRIM user accounts created (July 2018 to March 2021)**
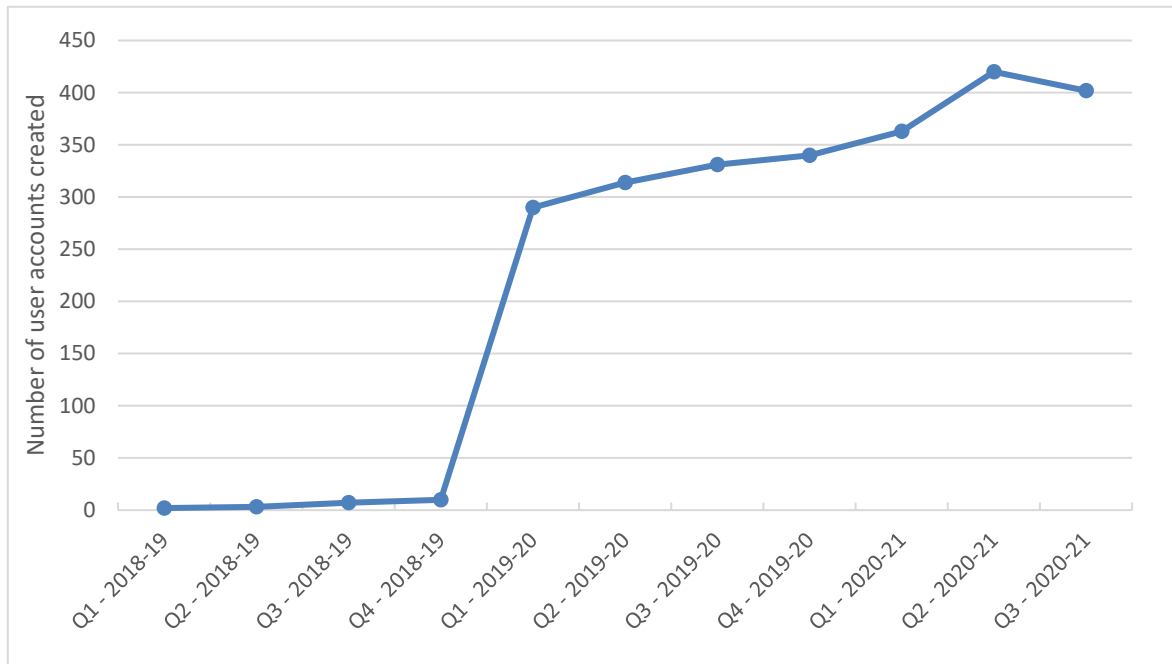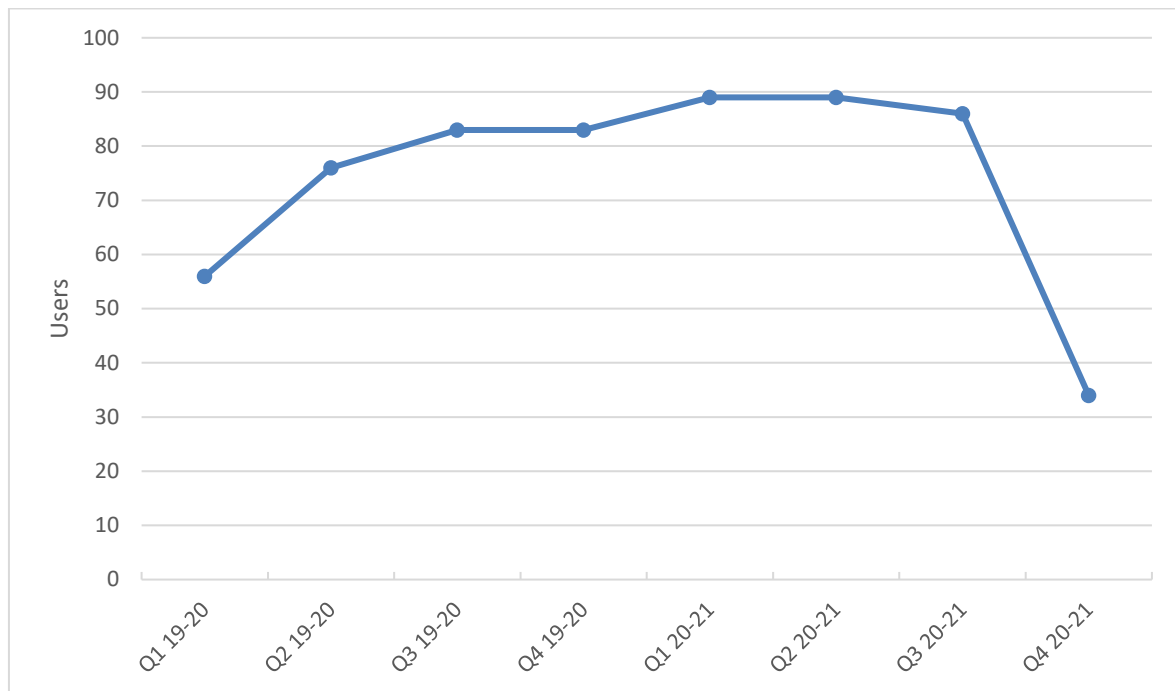

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services user account data

3.49   A review of the number of new user accounts created for the Community Services Directorate's whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS shows:

- few new user accounts were created in 2018-19; and

- in the first quarter of 2019-20 280 new users were added to the directorate's whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS. The number of new users being added each quarter steadily increased over this time, with 402 users being added by the third quarter of 2020-21.

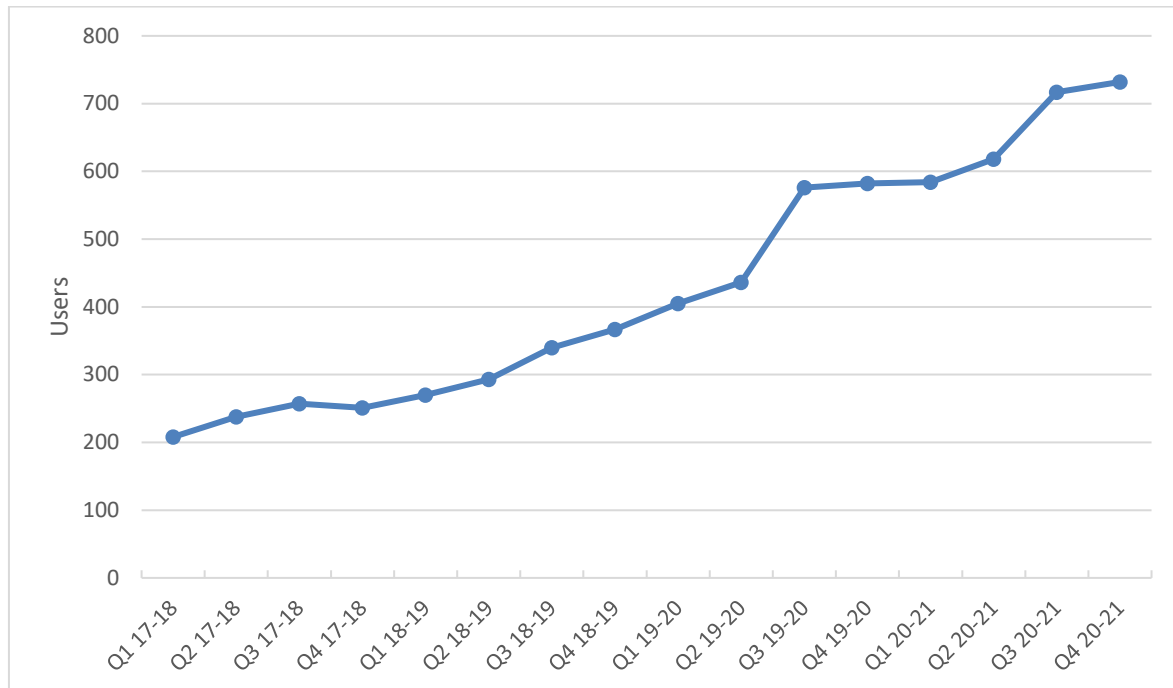**Figure 3-3   Housing ACT – stand-alone Objective users (July 2019 to June 2021)**

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services billing data

3.50   A review of the number of users of the Community Services Directorate's stand-alone Objective system (relating to Housing ACT) shows:

* the number of users increased from 56 in the first quarter of 2019-20 to 86 in the third quarter of 2020-21; and

* there was a significant decrease in the number of users between the third quarter of 2020-21 to the fourth quarter of 2020-21. The number of users decreased from 86 to 34.

Figure 3-4   Community Services Directorate stand-alone TRIM users (July 2017 to June 2021)

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services billing data

3.51   A review of the number of users of the Community Services Directorate's stand-alone TRIM system shows the number of users increased from 208 in the first quarter of 2017-18 to 732 in the fourth quarter of 2020-21.

3.52   The Community Services Directorate supports a significant number of user accounts in three distinct systems. As at 1 July 2020 there were an estimated:

- 83 active users of the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS;

- 293 active users of the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS; and

- 582 active users of Community Services Directorate stand-alone TRIM accounts.

3.53   These three system user groups are unlikely to be mutually exclusive. However, it is likely that the majority of the Community Services Directorate's 975 staff are EDRMS-enabled, and that at least a substantial minority (293 of 975 FTE) are whole-of-government EDRMS users.[16]

3.54   The shift in priorities of the Community Services Directorate through the *Go Digital Fast Track* project*,* due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen a substantial increase in the number of staff using both the directorate's stand-alone and whole-of-government versions of the TRIM EDRMS. The increase in active users indicates that the revised priority, outlined in the *Go Digital Fast Track* project plan, of enabling directorate staff to work from home or within an Activity Based Work (office-based) environment has been achieved. One negative aspect

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[16]   Full time equivalents (FTE), *State of the Service Report* 2019-20, December 2020

to the directorate's revised EDRMS priorities in 2019 and 2020 is that there is further work to do to consolidate TRIM use within the whole-of-government TRIM platform. This may occur when the timing is more opportune. Accordingly, the Community Services Directorate has not to date made as significant a contribution to the whole-of-government EDRMS goal of 5,200 users by June 2022 as was originally envisaged.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

3.55   The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has had a form of Objective in use since 2003. In December 2017 it was estimated that approximately 250 staff across a range of business units were familiar with using Objective through the directorate's stand-alone system. The directorate was also a user of a stand-alone TRIM platform at the time, which was used by 150 account holders for the purpose of managing correspondence raised by the community and directed to ministers.

3.56   In December 2017 the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate committed to obtaining an additional 600 Objective licences from Shared Services ICT for the purpose of the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project*. At that time, the directorate negotiated with its Objective vendor to include the use of a Ministerial Module in the additional Objective licences that were being obtained from Shared Services ICT as part of the rollout. Improvement in the use of Objective for managing ministerial correspondence had been identified by the directorate as important, given the wide range of responsibilities it has in delivering services to the ACT community.

3.57   Planning for the rollout of Objective across the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate commenced in late 2017 and in March 2018 the directorate finalised the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018). The Project Plan identified a need for consolidation due to the multiple information and record management systems in use across the directorate. The Project Plan also outlined the improvements to be made to the directorate's management of its ministerial correspondence.

3.58   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified three components to be delivered:

- rollout of Objective EDRMS to corporate areas;[17]

- implementation of the Ministerial Module; and

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17   Corporate areas included the following divisions and branches: the Directorate's Executive; Innovation and Customer Experience; Communications; Governance and Ministerial Services; People and Capability; Safety and Wellbeing; Finance, Legal and Sustainability; Transport Planning and Active Travel; Roads; City Presentation; NoWaste; Libraries ACT; Cemeteries; Yarralumla Nursery; Capital Linen; Transport Canberra Operations; Transport Canberra Commercial; Light Rail Stages 1 and 2.

- a business process review related to Ministerial, Assembly and Cabinet business within the directorate.

Timing

3.59 According to the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) the three components were to be completed by June 2019 on the basis that the first phase of the project had already commenced in November 2017. The 600 new Objective users were to be migrated to Objective at the rate of 300 in each of the two financial years: 2017-18 and 2018-19. Around half of the targeted new users were expected to need to also work within the new Ministerial Module of Objective.

3.60 The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) also references the timely completion of the project as a precursor to the directorate's 'strategic goal of adapting to Activity Based Working by 2020'.

Resourcing

3.61 The initiative to increase the uptake of a whole-of-government EDRMS in was not supported by a discrete funding appropriation. The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) provided an estimate of the cost to be met from recurrent funding to the directorate:

- $675,000 to increase Objective user numbers by 600 over the two years of the project;

- $652,862 per annum (ongoing) thereafter to support a user cohort of 732 Objective users; and

- a net cost of $93,200 for the implementation of the Ministerial Module.

3.62 The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has had a form of Objective in use since 2003. In December 2017 it was estimated that approximately 250 staff across a range of business units were familiar with using Objective. A stand-alone version of TRIM was also used by approximately 150 staff to manage ministerial correspondence. In December 2017, planning commenced for the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project*. The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified three components: the rollout of Objective to an additional 600 users across the directorate; the implementation of a Ministerial Module to manage ministerial correspondence; and a business process review of ministerial correspondence and cabinet business across the directorate. These components provide a discrete, timely and practical focus, which improve the prospects of successful implementation as the components address whole-of-government EDRMS aims while simultaneously addressing directorate-specific goals.

Current state, future state and benefits

Rollout of Objective across the directorate

3.63   The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate identified the need to expand the use of a whole-of-government EDRMS across the directorate. The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) provided some detail of the directorate's assessment of its current state:

> TCCS currently has 132 Objective licences and will be expanding access to a further 600 licences over two years, which will take the total to 732 licences. This will result in 78% of TCCS office and field-based workforce having access to Objective as the primary information and record management system.
>
> The operational nature and the large public facing functions of the Directorate means that there is a high level of engagement between the community and our Minister. This results in a high volume of ministerial correspondence, constituent enquiries, briefings and Cabinet submissions travelling in between the Directorate and the Minister's Office. Objective Ministerial module can be used to better manage the workflow of ministerial tasks and identify opportunities for improvement based on comprehensive information management and reporting capabilities.

Ministerial Module and the management of ministerial business

3.64   A key deliverable of the project was to be the implementation of the Ministerial Module of Objective. To support this implementation, the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) envisaged that a review of business processes within the Ministerial, Assembly and Cabinet business unit of the directorate would be conducted.

3.65   In early 2018 the directorate engaged an external consultant to review current business processes of the Ministerial, Assembly and Cabinet business unit. The purpose of the review was to understand what the business processes need to achieve, how these could be conducted better and how the Ministerial Module could be configured to achieve improved efficiency. The resulting report provided analysis based on an examination of processes and practices, and ministerial correspondence processed between August 2017 and January 2018.[18]

Project objectives and outcomes

3.66   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) outlined the project objectives that were intended to be achieved through the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the rollout of Objective to the corporate areas of the directorate. The stated project objectives included the creation of efficiencies in the ministerial processes and other corporate areas, the reduction of costs associated with hardcopy paper file management, increased transparency of information across the directorate and the alignment of recordkeeping practices with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

[18]   *Ministerial Process Review – Transport Canberra and City Services,* KPMG (July 2018)

3.67   Eight specific targets and outcomes were also documented in the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018), which also included detail on the current state (i.e., baseline) and the future state (i.e., target level). The plan outlined five targets for the Ministerial Module implementation and three for the broader rollout of Objective across the directorate. For example, a target for the Ministerial Module was to 'decrease the number of approvals required …'. It was expected that the number of approval steps required would be reduced from 13 to four. For the broader rollout of Objective, three targets were set. For example, a target was set that 100 per cent of 'information and records [within Objective] are compliant with the *Territory Records Act 2002*' by the conclusion of the project.

3.68   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) effectively articulated a high-level assessment of the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's 'current state' and 'future state' for its whole-of-government EDRMS activities. The Project Plan effectively outlined the project objectives that were intended to be achieved through the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the rollout of Objective to the corporate areas of the directorate. The stated project objectives included the creation of efficiencies in the ministerial processes and other corporate areas, the reduction of costs associated with hardcopy paper file management, increased transparency of information across the directorate and the alignment of recordkeeping practices with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

Project management and governance arrangements

Project Governance

3.69   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified that multiple officers across the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Shared Services ICT had roles and responsibilities for the delivery of the project. The Project Plan identified that a Project Steering Committee would be established, which would comprise a project manager, an implementation manager, a director from within the Governance and Ministerial Branch as well as the directorate's Chief Information Officer and Chief Operating Officer. Figure 3-5 outlines the governance structure for the project.

Figure 3-5 **Governance arrangements for the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project***
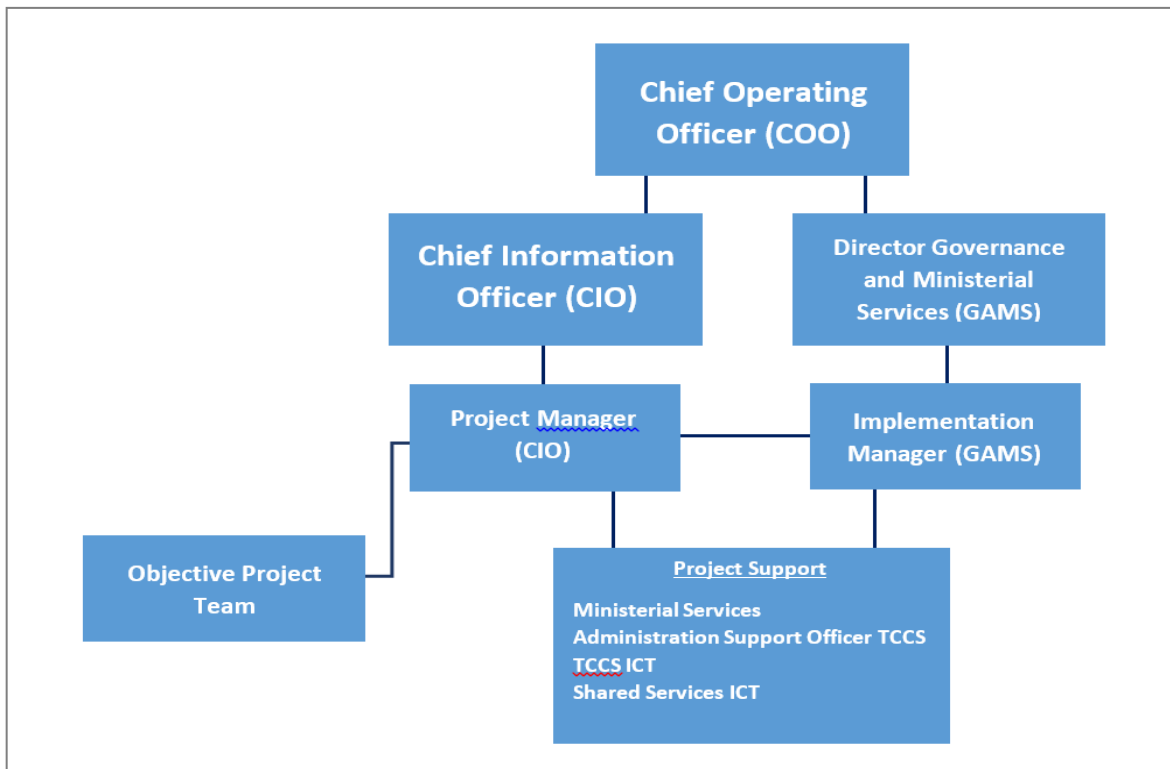
Source: *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018), Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

3.70 The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) also outlined the reporting requirements for those oversighting the delivery of the project, as shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 **Reporting requirements in the Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan**

Reporting forum	Responsible Officer(s)	Reporting requirements	Frequency
Project Steering Committee	Project Manager (lead) Implementation Manager Director Governance CIO COO	Manage Risk Register Progress Report	Fortnightly
COO Leadership Group	Director Governance	Project Performance Update	Weekly
TCCS Executive Board	COO	Project Performance Update	As requested
Objective Working Group	Representatives of Governance and Ministerial Services	Workshopping: Issues register File structure Records Management Training and Education	As required

Source: *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018), Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Project Steering Committee

3.71   A Project Steering Committee was established to oversee the conduct of the project.

Chief Operating Officer (COO) Leadership Group

3.72   The Chief Operating Officer (COO) Leadership Group received Project Performance Reports, which were referred to as 'snapshot reports'. Nine reports were produced between September 2018 and May 2019 and presented for review. The reports were planned to be presented fortnightly, but in practice were provided at intervals of three to eight weeks apart. The reports provided an update on the progress of the project, including the business units that had been transitioned to Objective, progress against milestones and targets, identified risks and planned activities for the following period. Written reports were not prepared or provided to the Leadership Group after May 2019 as the group was provided with verbal updates in lieu of documented reports.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Executive Board

3.73   Similar to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) Leadership Group, the Executive Board received Project Performance Reports.

Objective Working Group

3.74   The Objective Working Group's purpose was distinct to that of the Project Steering Committee in that its primary purpose was to undertake the specific tasks required for implementation. For example, the Objective Working Group was responsible for the identification of priority areas for implementation, the creation of user accounts, the organisation and conduct of workshops to develop requirements and the development and delivery of training for new users.

3.75   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified an intention for the Objective Working Group to report its activities through workshops, addressing its reporting requirements with regards to issues, file structure and training. The Objective Working Group met with the various users and business units within the directorate that were transitioning to Objective to discuss a range of issues, including initial business requirements, folder structures, access requirements and transition tasks. Minutes of these meetings were not taken.

Risk Register

3.76   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified that a risk register was to be developed and managed in line with the ACT Government risk management framework. The project manager and implementation manager were responsible for identifying, analysing, ranking, and mitigating risks for this project. Implementation progress reports prepared by the implementation manager were to be prepared to highlight risks to the Executives responsible for the project.

3.77   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified the governance arrangements for the project, including roles and responsibilities for implementation and oversight. The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate's Chief Operating Officer (COO) Leadership Group and Executive Board had explicit oversight responsibilities and two governance groups were established specifically for the project: the Project Steering Committee and the Objective Working Group. The Objective Working Group was active and involved in a range of activities that supported the project, including meeting with business units to assess and document business units' transition requirements.

Project delivery

3.78   Project Performance Reports and other documentation provide information on the delivery of the project for the period January 2018 to April 2021.

EDRMS wider rollout

3.79   Project planning for the wider rollout indicates that the rollout was scheduled by division or business unit. A high level 'rollout plan' identified when Objective would be rolled out to individual divisions within the directorate, although planning documents did not provide an indication of the number of users that would be added within each division.

3.80   Project implementation documentation was prepared that identified and tracked the rollout of Objective and the Ministerial Module to individual business units within each of the directorate's divisions. The documentation showed each business unit's progress in migrating content and the support provided for the business unit's users to use the system. A status of 'completed', 'in progress' or 'delayed' was provided in each case.

3.81   Project implementation documentation identify a total of 46 business units in which Objective was intended to be rolled out. In June 2020, there were 28 business units which were marked as completed, 16 marked as 'in progress' and two as 'delayed'. In July 2020, there were 29 business units which were marked as completed and two business units remained marked as 'delayed'. By August 2020, these two business units were marked as 'in progress'. Reports prepared between September 2020 and April 2021 did not provide any further detail on progress that had been made since August 2020.

Ministerial Module

3.82   The implementation of the Ministerial Module commenced in March 2018. A range of activities were completed between March 2018 and July 2018, including the conduct of workshops to determine specifications, the creation of user accounts, user acceptance testing and deployment to staff.

3.83   By July 2018, the configuration and testing of the Ministerial Module had been completed. As identified in a rollout schedule, the module was made available to the City Presentation business unit; the first business unit to use and trial the module. A project update noted that:

City Presentation will trial the Objective Ministerial Module. From this date, incoming ministerial correspondence will be processed in Objective. Our MACS [Ministerial, Assembly and Cabinet] team will provide on-hand support to City Presentation staff during this time. We will use this trial to test the module and finalise processes and procedures to ensure the experience is seamless and that it removes the burden of processing ministerials manually.

3.84   Following the trial within the City Presentation business unit, the Ministerial Module was made available to Roads ACT at the end of July 2018 followed by Capital Works by the end of August 2018. The module was scheduled to be rolled out from September 2018 to all other relevant areas of the directorate.

Ministerial process review

3.85   In July 2018, the consultant that conducted the review of the ministerial processes provided its final report to the Directorate. The report provided a detailed assessment of the 'current state' and detailed issues hindering the directorate's ability to manage correspondence within a ten-day target. In addition to documenting the methodology used for the review, the report detailed a 'future state' for the processing of ministerial correspondence within the directorate.

3.86   Approval of the intended future state and authority to proceed with the implementation of the Ministerial Module was sought from and provided by the Director-General in July 2018. In a brief provided to the Director-General it was noted that:

> … the TCCS Governance and Ministerial Services branch has been progressing the development and implementation of Objective. TCCS currently has multiple information and record management systems in place. Only a limited number of team members across TCCS are using Objective. Currently information is stored across TRIM (primary storage system), TCCS shared drives and Objective. To address the issues associated with multiple systems, Objective will be rolled out across TCCS as the primary information and records management system.
>
> …
>
> The KPMG Review advises that the configuration of Objective should be finalised to align with the process before it can be completed.

3.87   The July 2018 brief also provided an update of activities that had been completed to date noting that user acceptance testing of the Ministerial Module was completed in the week of 28 May 2018 and that the module was being trialled in the City Presentation business unit. The brief also noted:

> TCCS will have over 350 Objective licences by July 2018.This is around 200 more than what TCCS currently operates with on TRIM. The additional licences will enable [Ministerial Services] to access a larger number of TCCS staff on one system. This will significantly improve [Ministerial Services'] ability to circulate and track ministerial documents, and most importantly protect and track Cabinet documents from the drafting stage of the process.

3.88   Progress has been made for each of the three objectives outlined in the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) in the 2018 to 2021 period. A review of the ministerial business process was completed in July 2018, when a report was provided to the

directorate detailing its analysis. Progress for the implementation of the Ministerial Module and the wider rollout of Objective has also been made with the Objective rollout being completed in 28 business units by July 2020, at which point the rollout was continuing in the remaining 18 business units.

Project achievements

Wider rollout of Objective EDRMS

3.89   Progress in implementing the first component of the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) can be measured by identifying the number of users that have migrated to Objective over time. While data on the number of business units and 'objects' (e.g., documents) migrated into Objective, and the number of training sessions held, was presented in progress monitoring reports and internal updates within the directorate the reports did not indicate:

- the total number of Objective users migrating to the system over the course of the project; or

- the level of reduction in the use of stand-alone TRIM user accounts by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate for ministerial business.

3.90   Account creation and billing data identifies significant growth in the number of users of Objective across the directorate. Account creation data shows that between 1 July 2018 and 31 March 2021 there were 787 new user accounts created for Objective. Billing data indicates the increase in the number of Objective EDRMS users between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2021 to be 724. In either instance, the number surpasses the planned 600 additional users the directorate was aiming to migrate to Objective through the *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project*. However, the original completion date of June 2019, and implementation period of two years have not been achieved.

3.91   Figure 3-6 shows the number of whole-of-government Objective users in the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate for each quarter for the financial years 2017-18 to 2020-21 and the number of stand-alone TRIM users over the same period.

Figure 3-6   Changes in numbers of EDRMS users in Transport Canberra and City Services
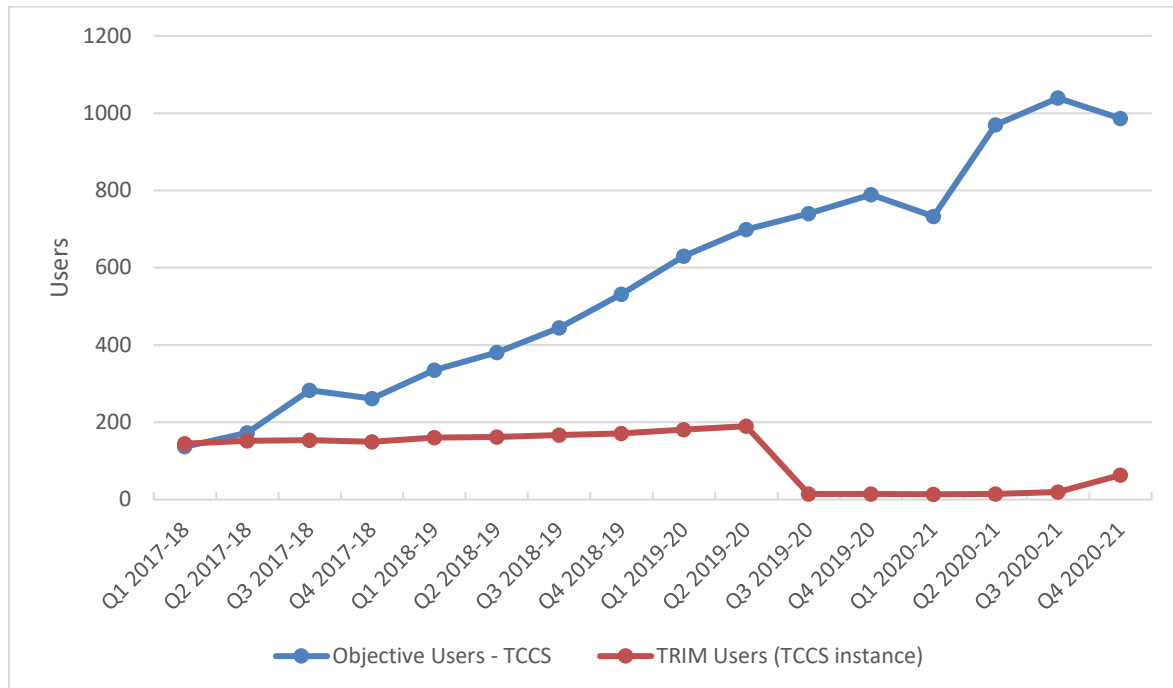
3.92   A review of the number of whole-of-government Objective users in the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, and the number of stand-alone TRIM users, between 2017-18 and 2020-21 shows:

- the number of users of the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS increased from 137 to 986; and

- the number of users of the directorate's stand-alone TRIM EDRMS decreased from 145 to 64. This related to the decreased use of the TRIM EDRMS as the management of ministerial correspondence was consolidated into the whole-of-government EDRMS.[19]

3.93   This shows the project's aims have been achieved, albeit over a longer period than the proposed two-year timeframe.

Supporting system users to maximise benefits

3.94   The *Objective Upgrade and Implementation Project Plan* (March 2018) identified activities for the establishment of governance arrangements for the ongoing operation of Objective within the directorate once the implementation was complete.

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[19]   The number of users within the directorate's stand-alone TRIM reduced to 15 by March 2019 but has grown to 64 by June 2021. Overall, there has been a reduction in the number of users over the four-year period.

3.95   The *Objective Governance Framework* was prepared by the directorate in July 2018. It aims to establish the 'roles, responsibilities and key principles for the administration and governance of Objective' within the directorate. The framework documents the roles and responsibilities of the directorate's executive, record managers and system administrators and provides detail on the folder structure and how business units can create folders to support their activities. A review of the framework was expected to be undertaken in July 2019, but this was not undertaken as planned and is now two years' overdue (as at July 2021).

3.96   The *Objective Governance Framework* also provides guidance on the levels of access that each user should be granted. The framework notes that a key guiding principle for the use of Objective is that it should facilitate information sharing across the directorate. The framework states that:

> To support the key guiding principles of Objective as an information records management system, facilitating access to records collaboratively across the Directorate is critical. However, access to records between TCCS staff should only be restricted when there is a business need or when restricted access is required by law.

3.97   As intended, the directorate updated its *Record Management Policy* and *Record Management Procedures* to reflect the implementation and the use of Objective across the directorate. The procedures document stipulates that Objective EDRMS is the principal digital recordkeeping system. It also documents comprehensive guidance and required actions on how to manage information.

3.98   Since 1 July 2018, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has increased the number of users of the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS by 724, thereby exceeding its target of 600 new users. The rollout and ongoing use of the Ministerial Module has also seen a reduction in the number of users of the stand-alone version of TRIM to manage ministerial correspondence, with the number of active users in the stand-alone version of TRIM falling from 154 to 64 by 30 June 2021. Systems consolidation is occurring in the directorate, in line with whole-of-government EDRMS expectations. The directorate also provided a substantial contribution in user numbers towards the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative, 724 towards the 5,200 target, with one year remaining for the project.

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

3.99   In 2015 there were four stand-alone TRIM versions across the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. Following Access Canberra's incorporation into the directorate in December 2014, there were also over 400 Objective EDRMS users.

3.100 In a February 2015 minute that sought approval from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's Executive Management Group to participate in the

2015 *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project*, certain areas of the directorate were identified as particularly suitable for the whole-of-government TRIM project:

> ... proposed EDRMS deployment would not feature integration with line of business systems such as transactional or case management systems but would concentrate on managing documents of the type created using MS Office environments. This means the project would be best suited to policy-type agencies rather than transactional areas.

3.101   The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate provided three of the seven pilot sites that participated in the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* that commenced in August 2015.

3.102   By June 2016, the first 98 staff were operating within the newly specified whole-of-government TRIM system. Forty-nine of these 'early adopters' were Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate staff working in the Policy and Cabinet Division.

3.103   In the latter stages of the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project* the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate commenced planning for the further migration of its teams to the whole-of-government EDRMS TRIM platform. Executive Management Group minutes from June 2016 highlight the importance of identifying the motivating factors and the 'appetite' in particular business units within the directorate for moving to EDRMS:

> Corporate has a program of record keeping reviews in place with business units who have identified an appetite for improved records management (both electronic and physical) and/or those who are moving to Activity Based Work (ABW) arrangements, to rationalise electronic group data stores and improve physical records management practices.

Current state, future state and benefits

Multiple stand-alone TRIM versions

3.104   In 2015 multiple stand-alone TRIM versions in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate were acknowledged to be a suboptimal approach to records management. The different TRIM versions were used for different functions. Staff needed to be able to work across these multiple versions using different business rules and this resulted in complexity and duplication of effort. The circumstances associated with the Objective EDRMS were similar. Given its use over an extended period since 2003 within the Office of Regulatory Services (Access Canberra's predecessor) it was subject to an even greater level of proliferation in its system design and functionality than stand-alone TRIM versions.

3.105   In June 2016 a minute to the Executive Management Group identified recordkeeping challenges beyond the operation of pre-existing EDRMS platforms:

> Digital recordkeeping practices across the Directorate vary considerably in scope and quality, with many records existing in uncontrolled locations, including network drives and personal/shared email accounts.

3.106   A further driver of the migration of staff to EDRMS in 2016 was the adoption of an Activity Based Work environment across areas of ACT Government operations and in particular, large areas of the directorate's existing office spaces, namely the Nara Building in Civic and the Cosmopolitan Building in Woden (where many of Access Canberra's staff are located).

Integration with whole-of-government EDRMS activities

3.107   In January 2017 the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate established plans to progress the rollout of the whole-of-government TRIM from an existing 200 users to a proposed 600 users across the directorate's 2,362 staff.[20] A large group of between 300 to 400 of Access Canberra's 555 staff were already able to use Objective EDRMS.[21] A January 2017 Executive Management Group report acknowledged the importance of maintaining capability across both of the two preferred whole-of-government EDRMS platforms, i.e. Objective and TRIM. In the case of Objective EDRMS:

> Areas of Access Canberra and Revenue Management use Objective as their EDRMS. Certain staff from Property Group, and Procurement and Capital Works also require access to Objective to share information with the Asbestos Response Taskforce.

3.108   In 2017 directorate-level planning for a desired future state for Objective was absent. However, within Access Canberra, where most Objective users were located, an initiative referred to as *Project Keystone* was endorsed by the Access Canberra Executive in September 2017. Its aim was to facilitate the migration of the records of 29 targeted business units within Access Canberra into Objective, and to support Objective system users to achieve 'day-to-day' functionality in the EDRMS environment in order to achieve the ultimate goal of Access Canberra being a paper-lite organisation.

3.109   Within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the discontinuation of the four stand-alone TRIM versions was anticipated, and it was recognised that the savings from this would only eventuate once the estimated 600 users were migrated to the whole-of-government TRIM platform. A two-year timeframe was identified.

3.110   By June 2018, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's whole-of-government TRIM activities aligned and integrated with those of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative*.* By June 2018, more wide-ranging and strategic intentions relating to the *Government Accommodation Project* and the *Workforce Transformation Program* were beginning to provide more pressing and inflexible timeframes that records managers needed to respond to. For example, the relocation of multiple directorates into two purpose-built and centrally-located offices in Dickson and Civic, at the time scheduled for 2020, concentrated attention on the need for an imminent solution on an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 files as well as a range of

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[20]   FTE in June 2017, *State of the Service Report* (2016-17)

[21]   FTE in June 2017, *State of the Service Report* (2016-17)

institutional curios located in the basement of the Nara building that had accumulated since self-Government.

3.111 Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate planning documents relating to EDRMS prior to the commencement of the June 2018 *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative identify the future benefits of consolidation of the directorate's staff within whole-of-government TRIM as:

- improved management of our asset (our records), including the reduction in the potential for the asset to be lost, damaged or destroyed – as they are no longer managed as a physical paper record

- less creation, storage, retrieval and handling of paper records

- faster access to and location of relevant information with more metadata information attached to the record improving the search potential

- less duplication of information and better version control

- improved ability to provide accurate, timely and transparent responses for information requests such as FOI requests, and

- the potential for the re-use of information and improved information sharing across the Directorate and between Directorates.

3.112 The transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS commenced in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate during the *One ACTPS Digital Recordkeeping Capability Project*, with three of the seven pilot sites selected for the project being within the directorate. Building on the work that was completed during the project, in June 2016 the directorate commenced planning for the migration of its other business units to the whole-of-government EDRMS TRIM platform. In planning for the transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS, the directorate identified that digital record management practices varied considerably across the directorate. Variability was both in the practices and in the technology adopted by business units, with multiple stand-alone versions of TRIM, as well as Objective EDRMS being used. Planning documentation prepared in July 2016 indicates that the directorate planned for the transition of the majority of its staff to the whole-of-government TRIM but would also support the continued use of Objective in business units where it was well established. This approach acknowledged that the individual needs of the business units and their prior investment in technology, practice and procedures is an important consideration in building EDRMS capability.

Project management and governance arrangements

3.113 The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's Corporate division led the planning for the directorate's transition to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS. In June 2016, the Corporate division sought approval to 'conduct business analysis and progress business readiness for the directorate to move to the whole-of-government EDRMS, when appropriate'.

3.114 The oversighting and authorising entity for this activity was:

- the Executive Management Group and its sub-committee, the Information Management/Information and Communications Technology Committee (IMICT), with respect to EDRMS developments in the directorate in 2017 and 2018; and

- the Senior Executive Group with respect to office move preparedness of the directorate in 2019 and 2020.

3.115 These groups effectively oversaw the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS platforms. With the establishment of the Digital Records Governance Committee and Digital Records Capability Working Group, in 2017, there was also whole-of-government oversighting and advisory input at the directorate level.

Implementation planning and support

3.116 There was no formal commencement to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's activities to increase and consolidate its use of EDRMS, nor was there a discrete project management approach or set of predefined milestones. Nevertheless, it is apparent that solid, early progress was being made. Reports to the Executive Management Group noted:

- 49 staff in the Policy and Cabinet Division were managing their records and workflow in the newly specified whole-of-government TRIM version (June 2016);

- 214 staff were working in the whole-of-government TRIM version (January 2017); and

- 409 staff were working in the whole-of-government TRIM version and 481 were working in the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS (June 2017).

3.117 On the basis of the user numbers modelled in the directorate's January 2017 financial projections, the directorate had made good progress in the first six months of the rollout towards its goal of a total of 600 whole-of-government TRIM users.

3.118 There was an initial intent to 'schedule' the rollout of the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS across the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's business units according to eight criteria relating to an assessment of each unit's suitability and priority. However, a range of factors impacted the scope and pace of the rollout including:

- acknowledgement that resources for the rollout were to be found from existing budgets as there was no discrete, additional appropriation;

- the estimated costs of implementation were uncertain, ranging from $150 to $800 per additional licence as the new centralised funding model had not been resolved; and

- while a business unit's readiness was an essential prerequisite, the availability of the Shared Services' Digital Records Management Team to provide the training and the technical switchover capability between platforms was a constraint. The Digital

Records Management Team was supporting business units across all directorates and was in high demand.

3.119 Accordingly, Corporate division officials advised that:

> … 2018 saw the transition of the rollout of EDRMS to [business as usual] and its ongoing rollout and development moved to form part of the Office Block readiness project.

> Status reports [specific to] EDRMS rollout … were no longer provided, rather global updates on the readiness project, or its associated issues was provided.

3.120 By February 2019 a paper prepared for the Senior Executive Group, *Office block readiness – proposed approach*, indicated the continued rollout of the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS in the directorate had become a component of the management approach to office block readiness.

Risk management and internal review

3.121 The Executive Management Group's oversight of the EDRMS rollout activity included periodic high-level assessment of risk and discussion of the management of risk.

3.122 Corporate division officials advised that given the integration of the EDRMS rollout as a 'business as usual' activity within business units, the responsibility for unit-level assessment of risk and the development of issues logs resided with business units:

> … this was [business as usual], 'formal' risk documentation was not produced as this wasn't a 'project', rather risk influenced daily business activity and forward scheduling

> ... rather issues were addressed as they occurred as part of normal business activities

3.123 An internal audit was included in the directorate's Internal Audit Program. The March 2019 internal audit report referred to:

> … a consistent theme of our findings was that there is limited coordination of a strategic and planned approach to EDRMS implementation with centralised support. This has meant EDRMS implementation has been generally unstructured and led by the initiative of individual drivers within business areas.

> Overall, a greater commitment toward strategic implementation, change and transition management, continual consideration of security requirements and staff technical training will serve to address a number of shortcomings in relation to EDRMS-readiness at the directorate.

3.124 The internal audit report was finalised at a time when the directorate's preferred approach to managing the rollout of the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS was to prioritise the office move preparedness, and to allow further EDRMS rollout to take place according to business units' motivation, financial priority and appetite.

3.125 The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's transition to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS was managed by the directorate's Corporate division, with further oversight provided by the directorate's Executive Management Group in 2017 and 2018, and the Senior Executive Group in 2019 and 2020. Key activities were initially scheduled around each business unit's readiness to transition to the whole-of-government EDRMS. By 2019 the transition was managed as a 'business as usual' activity alongside other

day-to-day operational management matters within the units themselves rather than as a discrete 'top-down' project. This change in management emphasis reflects the change in priority due to the need to support staff relocating, and subsequently working in a 'paper lite' and Activity Based Work environment.

Changing work locations

Office relocation

3.126   In 2018, while the rollout of the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS across the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate continued as part of 'business as usual', attention shifted to the directorate's readiness for the move to the new Civic Office. Figure 3-7 shows a July 2018 report to the Executive Management Group on the directorate's readiness for the move.

Figure 3-7   Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate Civic Office relocation readiness monitoring

Source: Update to the Executive Management Group (July 2018)

3.127   Figure 3-7 highlights three critical success factors were identified for business units' readiness to move into the Civic Office:

- ensuring staff have laptops;

- having staff working in EDRMS; and

- sentencing of records.

3.128 The July 2018 report to the Executive Management Group identified:

- most staff in these units had a laptop (a basic necessity according to Activity Based Work principles);

- many units were identified as being near or at 100 per cent EDRMS-enabled;

- many units only had a minor proportion of their records sentenced, (a fundamental step in achieving records management compliance, and in enabling secure disposal or archiving).[22]

3.129 In February 2020, early in the year in which the move to the two new office blocks in Civic and Dickson was due to occur, strategic risks relating to records management and the imminent office moves were identified to the ACTPS Strategic Board:

> When records management processes are conducted in a hurried or last-minute way it is more likely that:
> - Records assessments will be rushed and records incorrectly destroyed
> - Information about records sent to storage will not be captured, meaning that records are effectively lost or access to them becomes extremely difficult
> - Processes for organising records for secondary storage are not followed, meaning that later disposal processes are more complicated and more expensive
> - Records are left behind in old office accommodation, or disposed of insecurely such as during furniture removals or through ordinary waste disposal, in turn leading to risks of breaches of privacy or other embarrassment to the Government

3.130 The impending office move was evidently a major catalyst to getting legacy and day-to-day accessible paper records in order, such as sentencing, and as pressing as digitising records and managing them within an EDRMS platform. In this respect, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate officials acknowledged past records management practices were problematic:

> The current difficulties with the management and storage of hard copy records, both in office accommodation and in secondary storage, are in part a result of a period of under-investment in records management expertise, resources and support in the ACTPS. Many agencies have not conducted ongoing sentencing and destruction processes as business-as-usual operations and have not always assigned this work to qualified records management staff. This has resulted in large backlogs of records to be destroyed, lost records, and expensive retrieval, access and destruction processes that arise from poor organisation of files in secondary storage.

Working from home

3.131 A further fundamental challenge to the rollout of whole-of-government EDRMS, and one that could not have been anticipated, was the necessity in March 2020 for large numbers of ACT public servants to work from home at short notice.[23] This provided a more

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[22]*Standard for Records, Information and Data, Guideline 6 – Retain*, Territory Records Office

[23] On 16 March 2020, the ACT Minister for Health signed an instrument declaring a public health emergency under section 119 of the Public Health Act 1997. This was the first time a public health emergency had been declared in the ACT

immediate and higher-level priority for public servants to remotely access business systems including records management systems.

3.132   Officials advised that ensuring secure and reliable ICT access and instituting remote working practices such as digital authorisation superseded making progress with all other aspects of building an effective EDRMS environment. For example,:

> … due to COVID19, Shared Services has had to slim down on planning or assisting directorates come onto the whole-of-government EDRM system and focus more on ensuring the smooth running of the system.

3.133   Furthermore, the Digital Records Governance Committee and *Digital Records Capability Working Group* were inactive in the first six months following the declaration of the public health emergency in the ACT in March 2020, due to pandemic-related capacity constraints. Strategic leadership on whole-of-government EDRMS was not an ACT Public Service priority at the time, other than its instrumentality in enabling remote working or Activity Based Work.

Impact on EDRMS user numbers

3.134   It is evident from the slow-down in the rate of growth in whole-of-government EDRMS users in the last two quarters of 2019-20 (refer to Figure 2-1) that the COVID19-related public health emergency declared in March 2020 resulted in an immediate reprioritisation. However, from the second quarter to the fourth quarter of 2020-21 the rapid rate of growth in user numbers has returned and has surpassed the rate achieved prior to March 2020.

Impact on record creation and system use

3.135   Records managers have observed that the larger number of staff now working in a 'paper lite' environment by design (i.e. the Civic Office and Dickson Office) or by adaptive working practices (i.e. working from home) has had unintended consequences:

> … a side effect of people transitioning to digital recordkeeping is that they are creating a lot more records than if they were working with paper.

> … there has been an 1800 per cent increase in records created when users transition to digital record keeping.

> … the excessive increase in creating digital records could be addressed with staff receiving recordkeeping training. However, recordkeeping training does not appear to be a priority even though increased QA could assist users to stop making useless records. Also, proper labelling of records would also limit the practice of unnecessary duplicates of records being created.

3.136   Further observations made by records managers are that:

- the function of TRIM as a whole-of-government EDRMS has changed over the last two years. It used to be used as a collaboration tool but now it is primarily used as recordkeeping tool; and

- staff continue to exploit a division or directorate-specific network drive as a 'sandpit' where documents or other media such as video can be prepared collaboratively. Staff argue that the EDRMS is not useful for this and the G:\ drive suits their needs better.

3.137 These comments emphasise that accomplishing a successful transitioning of staff into a digital recordkeeping environment only overcomes the first hurdle. Procedures and work practices need to time to develop in order to exploit the full potential of EDRMS.

Project achievements

3.138 The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's EDRMS rollout strategy was identified in a January 2017 paper to the Executive Management Group: *Proposed EDRMS (digital record keeping) rollout strategy across CMTEDD*. The estimates used in modelling the financial implications provided a guide to the Corporate division's expectations as to the timeframe and scale of the rollout. At the time, the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS was already used by 214 staff in the directorate.

3.139 The *Proposed EDRMS (digital record keeping) rollout strategy across CMTEDD* paper identifies a goal of enabling 652 whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS users within 17 business units within a timeframe of two years. The goal of 652 included the migration of 198 existing stand-alone TRIM users to the whole-of-government TRIM version. .

3.140 The *Proposed EDRMS (digital record keeping) rollout strategy across CMTEDD* paper stresses that the 'figures are approximate and will be finalised as we rollout'. Deliverables and timeframes were not clearly identified and defined at the outset, but by 2019 the directorate's office move, scheduled for 2020, provided a major and potentially immovable deadline. .

Increasing whole-of-government EDRMS users - TRIM

3.141 According to new account creation data, between 1 July 2018 and 31 March 2021, the directorate added 847 users to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS. This is in addition to those already using the whole-of-government TRIM version prior to July 2018. Internal reports tracking progress during 2019, prior to the planned office move in 2020, identify that all the directorate staff moving to the new Civic office, with the exception of staff of the Revenue Office, and staff of the Chief Digital Officer, were able to work within whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS by the end of 2019.

Increasing whole-of-government EDRMS users – Objective

3.142 Some divisions and business units within the Directorate have also transitioned to the Objective whole-of-government EDRMS, with 357 new users added between 1 July 2018 and 31 March 2021. According to billing information, the number of new users and existing users has risen to 750 in the fourth quarter of 2020-21. Figure 3-8 shows the number of active whole-of-government Objective EDRMS users for each quarter and that there has been growth in the number of Objective users.[24]

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24   This is distinct from account creation data due to 'churn', and other factors.

Figure 3-8 **Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate whole-of-government Objective EDRMS users (July 2018 to June 2021)**
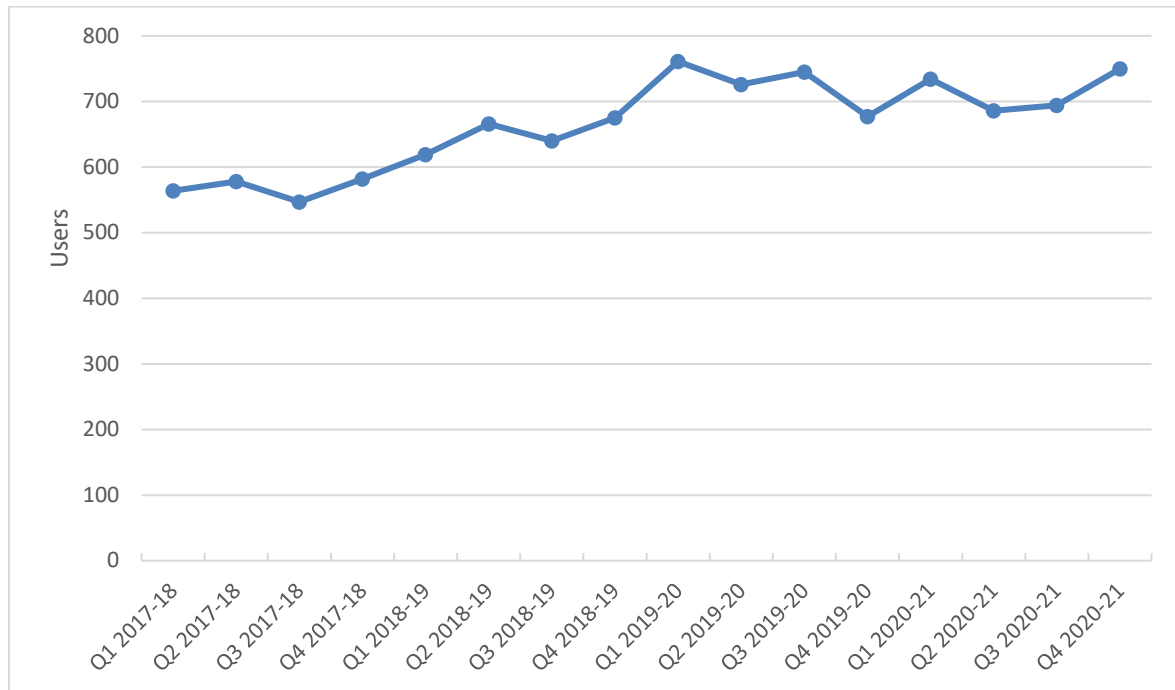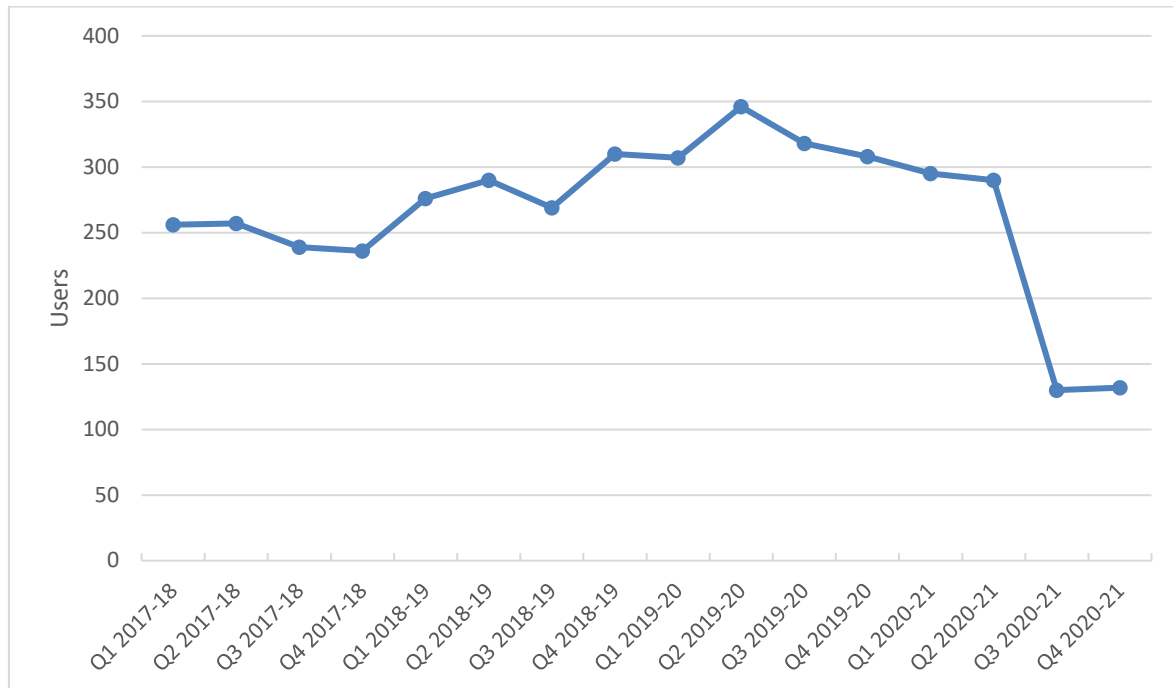

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services billing data

Reducing the number of users of stand-alone TRIM EDRMS users

3.143   The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has also decommissioned several of its stand-alone TRIM EDRMS versions. Figure 3-9 shows that the number of stand-alone TRIM EDRMS users in the directorate steadily increased to 346 by the second quarter of 2019-20 after which it has reduced to 132 by the last quarter of 2020-21, well below the number of users (256) in the first quarter of 2017-18.

Figure 3-9   Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate stand-alone TRIM users between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2021

Source: Audit Office, based on Shared Services billing data

3.144   The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has substantially surpassed the level of whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS user growth initially identified in the *Proposed EDRMS (digital record keeping) rollout strategy across CMTEDD*. It has also increased the number of directorate staff working in either (or both) of the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms. Considerable progress has also been made in reducing, by 56 per cent, the number of users working in stand-alone TRIM versions. The extended timeframe in which progress has been made reflects the timeframe of the 2018-2022 *Digitising Government Records* initiative. The directorate has already made a substantial contribution to the two whole-of-government EDRMS uptake target of 5,200 by June 2022; 1,204 new users or 23 per cent of the total.

A digital records strategy

3.145   There is one remaining Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate business unit that is yet to determine a solution to its digital records management needs. A *Digital Records Management Strategy* was drafted in August 2020 for the directorate. The strategy's action plan addresses knowledge capability, the next steps in improving records compliance within the directorate, and a digital records self-assessment improvement tool based on the seven principles from the *Standard for Records Information and Data* produced in accordance with section 18 of the *Territory Records Act 2002*. The strategy also addresses those business areas not in the two whole-of-government EDRMS platforms and not part of the Civic office relocation.

3.146 In January 2017 the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate planned for 652 users to be transitioned to the whole-of-government EDRMS within a two-year timeframe. An extended timeframe was agreed, in accordance with the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative. Between July 2018 and March 2021, the directorate added 847 users to the whole-of-government TRIM EDRMS and a further 357 users to the whole-of-government Objective EDRMS, thus surpassing initial targets. The directorate has also made progress towards reducing the number of stand-alone TRIM versions it has within the directorate with the number of users within the stand-alone versions decreasing from 346 in December 2019 to 132 in June 2021.

Summary observations from directorate case studies

3.147 The three directorates selected for consideration with respect to their planning and implementation of the rollout of whole-of-government EDRMS provide three different perspectives. Each commenced in 2018 from a different starting point:

- the Community Services Directorate had stand-alone TRIM EDRMS experience but this was concentrated in a relatively small group of officers and executives (47 of 975). The directorate had a diverse range of records much of which represented a digitisation challenge first and foremost;

- the Transport Canberra and City Services directorate had pockets of long-established Objective EDRMS use but also supported a stand-alone TRIM EDRMS platform for Ministerial correspondence;

- the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate also had a substantial group of 400 long-established Objective EDRMS users as a result of machinery of government changes in 2014.[25] It also supported stand-alone TRIM EDRMS platforms for Ministerial and other Executive business.

3.148 The use of EDRMS at the outset of the *Better Government: Digitising Government Records* Budget initiative therefore reflected machinery of government changes as well as legacy investment decisions made at directorate or agency level. All three directorates commenced their whole-of-government EDRMS rollout with at least some background in EDRMS usage. The directorates' existing EDRMS usage needed to be either displaced or built upon. In each case the directorate principally built on pre-existing capability and technology.

3.149 Each directorate assessed its current state, future anticipated state and the benefits that were expected to arise from whole-of-government EDRMS adoption. This formed the basis for the initiation of a project in each case.[26] Each of the directorate's goals and objectives

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[25] The establishment of Access Canberra within the directorate in December 2014 arose from business units primarily from Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (ESDD) and the Office of Regulatory Services within the Justice and Community Safety directorate.

[26] The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate commenced planning the rollout in 2017 and by 2018 subsumed further EDRMS activities within the office accommodation planning.

such as 'records digitised', 'users or business units migrated' and timeframes were confirmed in documentation.

3.150 Each directorate identified directorate-specific opportunities. Each directorate's whole-of-government EDRMS rollout activities addressed at least one other major complementary directorate-specific priority:

- the Community Services Directorate sought to regularise its legacy records in accordance with *Territory Records Act 2002* requirements and also to digitise those records to increase their utility and potentially generate storage-related savings;

- the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate sought to improve a directorate-wide business activity, i.e., handling ministerial correspondence, which was particularly relevant to the provision of municipal services; and

- the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, which had the widest and most diverse group of EDRMS-using business units, sought to combine whole-of-government EDRMS rollout and platform consolidation with the impending move to new offices initially scheduled for October 2020.

3.151 Each adjusted its focus in 2020 to enabling remote working. The trade-off was a slow-down in the rate of progress of system consolidation and in preparatory work to exploit the wider benefits of EDRMS.

Project management and governance

3.152 The project management of each directorate for the planning and implementation of their respective EDRMS involved Executive level managers supporting, resourcing, coordinating, monitoring, and reporting on activity through task-specific and pre-existing committee structures. The practical level at which detailed task planning and implementation occurred was at the senior management level within business units, with:

- additional oversight from corporate branch or group managers; and

- proactive or reactive support from records managers.

3.153 In this way directorates were able to tailor their implementation efforts to suit the different circumstances of each business unit. However, the whole-of-government Digital Records Governance Committee had limited influence or ability to support or provide assurance over implementation.

3.154 Directorates have not yet made progress in establishing an EDRMS performance framework for the rollout and use of EDRMS, that is able to shape progress monitoring or reporting beyond the number of users or business units migrating to EDRMS platforms.

APPENDIX A: AUDIT CRITERIA

Criterion One: **Have effective arrangements been established for the implementation of the whole-of-government EDRM systems?**

    1.1 Are there effective governance arrangements for the implementation of the whole-of-government EDRM systems?

    1.2 Are there effective governance arrangements in place for the operation of the whole-of-government EDRM systems?

    1.3 Is there effective planning for the implementation of the whole-of-government EDRM systems?

    1.4 Is effective support being provided to directorates to facilitate the transition to the whole-of-government EDRM system?

Criterion Two: **Have directorates effectively planned for the transition to a whole-of-government EDRM system?**

    2.1 Do the directorates have effective governance arrangements in place for the transition to a whole-of-government EDRM system?

    2.2 Have the directorates developed an implementation plan for the transition to a whole-of-government EDRM system?

Criterion Three: **Have directorates effectively transitioned to a whole-of-government EDRM system?**

    3.1 Do directorates have effective arrangements in place for the use and support of the EDRM system?

    3.2 Are directorates providing effective training to staff for the use of the whole-of-government EDRM system?

    3.3 Have directorates evaluated the transition to the whole-of-government EDRM system?

Audit reports

Reports Published in 2021-22	
Report No. 10 – 2021	2020-21 Financial Audits - Overview
Report No. 09 – 2021	Annual Report 2020-21
Report No. 08 – 2021	Canberra Light Rail Stage 2A: Economic Analysis
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Report No. 10 – 2020	2019-20 Financial Audit – Financial Results and Audit Findings
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Report No. 08 – 2020	Annual Report 2019-20
Report No. 07 – 2020	Management of care of people living with serious and continuing illness
Reports Published in 2019-20	
Report No. 06 – 2020	Transfer of workers' compensation arrangements from Comcare
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