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PART A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Introduction

This final report has been prepared by Synergy for the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

Synergy was engaged on 1 April 2019 to provide business improvement and change facilitation services to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), specifically in regard to its role in regulating and providing advice on the operation of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act).

The brief for the engagement was to explore opportunities for efficiencies in the OAIC’s FOI business operations. This included broader consideration of FOI priorities and the dynamics of organisational (FOI Team) and environmental factors related to overall performance.

Synergy has referenced a recent consultancy, undertaken in 2016, to develop a Workload and Forecasting Model reflecting business volumes and workflow within the OAIC, including FOI. This work provided insights into business process volumes and the relationship between effort and throughput. Synergy has used this information in examining the FOI Team’s business structure such as business priorities, work-type categorisation and detailed process efficiency analysis.

In relation to FOI, Synergy understands that the OAIC’s role primarily includes:

- Developing FOI capabilities of Australian Government agencies and ministers, and promoting FOI best practice including through issuing FOI guidelines under the FOI Act and procedural directions;
- Conducting Information Commissioner Reviews (IC Reviews);
- Receiving Extension of time requests for FOI processing;
- Handling FOI Complaints and conducting Commissioner initiated investigations;
- Receiving agency FOI processing statistics on a quarterly basis;
- Providing an FOI public information service; and
- Promoting awareness and understanding of information access rights in the community.

The intent of FOI regulatory action is to facilitate and promote public access to information, promptly and at the lowest reasonable cost.

The scope of this engagement was limited to the Freedom of Information Team (FOI Team), specifically Information Commissioner Reviews (IC Reviews).

Synergy would like to acknowledge and thank the FOI Team for their enthusiastic support and cooperation in conducting this assignment. We would like to thank Roxelle Agio, Principal Director and Andrew Solomon, Assistant Commissioner, Dispute Resolution for their guidance, flexibility and responsiveness, and support.

The FOI team was fully engaged and proactive in contributing to the workshop, focus groups, information and data collection and contributing to the ideation of opportunities for future state business processes. Synergy would also like to thank Lorraine Nurmy and Catherine Walsh for their support in managing the logistics of our engagement, including workshop venue arrangements and support in the office whilst on-site.

1 Workload and Forecasting Model – Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (T. Lansdell) Version 1.1 October 2018
2 Key outcomes

1. The teams Objectives and Key Results have identified the need to focus on:
   - Legacy Case Load - Matters greater than 12 months old
   - Increasing the capacity of the Information Commissioner to prioritise FOI regulatory activity. This includes more engagement with agencies to address external factors influencing IC review timeliness.
   - Addressing process improvement at key steps throughout the IC review process

2. A Case Categorisation Model has been developed to provide more granularity and insight into understanding case and workload complexity.

3. Process Maps have been developed for the current and future state. This will provide the guidance for continuous improvement.

4. A Draft Action plan has been developed to implement the Objectives and Key Results and process improvements.

5. A change management strategy is needed to manage the impact of change on the FOI team and OAIC stakeholders.

Observations

Synergy has made the following observations about pressure points and opportunities:

6. People
   - Staff capacity and turnover – The current and forecast work demand already exceeds staffing levels. This trend is compounded by an above average turnover within the team over the past two years, requiring resource to be diverted to process and content knowledge development. Strategies should be considered that allows workforce capabilities to be established through additional mentoring and professional development. Increased resourcing should be considered. Staff turnover is an area for potential future analysis and testing the impact on workforce capability.

7. Process – IC Reviews
   - There is an opportunity for efficiency gains in the IC review clearance process. This process is the final key step before a draft decision is provided to the Information Commissioner. This is expanded in this report.
   - There is an opportunity to improve timeliness by addressing non-compliance with the procedural direction for document and other information submission timelines.

8. ICT Tools
   - Anecdotally, the Case Management System (Resolve) is not fully configured to leverage data and information to provide optimum management insight into business workflow and case workload. Improvements could be gained by adopting a more evidence-base method to support management decision making. This should enable greater flexibility needed to balance and align case complexity with the capability and capacity.
   - Increased use of management data will support continuous improvement through point-in-time and longitudinal assessment of productivity.
   - Currently, the online FOI smart form is hard to find, under-utilised (relative to email), and does not import into Resolve. This duplicates effort by double-handling information from smart forms and email requests. Other opportunities for automation should be explored.

9. Environmental Factors
   - IC Review timeliness is affected by external dependencies. Opportunities for improvement should be explored in relation to agencies and ministers responding to
the Information Commissioner's requests for documents, submissions and any other information in the notice of IC review. Clause 3.7 of the Procedural Direction allows three weeks to respond, unless an extension of time has been granted. Close monitoring of response time compliance has not previously been a focus as a key result measure. In the 12 months to January 2019, approximately 25% of IC reviews involved a request for an extension of time.

o The external environment factors require action and prolonged focus in order to sustain changes in business process. In their report, Diacher Consulting noted that number of IC Reviews “… continued to grow reflecting the increasing timelines to finalise matters…”, and that “… failure to resource this activity will ensure that delays continue. Although process improvements will be made, the complexity of IC Reviews is such that they will take time to bed-down and realise expected benefits. The Diacher Consulting report noted that “… IC Review process improvements cannot be expected to make material difference in the short term.”

– End Executive Summary –
PART B: DELIVERY REPORT

3 Requirement:
Synergy was engaged to provide business improvement and change facilitation services in regard to the OAIC's role in regulating and providing advice on the operation of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The purpose of this engagement was to:

- identify opportunities to improve productivity, performance and outcomes of services provided by the FOI team. This is to be captured as Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)\(^2\) achievable within a 3-month period. (Synergy notes that these OKRs are intended to drive a 'step change', resulting in a material and measurable productivity uplift.)
- use an approach that is collaborative and addresses both process improvement and a renewal of team purpose.
- Document the IC Review business process showing:
  - Current state "As-Is"; and
  - A possible future state "To-be".
- Develop a high-level action plan for achieving target objectives and implementing the "To-be" business process improvements.

4 Context
Synergy understand that the FOI Team has an Average Staff Level (ASL) allocation of 16 in April 2019. However, at the time of conducting this engagement, the team was working above that (19), with 7 in non-ongoing roles to help with current work load. As well working on IC reviews, the FOI team also undertakes other regulatory functions and tasks, including:

- Registration of all case types
- Investigation of FOI Complaints and Commissioner Initiated Investigations
- Consideration and decision of extension of time applications
- Consideration of vexatious applicant declaration applications
- Compilation of FOI statistics
- Oversight of the Information Publication Scheme and disclosure log requirements
- Issue of Guidelines under s 93A of the FOI Act
- Provision of information, advice and recommendations on the operation of the Act
- Provide support to the Commissioner in relation to domestic and international partnerships.

In 2017-18, the OAIC received 34,438 FOI Requests. Of these, 801 (2.33%) proceeded to IC Review.\(^3\)

At the time of conducting this engagement, the FOI Team advised that they had approximately 860 IC Review matters on hand.

\(^2\) "Measure What Matters", J. Doerr, 2018

\(^3\) Office of Information Commissioner Annual Report 2017-18
By their analysis, there was a 42% increase in the number of IC Review applications received during the period July to December 2018 (compared with the same period 2017). This analysis also showed a significant shift in the type of issues, which indicate thematic changes in the operation of the FOI Act that have consequential impact on the relative complexity of matters being managed by the FOI Team. For example, the increased use of access refusal reason: practical refusal.

There is evidence of increasing complexity and demand for IC Reviews and this is creating pressure points on the current process and on the capacity of the FOI Team. The FOI Team is currently only able to assign cases to 13 staff.

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4 Executive Brief, 21 March 2019 (resubmitted 5 April 2019)
5 Delivery
Synergy conducted preliminary research and preparatory activities on 3 and 5 April, including meetings with the OAIC Deputy Commissioner and the Principal Director, FOI Team.

The services were delivered on-site at OAIC’s premises at 175 Pitt Street, Sydney between Monday, 8 April 2019 to Friday, 12 April 2019.

5.1 FOI Team Business Planning Workshop
The workshop was delivered on Monday, 8 April 2019 at an off-site venue located adjacent to the OAIC offices. The agenda for the workshop is outlined below.

MORNING SESSION
Welcome (Deputy Commissioner, Libby Hampton) – context and scene setting
Introductions (ALL) (Getting to know the mix of experience and expectations within the team)
Approach – outline of the methods for goal setting and process mapping
  • Outline OKRs method
  • Outline Value Chain Business Process analysis and mapping
Goal Setting – Acknowledge and reflect on outcomes of planning day (Aug 18); identify key Objectives – “Step change – NOT incremental” – “Myth Busting”
Priorise Objectives (Do Now = “3 big audacious objectives” and Do Later)
Goal Setting – identify Key Results

AFTERNOON SESSION
Review Goal Setting – Report out and discuss Key Results
Business Process Model - Current State and potential opportunities (include items identified from planning day (Aug 18))
Goal Setting Review – Correlate observations about the Business Process Model with Objectives and Key Results
Executive Summary – Report Out to Deputy Commissioner

The purpose of the workshop was to:
• develop FOI Team OKRs for the next three months;
• examine the current IC Review business process to identify pressure points and opportunities for improvement; and
• conduct a high-level assessment of the environmental factors that influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the FOI Team and the IC Review process.

Two focus groups were held with smaller groups from the workshop attendees in the following two days to address business processes in more detail.

5.2 Business Process – IC Reviews
To produce:
• “As-Is” business process map;
• “To-Be” business process map
5.3 DRAFT Action Plan

A high-level plan, that is manageable and acknowledges the impact on current service delivery, and that can be commenced as early as possible, that will:

- drive daily business actions towards achieving target OKRs;
- regularly monitor and measure progress towards OKR targets; and
- implement future business improvement initiatives.

5.4 Risks Identified

Change Management

Synergy notes that implementing the above changes will be disruptive to current service delivery, which carries inherent risk to:

- staff well-being;
- achieving target OKRs;
- OAIC reputation; and
- overall FOI regulatory action outcomes.

Risk response – The Action Plan will:

- apply the Kaizen philosophy that many small improvements can amount to enormous results. OKRs will be used to focus on identifying and addressing readily apparent issues that can start to be addressed through resource and workload re-prioritisation.
- include a step change to process improvement which should be implemented iteratively to help guide results, instead of making wholesale, larger-scale changes which could be harder to implement and be too disruptive to current service delivery.

5.5 Focus Groups

The workshop was followed by two focus groups to provide a more detailed assessment of the business process for Intake and Early Resolution and Information Commissioner Reviews.

Focus Groups were conducted on Wednesday following the workshop.

Workshop participants

Intake and Early Resolution

- Allan Teves, Acting Director
- Sandra Wavamunno, Assistant Director
- Carl English, Acting Review Adviser (Legal)
- Adic Chang, Assistant Review Adviser (Legal)
- Irene Nicolaou, Assistant Director

Information Commissioner Reviews

- Emma Liddle, Acting Director
- Irene Nicolaou, Assistant Director
- Gillian Cameron, Assistant Director
- Kevin Cheng, Assistant Director
- Margaret Sui, Review Adviser (Legal)

The key outputs from the focus groups were business process maps for the “As-Is” and “To-Be” states. (See Annexure B – Business Process Maps)
5.6 OKRs

The team was asked to identify up to 3 key objectives. The focus was on "...what is most important for the next three (3) months?" as well as identifying those things that can be deferred for a future time.

OKRs are intended to provide direction, set clear priorities, and be transparent in its monitoring and measurement of results to promote collaborative and consistent focus of time and effort.

At the workshop, the Deputy Commissioner invited the team to be brave and set audacious but realistic objectives.

Characteristics of strong key results are that they are:

- clear and specific;
- time bound;
- measurable and verifiable;
- ambitious but realistic;
- aligned with business and cross dependencies with other OKRs; and
- paired, to ensure quality and quantity measures are in balance.

The key focus business process is IC Reviews.
The FOI Team has identified the following OKRs for the next three (3) months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective No. 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve IC Review timeliness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Results – within 3mths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(as measured by...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Registration, acknowledgement, case creation &lt;3 business days for each matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. All invalid matters resolved &lt;3 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. All Deemed access refusal matters finalised (i.e. closed or referred for assessment) within 15 working days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All documents and information required is produced within 3 weeks of notice (use of s 55R with s54Z)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Monthly Case closure target: 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overall target average time to completion: 4 months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective No. 2
50% matters allocated as at 30 June 19, that are 12 months or older, within three months

Key Results
(as measured by...)
1. Assess current case load for all FOI officers by 1 July 2019
2. Review Objective
3. Assess all current matters and receive docs (within 2wks)
4. Assess all material to decide IC decision or decline (within 4wks)
5. Draft decision/closure letters cleared within FOI team (within 10wks)
6. Information Commissioner makes a decision on all relevant matters (within 12wks)

Objective No. 3
Work with the Information Commissioner to drive best practice FOI regulatory action across government and to support Objectives 1 and 2.

Key Results
(as measured by...)
1. Increase the number of ICR decisions per month
2. Increase the use of “the weekly wrap” to increase awareness internally about trends in systemic FOI issues
3. Increase the number of meetings with key agency heads to address systemic FOI issues
4. Improvement in document collection times
6 Business Process Analysis and Improvement

Synergy’s Business Process Management methodology was implemented to support this engagement. The areas for consideration, included at Figure 1, outlines the process and areas of consideration for the review. This method was also implemented throughout the focus groups held to develop the current state and future state processes. Particular focus was placed on:

- Decreasing Wastage – removing non-value-add elements of the IC review process
- Enhancing Quality of Outputs – the output’s and communication with the applicants and respondents
- Streamlining Operations – enhance the process so cases can be closed earlier.

To that end, the following business process improvement principles were considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Process Improvement Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvements are based on small changes, not only on major paradigm shifts or new inventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas from the team are important and valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many improvements are, and should be, inexpensive to implement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Team must be involved in any business process improvement activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement is ongoing and must be built into the culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement is measurable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Business Process Improvement principles

Synergy’s Business Process Improvement Method () supports these principles.

This report focuses on the Analyse and Design stages outlined below, implementation and Monitoring will be conducted by the FOI team upon completion of the engagement, based on the Action Plan developed.

Figure 2: Synergy’s Business Improvement Process
6.1 Specific processes reviewed

This review was very focused on mapping and modelling the current state processes for:

- Intake and Early Resolution; and
- Information Commissioner Reviews.

Enriching and Enhancing the process was limited by time and focussed on changes that will have an immediate and potentially substantial impact on the time taken to close a case.

6.2 ‘As-is’ current state assessment

The high-level value chain for the current state process (Figure 3) includes five core processes, identified in Figure 3 below:

**Current State – FOI Reviews**

![Diagram of Current State FOI Review process]

Figure 3: Current State FOI Review process

The table below includes a description of the phase and the Tier-two value chain for each phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Level 1 Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triage</td>
<td>The Triage Phase covers the period from when a request for review is received to when acknowledgement of the request is sent to the applicant.</td>
<td>Receive, Record, Acknowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and Early Resolution</td>
<td>This phase covers the period immediately following acknowledgement to the applicant, through initial assessment and up to the point at which the case is reviewed by the case officer.</td>
<td>Initial Assessment, Intent to Decline, Issue 54z, Case officer allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Management</td>
<td>This phase is heavily focused on conducting a Preliminary view of the case to attempt resolution prior to a decision to send to the IC.</td>
<td>Review materials, Conduct Preliminary View, Conduct resolution activities, Send for IC review decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Commissioner (IC) decision</td>
<td>This phase covers the drafting and clearance of IC review decisions, up to the IC Signing the decision.</td>
<td>Draft IC review decision, Clearance, Sign-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>The closure process covers post-signing activities, up to when the case is closed and completed.</td>
<td>Inform parties of decision, Close and publish case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.1 Key Observation

- The current state processes are contributing to the current backlog of cases. Non-value-added activities and practices appear to have been implemented over time.
- The Future state process aims to reduce and/or remove the non-value add activities.

6.3 Future State Processes

The current-to-future state processes were discussed with the team during the focus groups. The team identified a number of inefficiencies in the process and the reasons they thought they might be included. These identified areas have been included in the future state process.

The high-level value chain for the future state has not changed.

6.3.1 Key observations

- The current intake and Early Resolution process appears to be consistent. Multiple processes for the same outcome were not identified.
- There is a focus on procedural fairness throughout the processes. It appears that there may be additional steps and layers in the process that go over and above procedural fairness, potentially delaying outcomes.
- Additional non-value-add activities have been added to the processes over time.
- Information Commissioner review decisions have a multi-layered clearance process, increasing the time to case closure and increasing the workload for the senior people involved in the process.
- Following registration and early intervention\(^3\), all valid IC review applications currently pass through the Principal Director, either during an assessment process or as part of the clearance prior to submission to the Commissioner.
- The levels of internal quality assurance and clearance could reduce the responsibility assumed by the case officer for the work.

6.3.1.1 Risks

The key risk with the current process is the heavy reliance on one person to assess and clear all cases.

6.3.1.2 Opportunities

This current state process includes a number of opportunities that will:
- Reduce the touch time to case closure
- Reduce the overall time to case closure
- Place more accountability and ownership at the right level.
- Improve overall job satisfaction
- Remove non-value add activities
- Remove duplication of effort

\(^3\) Early Intervention includes preliminary inquiries and action following deemed access refusal decisions.
6.3.2 ‘To-be’ future state assessment

The future state was developed and streamlined in consultation with the FOI team during targeted focus groups. The high-level future state process is included at Figure 4.

Future State - FOI Reviews

Figure 4: Future State - FOI Reviews

6.3.2.1 Key observations

Some opportunities identified are intentionally bold and require focused effort by the team to ensure they do not revert to their original processes. During the focus groups, the team found some of the proposed changes to process challenging, however maintained a positive attitude. Engagement with these changes at all levels will be a key dependency.

The Challenge for the team

Letting go of non-value add activities and focusing on value-add activities.

The Challenge for the Office

Unless there is a big change to the process, with substantial buy-in at all levels, the improvements identified will not be met.

6.3.2 Risks

These changes require engagement and buy-in at all levels, up to and including the Information Commissioner. Without this, improvements will be difficult to implement.

6.3.2.3 Opportunities and Improvements

Opportunities and Improvements have been identified and categorized below.

Contact with the applicant and agency is streamlined.
Changes to process
With the exception of the offer to review their decision, OAIC-outgoing contact with the applicant is only via email.

In general, no general correspondence passes through a second layer of 'clearance'. Applicant is contacted (via email) only once in the triage phase to request clarification and additional materials.

Timeframe
Immediately

Benefits
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

Case file creation is streamlined

Changes to process
Until the electronic form is integrated with the case management system, only a 'short' case file is created when the applicant has not provided all information. Case File is completed when all information has been received.

Timeframe
Immediately

Benefits
- Time Saving
  (current approx. 100 out of 600 cases are closed when the applicant does not respond to clarification or a request for additional information)
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

Initial Case Assessment streamlined

Changes to process
Initial Assessment is 'broad-stroke' (av. 5 mins) and does not include the Principal Director unless the case is potentially significant or systemic.
Timeframe
Immediately

Benefits
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

Changes to process
Agencies are afforded one opportunity to provide materials (following the issuance of a s 54z) for the OAIC to make a decision on an IC review.
Increase the time to four (4) weeks for agencies to respond to a 54z.
Cases are initially considered for IC decision. If a case does not proceed immediately to IC decision, the agency is contacted once with an offer to reconsider their decision (3 day turnaround for the agency to make a decision). If the agency does not make a decision, the case proceeds to IC decision.

Timeframe
Immediately following communication to agencies about the change in process and practice.

Benefits
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

Changes to process
A maximum of 15 cases are assigned to a case officer at any one time (note: a case officer may have less than 15 cases).
Cases are allocated to a case officer by their immediate supervisor following consultation with the case officer.

Change to definition
Establish an 'allocation category' to identify the skills/category of case officer the case to whom the case will be allocated once their case load allows. For example, agency-specific or specialist.
Clarity around what sort of case is included as 'unallocated'. 'Unallocated' should only refer to cases that are ready to be allocated once case loads allow. Cases prior to this point should have a different category.

**Change to principles**

Cases are only allocated if the case officer has time to work on those cases.

Case Officers should not be allocated additional cases without their input and unless they know it is being allocated to them.

**Timeframe**

Implement principles immediately, noting that it will take time for current caseloads to reduce to planned targets when current cases are not re-allocated.

**Benefits**

- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

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**Seeking clarification of the case and additional applicant materials**

**Changes to process**

Initially only seek clarification from the team if required.

If the applicant needs to be contacted for clarification, ensure that they are asked for relevant materials if they have not provided them.

**Timeframe**

Immediately

**Benefits**

- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

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**Early Identification of potentially Significant or Systemic case**

**Changes to process**

Addition of a decision point for early identification of significant or systemic cases. It is only these cases that receive focus and input from the Principal Director
Timetable
Immediately

Benefits
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

Changes to process
The person drafting the IC decision is responsible for ensuring it is at the final draft stage before it enters the clearance process.
The EL2 is responsible for ensuring quality (content, consistency) of the decision.
The IC is briefed on potentially significant or systemic issues prior to finalizing the draft decision.
Principal Director only clears potentially significant and systemic cases.
Prior to proceeding to IC, the draft decision cleared only once within the team. A senior ‘clearance’ officer, which may be the EL2 of the team developing the draft decision, or the Principal Director for potentially systemic or significant issues.
IC review decision briefing meetings (weekly or fortnightly) are established to provide opportunity for the IC to query case aspects prior to signing. Decisions are signed at the briefing meeting. If a decision needs to be edited, the edits are made to the decision and brought to the next meeting for signature.

Timetable
Immediately

Benefits
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

Focus on the Smart Form

Changes
Link to Smart Form is prominent on the OAIC home page and on the ‘how to submit’ page on the OAIC website.
Communication with applicants who send in an email includes information about the Smart Form.
Smart form workflow assessed to ensure, for example, that the attachment of the decision is mandatory for applications for review. Smart Form is integrated with Resolve.

**Timeframe**
Commence review of Smart Form and liaison with Resolve and website teams immediately

**Benefits**
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

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**Resolve**

**Changes**
Review resolve fields to ensure all necessary information is available, including revised templates. Liaise with Resolve team to identify and progress requirements. Include dashboard reporting in these requirements. Smart Form Integration (see above).

Ensure team is using Resolve as their case management system and undertake additional training if necessary (note: this was out of scope so not explored)

**Timeframe**
As soon as possible

**Benefits**
- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focuses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

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**Mailbox auto-reply**

**Changes**
Set up auto-reply on mailbox to acknowledge receipt of email.

**Timeframe**
immediately
Benefits

- Time Saving
- Reduce duplication of effort
- Streamline time to closure
- Focusses the Principal Director time on tasks that require her attention

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Tracking progress on new and legacy cases

**Changes**

Establish a Kanban-style board that visually tracks progress of issues (listed by case number for confidentiality reasons) through to completion:

- Tracking board should be visible by the team
- Cases are included on post-it notes or something similar that makes it easy to physically move through the process

**Timeframe**

Immediately

**Benefits**

The benefits of a Kanban include:

- Flexibility
- Focus on continuous delivery
- Reduction of wasted work / wasted time
- Increased productivity
- Increased efficiency
- Team members' ability to focus

by providing a visual representation of the work of the team and supports celebration when cases are completed.

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7 DRAFT Action Plan

The action plan is at annexure a
## PART C: ANNEXURES

### 8 Annexure A: Draft Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Key Result</th>
<th>July 2019</th>
<th>August 2019</th>
<th>September 2019</th>
<th>October 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement OKR monitoring system</td>
<td>System is visible to and able to be updated by staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Configure Resolve to support OKRs</td>
<td>Case Mgt tracking to gather data to monitor progression of cases towards Draft Decision / IC Decision / Close</td>
<td></td>
<td>End July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Form</td>
<td>Update website – Smart Form more visible and easier to use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt Case Categorisation Model</td>
<td>• low - able to be finalised 1-4mths</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• medium - able to be finalised 4-8mths</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• high - could take &gt;24mths to finalise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Reduce number of people involved in Draft Decision clearance:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Cat 2 – Snr Clearance Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Cat 2/3 – Principal Director</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o AC and DC (as required)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Adopt stronger posture on:</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provision of relevant documents and submissions: Completeness and Timeliness;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discontinue PV consideration. (Discuss options to revise decision with Agency – agreed response 2days, then proceed to IC Decision)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration, acknowledgement, case creation</td>
<td>&lt;3 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All invalid matters resolved</td>
<td>&lt;3 working days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration, acknowledgement, case creation</td>
<td>Start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All invalid matters resolved</td>
<td>Start</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All Deemed access refusal matters finalised (i.e. closed or referred</td>
<td>Start</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 working days.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All documents and information required is produced within 3 weeks</td>
<td>Link with pilot</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notice (use of s55R with s54z)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly Case closure target: 60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall target average time to completion:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current (approx.) 213 matters on hand</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumes no other cases included.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumes 30% of matters won’t require an IC Decision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated average decisions per day = 2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 decision per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 decisions per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 decisions per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 decisions per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Commissioner spends 2 days per week on IC Reviews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not less than 20-ICR decisions per month</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOI content always included in weekly wrap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with agency heads to address system FOI issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Document collection times are within 4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement a change management strategy to support the FOI Team, OAIC</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal and external stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 Annexure B: Business Process Maps

9.1 “As-Is” Current State
9.1.1 Process: Triage – Level 2 process

Commented [A1]: OAIC Comment: We have set out the correct triage current state process. Please see attached process map for 9.1.1
Commented [A2]: OAIC Comment: We have set out the correct Assessment and early resolution current state process set out. Please see attached process map for 9.1.2
9.1.2 Process: Assessment and Early resolution – Level 2 process
9.1.3 Process: Case management – Level 2 process

Commented [A3]: OAIC Comment: We have set out the correct process map for 9.1.3.
9.1.4 Process: Information Commissioner review decision – Level 2 process

Process: Case Manage - current state

[Diagram illustration of the process flow]
9.1.5 Process: Close – Level 2 process

Process: Close - current state

Case Manage

notify parties of decision

Publish decision

Close Case

Commented [Ad]: OAIC Comment: Please note that this should read 'Close a 50/50 decision'.
Please note that Close Case action should precede Publish decision.
Please note that other forms of closure are in previous processes.
9.2 “To-Be” Future State

Future State - FOI Reviews

Triage → Assess → Review → Close
9.2.1 Process: Triage – Level 2 process

Process: Triage - future state

Commented [AS]: OAIC Comment: Please see my comments above.
9.2.2 Process: Assessment and Early Resolution – Level 2 process

Process: Assess - future state

Commented [A6]: OAIC Comment: Please see my comments above.
9.2.3 Process: Review – Level 2 process

Commented [A7]: OAIC Comment: Please see my comments above.
9.2.4 Process: Close – Level 2 process

Process: Close - future state

Commented (AB): OAIC Comment: Please see my comments above.
10 Annexure C: List of stakeholders engaged

Synergy has reviewed the following documents and information sources as part of the discovery phase of this engagement. Its research continued throughout the engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Name</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Angelene Fa k, Commissioner, Office of the Information Commissioner</td>
<td>Informal discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Libby Hampton, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Information Commissioner</td>
<td>Meetings, discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Andrew Solomon, Assistant Secretary, Dispute Resolution</td>
<td>Meetings, discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Roelle Aga, Principal Director, FOI</td>
<td>Meetings, discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Azam Bu buke, Review Advisor (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Allan Teves, Acting Director, Intake and Early Resolution</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Sandra Wavamunno, Assistant Director, Intake and Early Resolution</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Carl English, Acting Review Adviser (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Adie Chang, Assistant Review Adviser (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Irene Nicolou, Assistant Director, Systemic and Significant Issues/Matters</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Emma Liddle, Acting Director</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Gillian Cameron, Assistant Director, Systemic and Significant Issues/Matters</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Kevin Cheng, Assistant Director, Systemic and Significant Issues/Matters</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Margaret Sui, Review Adviser (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop, Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Jessica Estick, Review Adviser (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Emily Hartly, Review Adviser (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Raewyn Hartlock, Assistant Director, Systemic and Significant Issues/Matters</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Vivian Yue, Review Advisor, (Legal)</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Rachel Ranjan, Assistant Director, Reviews</td>
<td>Discussion, workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff unavailable at time of engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelley Napper, Review and Investigations Advisor (Legal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Kreimelmaier, Assistant Review Advisor (Legal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annexure D: Source Material and Documents Reviewed

Documents and information sources researched and reviewed by Synergy, prior to and during the engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Title/Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FOI Team Org Chart (February 2019)</td>
<td>OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Themes from FOI Branch planning day (Aug18)</td>
<td>OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>IC review practice toolkit -- case management resources</td>
<td>OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Workload and Forecasting Model -- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (T. Lansdell) Version 1.1 October 2018</td>
<td>OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Summary of executive brief -- FOI performance</td>
<td>Email - OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Executive Brief - Increase in Information Commissioner reviews -- Themes, projections and strategies (21 March 2019, Resubmitted 5 April 2019)</td>
<td>OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Freedom of Information Regulatory Action Policy (February 2018)</td>
<td>OAIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>IC review decisions</td>
<td><a href="https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/foi-decisions/ic-review-decisions">https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/foi-decisions/ic-review-decisions</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Case Load Stock take (IC Reviews) Apr18</td>
<td>FOI team – emails (Various)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 Annexure E: Case Categorisation

The table below uses the breakdown of the nature of the issues identified in IC reviews as the framework for codifying case complexity categories.

- Category 1: Low complexity. Matters which are likely to be able to be finalised within 1-4 months.
- Category 2: Medium complexity. Matters which are likely to be able to be finalised within 4-8 months.
- Category 3: Highly complex. Matters which could take up to 24 months (or longer) to finalise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access grant decisions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: charges</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: amendment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: decision not made in time (deemed access refusal)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: practical refusal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: searches (sole issue)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: searches and single conditional exemption</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: searches and single non-conditional exemption</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: searches and various exemptions (more than one)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: single conditional exemption</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: single non-conditional exemption</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: various exemptions (more than one)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: exception to FOI Act</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid IC review application</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access refusal reason: material irrelevant to FOI request</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13 Annexure F: Example Graph of FOI management data

The following is a set of example graphs that can be used to illustrate the potential to gain insights by using meta-data currently not being captured or used from Resolve.

Officer Case load by Category by Age

Commented [49]: OMIC Comment: We suggest including brief introductory text about the range of functions that case officers may undertake, including IC reviews, clearance of decisions, investigation of FOI Complaints, making extension of time decisions, supervising junior officers.
English, Carl

Eslick, Jessica

Harty, Emily