

Implementing a records management strategy to complement Parliament's knowledge management initiatives.

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ABSTRACT

Organisations everywhere are attempting to maintain a competitive edge by leveraging existing knowledge to generate new insights, leading to new products and innovative services. Parliament's focus is to strengthen oversight and accountability, cooperative governance and legislative capacity, enhance public involvement and to deepen engagement in international fora. Parliament, in its strategic plan, places a lot of emphasis on the importance of improving recordkeeping, knowledge and information services and increased use of information and communication technology.

Parliament took a decision to develop a knowledge management strategy that can ensure the organisation serve its customers and stakeholders better. At the same time the Documentation Section, responsible for records management, was moving to implement records management in terms of the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act (43/1996). Parliament had not implemented records management principles, with the exception of pockets within the organisation and the task was daunting. The issue was how to ensure that records management added value that will ensure buy-in and enthusiasm for the task.

The question was how to build records management so that it compliments and assists the knowledge management initiative. A successful knowledge management strategy is dependent on proper information management. There are other facilitators like organisational culture, commitment and buy-in from top management, organisational structure, etc. The focus here is on how records management can assist with information management, as a basis for knowledge management.

Parliament possesses vast amounts of information that needed to be organised and made accessible for informed decision making that will lead to a capable and productive parliamentary service that delivers enhanced support to Members of Parliament in order that they may efficiently fulfil their constitutional functions. This paper will detail the efforts made to use records management as a tool to support knowledge management by identifying where critical information and knowledge resides and how to harness it for critical decision making areas.

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1. BACKGROUND

Parliament's administrative processes are guided by the Financial Management of Parliament Act, No 10, 2009. In terms of this Act, the Secretary to Parliament, as the accounting officer, is tasked to prepare a draft strategic plan for Parliament to be presented to the Executive Authority within 6 months of an election. Parliament engaged in this exercise and tabled a new strategic plan for 2014-2019 in February 2015 which intends to guide the work of Parliament for the term of the new Parliament. The main business of Parliament is to pass legislation, conduct oversight, and ensure public participation in its processes with large emphasis in the last two Parliaments to exercising oversight. The strategic plan covers five years and specifies the priorities of Parliament for the period in question. (Strategic Plan of Parliament 2014-2019, p. 5) There are five strategic priorities outlined for the 5th Parliament. However, the plan also states that these priorities will not be achieved without looking at the re-engineering the business of Parliament, looking at issues like capacity its to implement, its processes, the organisational structure and the application of suitable technology solutions to complement its enterprises.

One of the focus areas highlighted in the strategic plan is the need to "increasing the knowledge and information services, research and record keeping" (Strategic Plan of Parliament 2014-2019, p. 12) . For the Knowledge and Information Services Division of which Documentation Section forms part, this was a significant inclusion. It is commonly acknowledged that Parliament is an information driven organisation and this inclusion clearly demonstrates that Parliament as an institution recognises the strategic importance of information for its daily functioning.

A proposed initiative in the direction of increasing the value of information available to the institution was the decision to development a knowledge management framework for the institution. This task was delegated to the head of the Knowledge and Information Services Division. The intent of this initiative is to increase access to information critical to decision-making for Members of Parliament, staff and the public. It therefore places information centrally as a strategic tool to achieve the objectives of Parliament.

Statistics from Microsoft in the 1990's found that on average employees spend 30% of their days looking for information (UX User experience, 2015). Other statistics suggest that it takes approximately eight attempts to find the right information. In an organisation such as Parliament this means that decisions may be delayed due to lack of information. Any efficient organisation needs to ensure that decisions can be taken speedily and access to information that is of high quality, that is appropriate, accurate and timely information is crucial to facilitate effective decision making. One of the main tasks would be to discover who has vital information, where this information is in the organisation and how to make it available to those needing it. As a result of this need being acknowledged, Parliament decided that it needed to begin the process of managing its knowledge and began by starting to develop a framework for knowledge management.

This Parliamentary framework is adapted from the one developed for the Legislative Sector of South Africa. At this point it is necessary to explain that besides the National Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, each of the nine provinces also have its own provincial legislature and that the institutions have a long history of collaboration on issues of common interest and developing best practices through working together in various forums.

The Draft Strategic Framework for the Implementation of knowledge management in Parliament defines knowledge management as follows:

“Knowledge Management (KM) means the systematic location, storage, processing and distribution of knowledge, competency and expertise within Parliament. It also means access by the public to the work of Parliament and in so doing, facilitate PUBLIC PARTICIPATION in the work of Parliament.” (Division, 2015, p. 5).

It states that knowledge management is the process through which Parliament (and the legislatures) will use its collective intelligence to meet its strategic outcomes and mandate. The purpose of knowledge management is not just to become more knowledgeable but to be able to create, transfer and apply knowledge with the purpose of better achieving the objectives of Parliament and the National Development Plan, which speaks to the economic and social development of the country as a whole.

The framework recognises that all the legislatures have information and knowledge but that it needs to be located and organised for use. It is a recognition that information has value for an organisation and that it should be regarded as an asset that should work for you.

The Framework further states that “the challenge in KM lies in the fact that the most valuable knowledge mainly exists in an undocumented form as tacit knowledge in the minds of the individuals. As we know, knowledge has both an explicit and a tacit component. What is required is the creation of

a cultural and technological environment in which all members of Parliament can share and exploit this knowledge. Parliament (and the South African Legislative Sector) requires the adoption of a sector-wide Strategic framework for knowledge management.” (Division, 2015, p. 5)

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The Objectives of the knowledge management framework is stated as follows:

1. To improve performance of the institution by using existing information and knowledge for informed decision making.
2. To support the strategic objective of “Improve average turnaround time for provision of procedural and legal advice, content advice, research products, minutes and reports and other products to the Houses, Committees and Members by 2019”.
3. To facilitate and be part of a “learning institution” and learning opportunities from best practices, one another and the practices from the past.

Knowledge management, information management document and records management complement each other and are interrelated. Knowledge management is concerned with achieving organisational objectives by leveraging knowledge that exist in the organisation, whether in explicit or tacit form. Knowledge management is a process where people capture, share, and generate knowledge in various ways, whether through the use of technology or through social processes, to the benefit of the organisation and the expertise of its people (Chen, Snyman, & Sewdass, v 7 (3) September 2005).

2. OBJECTIVES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AT PARLIAMENT

Parliament must conduct oversight, make laws and ensure public participation as contained in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. These mandates need to be carried out in an effective, efficient, economic and transparent manner and must ensure effective public participation in the processes of Parliament. This requires innovation, creativity, sharing of experience and expertise for the benefit of its citizenry.

Parliament is not a profit making institution. However, it functions with public funds and it endeavours to deliver a range of services in line with its constitutional obligations. In order to deliver these services effectively the following objectives for knowledge management were noted:

1. To create and manage knowledge and information for improved decision-making, planning and reporting.
2. To share best practice within Parliament and across the sector.
3. To avoid duplication and improve efficiency and effectiveness within Parliament and across the sector.
4. To improve and streamline collaboration within Parliament and across the sector.
5. To develop and preserve institutional memory for continuity.
6. To generate, share and use new knowledge.
7. To retain legislative knowledge and reduce process life cycles.
8. To reduce the carbon footprint through the saving of paper and the increased efficiency of business processes.

3. ROLE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

One of the first initiatives within this framework is Project 20/1: Develop Uniform Norms and Standards for information Services. This initiative is led by the Knowledge and Information Services Division manager. This is a process aimed at developing the information management standards that will ensure that information available to Parliament (internal) is identified, quality controlled, captured and indexed for retrieval. This includes an information and systems audit to find out what information exist, where it is, how it is captured, which systems are in use and which have become obsolete. Thereafter it is envisaged that the information will be quality checked before being captured into a repository/repositories. Subsequent actions include that the processes for managing information and handling information will be established, documented and implemented. This project or initiative will serve as the first phase in the development of the KM Framework for Parliament.

From the side of Documentation Section it was realised that a fundamental component of the knowledge management initiative would be to assist in the manner in which the organisation manages its documents and records and that here we have a key role to play. Any organisation that manages documents effectively will manage records and information effectively.

We would be focused at the individual at business unit level where people who generate or receive documents in the course of their functions and activities, take responsibility and are taught to properly identify, capture, categorise and store their information, whether paper or electronic and manage it through its life cycle. The aim is to manage internal and external information for effective retrieval, administrative efficiency, accountability, transparency, and compliance.

Here we have to work closely with our Information and Communication Division. We need to recognise that we operate in a hybrid environment where information exist in both paper and digital format and that we must manage the handling and storage of both formats. Our role will be to see that information in paper format is handled in accordance with set standards and that at the same time we input into the processes and standards for the handling and storage of digital information. We have been collaborating with the ICT Division to ensure that the new EDRMS system facilitates the management of documents in general and records in particular.

Records management is focused on a subset of documents that serves as authoritative, authentic, stable sources of evidence of business transactions of an organisation. Its management is guided by legislation and its aim is accountability, transparency and legal compliance. Records management is implemented in line with the provisions of the National Archives and Records Service Act of South Africa 43/1996.

4. CURRENT STATUS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The conscious management of records in Parliament is not well entrenched. People have devised different ways to manage their documents in the absence of a central process and plan driven by a conscious strategy. There are pockets in Parliament where people manage using whatever system they have developed but there are other places where people are struggling. In the absence of a trustworthy central plan and process, people have no trust in others to keep records, duplicates exist all over the place and offices are groaning under the load of paper. When people leave, they do not hand over and they destroy their documents. There might be no documents for the next person to take over or learn from.

This results in situation where the institution sometimes struggle to produce evidence of how decisions came about or how courses of action were decided on. It could be a dilemma faced when legal challenges to legislation are mounted and the records of decisions are not available to defend the institution. Since people cannot distinguish between documents and records, copies and duplicates, some tend to keep everything. Processes are duplicated since no proper record exist of what activities/actions were undertaken around a particular issue. What has happened in the past in the institution is not available when the same issue comes up for discussion. Information pieces have no context and are scattered across the various offices. Each occurrence of an issue or problem is treated as if it is unique in the history of the institution when the reality is that some problems are of a cyclical nature and has been discussed or dealt with before. However the records of those discussions and decisions taken are not available to the next incumbent or the next generation since it is sitting in a dark cabinet or room or thrown away.

There is a policy and procedures for records management since 2007 but it has not been enforced or committed to. The problem is that we need to have consensus on the way we manage our information and our records. The result is that people develop their own systems since there is no reliance or trust in a central coordinated system.

We are also in the process of replacing the old content management system with a new one based on open source software called Alfresco. The problem with the old Hummingbird platform was the cost of upgrading and the technical skills available in the country to facilitate such an exercise. Open source software was much more cost effective. Included on the Hummingbird platform were the development of workflows, electronic signatures, and a records management module but there were technical challenges that resulted in the non-delivery or partial functioning of these features. Therefore we could never fully move to a less paper-intensive environment.

The driving force for the new content management system was the development of the My Parliament App, which is supposed to deliver content to Members of Parliament across a range of mobile devices to enable instant access to information they need to conduct their business in Committees and the Houses of Parliament. The old content management system could not be upgraded or maintained anymore and because of the technical challenges, the culture and ingrained behaviour of people it was never fully utilised and its full potential was never realised.

So the acquisition of a new content management system, Alfresco, was driven from the app side and not the record management perspective. It was therefore imperative that the records management team give input into the development of the new system so that it works for us as well. Since compliance is an issue, one of our points of departure is that we need to make it effortless for the user to comply. Currently we are also considering the question of naming conventions and templates that could be seen as critical to develop uniformity and compliance in the way documents are handled.

5. RECORDS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

As part of its information management, any organisation would need a strategy to manage its records which would drive whatever initiatives are undertaken in that direction. In terms of the law, all public and private entities need to manage their records effectively so that they can be accountable, transparent, protect themselves, provide reliable information when required to, make effective decisions, understand the history and context of business decisions and function efficiently and effectively.

Parliament is no different and in fact, has a greater responsibility in terms of accounting to South Africa in terms of its actions and activities. So the duty of proper recordkeeping is crucial. Our strategy to manage records must align itself with the strategic direction of the organisation as outlined above. It must facilitate the direction the institution is choosing to take.

Records are defined in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act 43/1996 as “recorded information regardless of form or medium, created or received by an organisation (specifically a governmental body) in the conduct of mandated functions, and retained by an organisation as evidence of its functions”.

Some of the pieces of legislation that provide the requirements for records management are:

- (a) Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act No. 25 of 2002)
- (b) Financial Management of Parliament Act, 2009 (Act No. 10 of 2009).
- (c) National Archives and Record Service of SA Act. 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996)
- (d) Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000)
- (e) Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 1996 (Act No.3 of 1996)
- (f) Protection of Information Act, 1982 (Act No. 84 of 1982)
- (g) Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013)

We also paid attention to the provisions of the Minimum Information Security Standards of 1996 which relates to the handling of classified information.

In our strategy the purpose is to:

- Organisation commitment and buy-in at the top level to ensure cooperation from all business units
- Enhance awareness of the importance of records management and the responsibilities and accountability thereof
- Ensure systematic approaches to managing records in all formats
- Ensure that records of long terms value are identified and preserved
- Ensure compliance to the regulatory and legislative framework
- Ensure efficiency and best value by improving the flow of information by greater coordination of records and storage systems (Mokoena, 2015).

Elements of our strategy are as follows:

- Involve top management in the project and get commitment and cooperation from all levels
- Management of records – Implementing records management systems that are user-friendly and efficient to assist with management of the creation, use, storage and disposal of records.
- Records quality – Ensuring records that are recognised as authentic, accurate and valid enough to meet the legal obligations of Parliament.
- Responsibilities for records – All record creators and users, both at management and staff level, should understand their roles and responsibilities in creating and managing records through its life cycle.
- Records security and access– We need to create secure storage spaces for records where access is properly controlled and managed and create the conditions where the records are safe from harm and remain accessible for future use.
- Training – We need to train all staff members about their legal responsibilities in the creation, use, storage, disposal of records.
- Records audit – We need to audit and monitor to ensure that records management standards are maintained.
- Structure and resources – We need to ensure that structure is aligned to strategy and that we are resourced to assist the institution with records management.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Top management commitment

Since records management is mentioned in the strategic plan of Parliament we are we are fairly sure that there is awareness of the importance of proper record management and that we have support at the highest level. There is an awareness that information is of strategic importance and that Parliament has to actively organise and manage its information to benefit from it. Basic to knowledge management is information management of which records management is an essential component.

Additionally, the challenges that some managers and staff currently face and that has been mentioned above, means that they realise that the management of records in their business units at the moment poses problems that they need to address and some have been asking for assistance. We have therefore concluded that the organisation is ready for records management and that it is up to us to come up with a plan to assist the organisation.

We have managed to persuade the Human Resources department to embed certain records management responsibilities into the performance contracts of managers at all levels and we are sure that this will assist greatly with commitment.

2. Management of records

The first thing we did was to update the file plan, which is the classification system for records, and the retention periods for records. In terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act 43/1996, the National Archivist has overall responsibility to ensure that public records are properly managed. Standards for the management of records are set by this agency. Part of ensuring the maintenance of standards is the requirement that all classification schemes for records be approved by the agency. The agency also approves the retention and disposal of records. All public bodies must work hand in hand and cooperate with the agency in the management of records. Within public entities, responsibility rests with the Accounting Officer, who must designate a record manager who will ensure that the organisation properly manages its records and that officials fulfil their responsibilities and understand their roles.

In updating the file plan, we invited the participation of all business units so that they can outline their functions from which records of the organisation is derived. Business units were also consulted on how long records should be kept based on their legislative environment, their past experience and personal preferences. This process also served to create awareness of records management in various business units in the organisation by introducing them to the file plan and retention schedules.

By March 2015 the file plan and the retention periods were approved by the National Archives. It is important to note that there was an existing file plan and this was merely an exercise to update it. It must also be noted that some business units' commitment to the process was not as diligent as one would have wished but we worked with what we had.

At the same time that we were updating the file plan, we also started a process of updating the records management policy and procedures of Parliament. In this process we identified key role players and stakeholders and invited them to give their input into the policy. We followed this approach because we understood that certain experts had a bigger role to play in the formulation and execution of policy and that in cases where there are other policies impacting on records management, we needed to bring those people in to get their input and to foster mutual cooperation and awareness. Once again there was a process that created awareness of records management by drawing people in and getting them to think and discuss records management. We involved subject matter experts like Internal Audit, Risk Management, Protection Services, Legal Services, ICT, PIC in the process so that they can input into the policy and their roles in records management can be clarified. In our situation, for instance, we need to clarify the handling of records classified in terms of MISS, and which we do not necessarily handle. We know that in some cases in the past, there has been lack of understanding of the difference between what a library asset is and what an institutional

record is. In some cases, people did not realise that records can take on other formats and that we have a responsibility for those too. We know the Library does have unique records of Parliament, like the early Hansards so we need to start talking to people to find out where records exist and what should happen to them.

In some cases we also needed advice in developing the policy. Currently Legal Services have been working on the policy and we have set down a meeting date to go over the policy once again. Once the draft is ready, it will be submitted for approval. Approval would involve presenting the policy to the top management of the institution and getting consensus on the changes and this once again creates awareness of records management and the implications of implementing the policy. The policy will provide the framework within which we can manage our records and will allow us to put in place systems to properly manage and achieve compliance with internationally recognised standards.

As indicated earlier, an information audit is part of the knowledge management framework. Parliament needs to know what information exist, in which format and where it resides before framing plans to manage the information. This is one of the areas where the file plan can assist. Our plan to draft an extended file plan will assist to achieve this initiative. Building on the existing file plan we expand the columns to include location, storage, volume, format, arrangement, restrictions and access, applicable legislation, duplications, copies, active, non-active etc. We will also establish in our interaction which records wider access should be facilitated to by digitising them and making them available through the content management system.

This information can also be used to build in requirements of the new electronic system. So the information is not just for us but also serves as specifications for the new content management system as well as for knowledge management. Furthermore, this will enable us to have a holistic view of the records situation and also allow us to set targets which can be measured to mark progress with the records management project.

3. Records quality

Since the policy will clearly define what is record is, why we need recordkeeping and what the legal framework is within which we need to maintain proper records, we expect that understanding will grow and people will begin to create and keep records that meet certain standards. The procedures will spell out the finer details of the processes involved.

People need to understand under what conditions a document becomes a record and what to do with it.

4. Responsibilities

The policy and procedures clearly spell out who the role players are and what their responsibilities are. Furthermore as indicated earlier, to advance records management and achieve compliance and commitment, we have entrenched the functions in the new performance management system of the institution by writing record management into the contracts of managers. Managers must ensure records are managed by updating their file plan and retention periods periodically, appointing record officers, by sending people for training, by designating storage areas that meets certain standards and allowing us access to monitor how records are stored and to give feedback into the performance process. We are in the process of developing checklists for that purpose so that we can monitor and give feedback to the organisation to assist them with improving the storage and maintenance of records.

5. Training

If we are to train people to manage their records, we first need to empower our own staff to assist with records management. Although records management is part of our function, up to now we have not focused on that. From now on we are aligning ourselves with the direction of the strategic plan which has recognised the strategic value of having access to the right information at the right time and to the right person.

Therefore we have embarked on training programmes in records management, we have joined SASA and attended their conference and we have sat down with staff so that they understand the strategic direction and where they can contribute. Broadly there is agreement and the relevant performance contracts have been aligned to the new direction. Since our staff must support the institution to manage its records, they need content training as well as training in how to facilitate, train and support. This training is currently underway. Training material, guides and tutorials must also be developed and we have some developed and more to go.

We have also resolved that we need to move slowly in implementing records management. Ideally we should have more resources to tackle the task but we will work with what we have. We do not have the resources for a big bang approach and will have to work in an incremental way by moving from unit to unit, ensuring that staff are comfortable and knowledgeable before moving to the next unit.

It is important to train staff to do the right thing and to ensure that we spend enough time in a unit to empower staff, train up, support records officers and allow good practices to become entrenched before we leave to the next unit.

6. Audit

Part of our function will be to ensure that standards are maintained and we will be concentrating on training our staff on standards. Our standards are derived from the National Archives who base theirs on international standards. We are creating a forum for records officers to meet regularly and discuss problems and solutions, standards, set direction and generally coordinate record management across the institution. As indicated earlier, managers must appoint representatives from their business units to serve as records officers who can liaise with us frequently and consistency. They, together with us, will drive compliance, exercise control over storage areas and control access to records. Together with our team, they will ensure that records are managed properly across its life cycle and that disposal takes place according to policy and procedures.

We have also requested the Internal Audit unit to assist us with information about what to prepare for when the Auditor-General comes to audit the information management practices of public bodies. We understand that there are moves in that direction and one would want to be prepared for such an initiative.

Since we have records management as part of the performance contracts, we have had three approaches for more assistance and training. One of the requests came from the Committee Section, which can be identified as one of the areas, in terms of knowledge management, where critical information lies that should drive decision making in Parliament. The request from Committees, which is commonly referred to as the engine of Parliament since legislation, oversight and public participation is driven through our Committees in both Houses, is significant for us since we have been trying to get their cooperation for years. They have realised that they need to keep systematic, organised authentic records, that they need to understand what constitutes a record and that they need to provide information in context when required to.

Two meetings have been held to gauge the scope and the approach to take. Currently we are waiting on some information from them that we can use in planning. Our approach will be to start training and support with one committee or more, based on where they pinpoint the need is most urgent. As said earlier, we will not move on until we are sure that they can manage their records properly. Part of the process we intend to engage in with them is for them to

identify which records should be digitised. One of the criteria used as the basis for digitisation would be wider access to the information.

While working on the management of paper records, we also need to keep the electronic records management environment in mind. We need to ensure that the two mirror each other and the requirements for classifying and filing records, whether paper or electronic, remains the same and the user is not confused. Please keep in mind that at this point, we cannot truly go paperless until workflows with electronic signatures are in place. We are aware that ICT are working on these initiatives but it will take some time before these functionalities are rolled out.

Having taken a conscious decision to work closely with ICT to ensure that the content management system facilitates proper document and records management, we have brought them on board in our interactions with Committees. Currently we are attempting to align the electronic folder structure to the file plan of Parliament to ensure that they match and users are not having to content with two different systems for managing paper and electronic records. In setting up the system we will be guided by the needs of the clients so that it works for them and adoption of the system is painless. We have had some differences with ICT on how to implement and our view is that we need to work together with the clients/users in the development of the system so that we are all on the same page and there is no confusion about how records are managed in the paper or the electronic environment. Any problems will be ironed out in daily interactions with the client.

Recently we arranged a three-day training course on how to implement an EDRMS system and invited ICT, Legal Services, Internal Audit, Risk Management, the Library, etc. so that we can gain a common understanding of the principles underlying implementation that can facilitate proper document and records management. Attendance was very high and people enjoyed it. We decided at the workshop that we will keep the momentum going with further meetings and discussions by compiling a concept document on the knowledge management project that we can take back to the forum and that can be used as a basis for engaging with the Project Management office to develop a project plan for knowledge management. The records management initiative will therefore form part of the broader knowledge management project.

7. Structure

One of the areas that we need to focus on is our structure which currently does not facilitate the records management function. With the current roles and structure it will be very difficult for us to support Parliament to achieve compliance with records management standards in the most effective way. Therefore we hope to make use of the intention of the organisation to complete the restructuring exercise started last year. Earlier it was indicated that Parliament acknowledged that to achieve its strategic priorities it would need to look at structural and capacity issues.

Therefore, if Parliament is planning to align its structure to its strategic plan, the plan is to use that opportunity to determine what we need in terms of roles and skills so that we can use that information to feed into the redesign of our structure. We will therefore look at preparing a concept document on what records management is, what is required for compliance, what skills and resources are needed so that we can propose various models when we are invited to give input into the process.

In the meantime we are skilling up the resources that we have, discussing with them the changes that we need to undergo to meet the requirements of the institution and redefining their roles.

Secondly we can leverage of the interactions of the restructuring exercises if we can gather additional information on what functions are performed in different business areas and the records generated by those functions and feed that back into updating the file plan.

7. CONCLUSION

Parliament has accumulated a vast amount of information that can be exploited if it is organised properly and accessible so that it is available to inform decision making. If we can leverage of the rich history of the institution we can improve our efficiency and the effectiveness of our decisions. Our role is to assist with proper information management which in turn relies on efficient document and records management. Our role in the knowledge management chain is to assist staff to manage their records in accordance with certain standards. If we can assist to identify where the information resides in the institution, if we can assist with organising it and ensuring that the organisations records are reliable, accurate and authentic and it is accessible, digitised where necessary then we will have helped the knowledge management initiative by ensuring information is available for faster

and more effective decision making, that people can draw on the rich history of the institution so that we create a learning institution that can generate new knowledge and insight.

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