

# INFORMAA

quarterly

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**The e-Volution**  
**Sound about**  
the good, the bad and  
the ugly Recordkeeping



## Research Report Shock

Serious lack of  
Qualified Records  
Professionals in NSW

*education & training*

**SPECIAL FEATURE:**  
Records Management  
Qualifications in Australia and  
New Zealand : A Review

Official journal of the records management association of australasia

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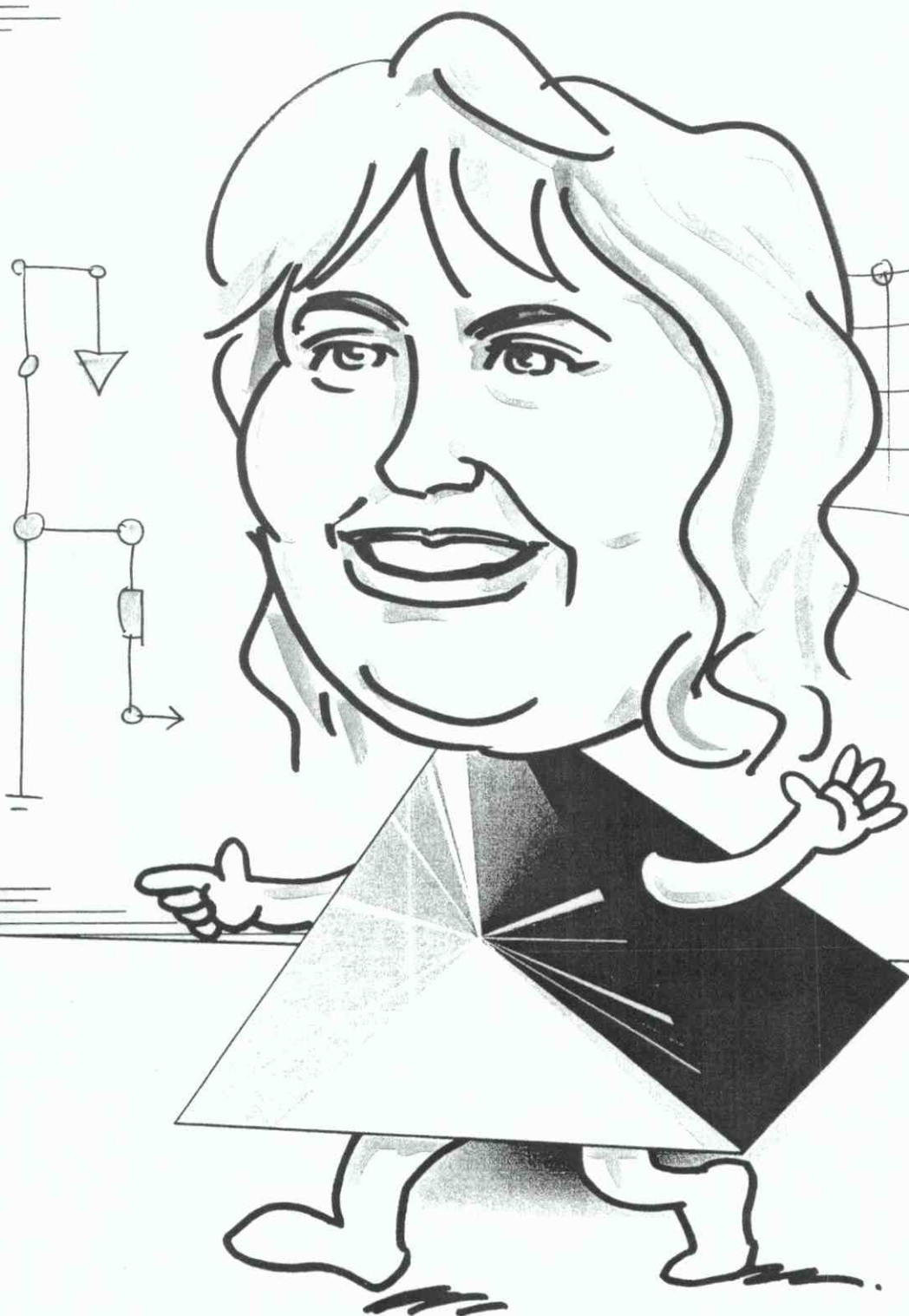
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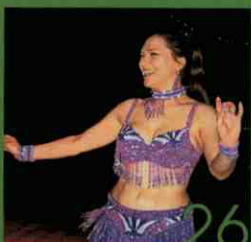
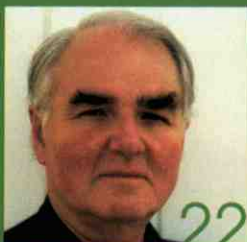
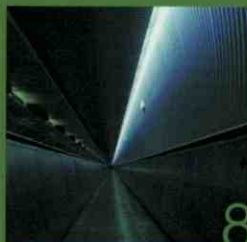
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# Contents...

RMAA Directory	4
Federal President's Message	6
Editorial	7
Special Feature: RM Qualifications	8
 Australasian Articles	 16
 <b>Research Report Shock</b>	 
Serious lack of qualified Records Professionals in NSW	16
<b>Focal Point for RM Education and Professional Development</b>	21
 International Article	 22
 <b>Two old Archive friends engage in Function-Subject Debate</b>	 
Oz Strategist and NZ pragmatist spar over F and S words, but agree: No real worries!	22
 Conference Reviews	 26
 <b>The e-Volution round about</b>	 
The good, the bad and the ugly recordkeeping	26
<b>The ASA Conference 2002:</b>	
From Manly to the Fourth Dimension	30
 J.Eddis Linton Awards	 34
 National News	 36
 Historic agreement signed with ASA	 36
Obituary - Neil Harold Granland, ARMA	36
RMAA name change approved	37
New Zealand branch okayed	37
RMAA Officers for 2002-3	37
Archives NZ and Hurley part company	37
 Industry News	 38
Branch Reports	42



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# President's message



I would like to formally welcome all of the members of our newest branch in New Zealand. It was great to see about 16 members come over to the Convention in Adelaide, many of whom were awarded with their Associate Certificates during the AGM.

The creation of a New Zealand Branch has been discussed for about six years and with more intensity this last year with a number of visits by Kate Walker and myself. Discussions were held with members of the former Wellington Chapter of ARMA and more recently the Auckland Chapter of ARMA in regards to the benefits of being part of the RMAA, running professional upgrade workshops and discussing policies and procedures as to how an International Branch would work.

The approval of the creation of the New Zealand Branch was formalised at the September Board meeting. The Branch will be based in Wellington and will have a Chapter initially in Auckland and it is hoped to form Chapters in Christchurch and possibly Dunedin. At last count there were almost 50 new members who had joined, with an anticipated membership of approximately 120.

To demonstrate our commitment to the New Zealand Branch, a motion was put to the AGM to change the name of the Association to the Records Management Association of Australasia. This was unanimously adopted. The Federal Executive will be working over the next few weeks in updating letterheads, the web page, the Memorandum and Articles, By-laws and Policies etc to make the change as smooth as possible.

On another note, I would like to thank Geoff Smith and Janet Knight for all the hard work and enthusiasm they put into producing INFORMAA Quarterly over the past two years. Geoff and Janet have chosen to step down from the Editor role and the Board is currently looking for someone to fill it as well as looking at the possibility of employing a professional editor to proof read articles, thus making the Editor's job more of a coordinating role. I have asked Mike Steemson from New Zealand to act as Editor for the next two editions until a new Editor can be found. If you are interested in this, please feel free to discuss it with me.

In the last edition, I talked about the new member administration software package that the Association purchased. This was installed in August and is now working well. One of the new package was the issuing of membership cards and setting up of a members-only site on the RMAA Website. If you do not have a membership card by now, please check that you have paid your membership fees for the 2002/03-year. If you have, please contact the office as soon as possible. Your new card will allow you a discount of up to 30% on the normal rate for seminars and conventions, plus free attendance at either breakfast, lunch time or evening meetings and access to the members-only part of the Website.

For those who were unable to attend the AGM, the following people were elected to the Board for the 2002/2003-year.

<b>National President</b>	Chris Fripp
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If you have any questions of the Board you can find their contact details on the RMAA Website.

**Chris Fripp**  
**Federal President**



# Editorial



Mainly information management conference in August, an Adelaide information management conference in September; makes one wonder why they were a thousand or so kilometres and a few weeks apart. I couldn't afford both, and I'm glad I didn't miss ARMAA's South Australian event, but it irritates me that as a result I have denied the choice of seeing and hearing some of the vital speakers at the Australian Society of Archivists' gathering.

Especially when we succeeded in putting the two conventions together only last year.

There were grumbles that Hobart's 2001 event was 'too archival' or, on the other hand, not archival enough. This was, sadly, to be expected. Some records managers seem to regard archiving as simply an end product, not a core business, and some archivists appear to think of us just as record 'grunts'.

This is what some of the Adelaide speakers were talking about. This is why Rick Barry said that the scoreboard currently stands at 5: RM 0. This is behind the humour of Wendy Fewsdale's scary recordkeeping stories. As a breed, we are not often enough looking outside our cosy little records circle to see what the rest of the information management world is up to.

Archives? Too much theory! IT? Too much technology! Business re-organisation? Too much everything!

Quite wrong! To survive, we must take on board the theories, the technologies and the business acumen. We should have heard the ASA's 'who cares!' conference themes because we must care, too.

Happily, plans are again in the slow making for closer contacts between the two conventions, a back to back event soon, possibly another joint gathering in the distance. It's not good enough. There is no valid reason why the two events, with separate subject streams if necessary, should not run side by side so that, at the least, archivists and records managers can meet and discover that, really, they're talking and worrying about the same things.

Have a look at the reviews of the two conferences and the Hurley-Symondson debate on archiving practice in this edition and you will see what I mean. Oh, and hello! I'm editor for this and the next IQ edition. Hope you approve of my offering. Janet Knight and Geoff Smith left me some very big shoes to fill, bless 'em.

**Mike Steemson ARMA**  
Acting National Editor



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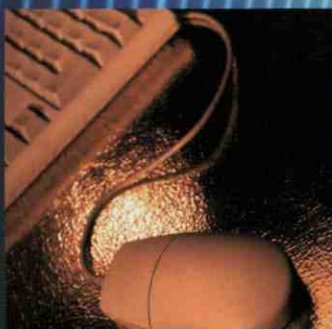
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# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Education & Training





# Special Feature : Education & Training Records Management Qualifications in Australia and New Zealand: A Review



Amanda Cossham

The job is great, the hours are not bad, the pay's adequate, you've just got beyond the initial steep learning curve, and your boss calls you in to say: 'You're doing such a great job that we're re-grading your position. You're now the Records Manager but you need to get some qualifications.'

## Great, but where do you start?

There is so little offered in this field in New Zealand that I began by investigating the records management qualifications offered in Australia. I did this as part of a post-graduate research project into the professional development needs of records managers in New Zealand. This article presents what qualifications are offered in each country.

In Australia, there is a range of options. Several universities offer records management qualifications. Others provide individual courses. The Queensland State Archives, [www.archives.qld.gov.au/](http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/), is in the process of collating the whole range of continuing education courses but it had not made these resources available at the time of writing. I consider only complete Australian qualifications in this paper, but cover individual courses as well for New Zealand, as there is so little on offer.

A good place to start is the RMAA Website, where there's a list of available qualifications and links to the universities, which offer them. Websites being what they are, the links may not be up-to-date, and universities change their qualifications from time to time. So don't take any site as gospel, and search the individual universities' Websites for confirmation.

When I used the RMAA list, it had not been updated for a while and initial information I had was at least two (2) years out-of-date. During that missing two (2) years, there had been some considerable change to what was being offered. However, the list has now been updated. I did make every effort to ensure that what I located was what was actually on offer, emailing each university and asking them to confirm supplied details.

It may be worth noting that the University of Canberra did not reply to email messages asking for confirmation that what I had located was correct and complete. All other institutions supplied a response.

## Focus on records

My focus was strictly on records rather than archives management or librarianship. Although there are considerable overlaps between records management and archives, my interest lies in the management of current information, rather than in historical repositories.



With this in mind, I extended the focus of my searching to include knowledge management as well as records management. Although I don't think that knowledge managers can be identified as a separate profession quite yet, the professions overlap in many ways, share common ground and deal with many of the same issues. In many cases, they are working with the same resource - records. The hot term seemed to be 'information management', with information technology included as part of this concept.

One of the problems facing searchers is that the universities put records management qualifications in a variety of different places, and you can only guess where. If they offer access to courses based only on faculty, then you will not locate relevant information unless you know the faculty... and it could be anything from communications or health and science, to humanities, information technology, education, commerce and economics, or information science and humanities.

The siting, of courses, does provide an interesting perspective on the way education providers, if not the profession itself, consider such qualifications.

Despite the range of faculties in which the qualifications are located, the qualifications have a business focus, linked to information technology, showing through in many universities. This seems to indicate a growing awareness of the importance of information management and, more specifically recordkeeping, extending beyond just the technological, and of the importance of managing an organisation's knowledge in whatever form it is found. It is a perspective that many records managers would do well to adopt in order to improve their status, salary and awareness of their importance to their organisations.

In some cases, these qualifications are closely linked to librarianship courses that have been

available longer and at least nominally deal with similar issues. Other institutions offer archives courses where conceptual bases at least have strong similarities. These links are not necessarily the most useful, however, especially in the environment in which records managers will most often be working.

## Search engine hits and misses

Some universities have excellent Website search engines - but not all. I searched each site using the terms 'records management' and 'record(s)', initially. Use of these terms only often proved fruitless, or at least time wasting, especially in sites where it was not possible to search courses and programs separately. In these cases, the first 'hits' were often just links to University recordkeeping documentation and projects, rather than available courses.

## 'virtual' learning is offered for many of these courses,

I also searched using 'archives', 'recordkeeping' and 'information', especially where I knew that some courses had previously been offered. This was occasionally useful in locating the relevant

department when the 'records or records management' searches had turned up nothing. Like them, this was most useful where it was possible to search on only course and program information. Even this did not always guarantee success - perseverance is needed.

Most of the programs were offered at a post-graduate level. Some undergraduate programs that offered no whole degree in records management nonetheless allow records minor courses, in which candidates can at least demonstrate a significant strength and interest in this area. Most undergraduate information and library studies degrees provide at least some relevant courses. Distance or Web-based 'virtual' learning is offered for many of these courses, so choice is considerable, regardless of your location.

The structure of Graduate Certificates, leading to Graduate Diplomas and Masters

degrees, allows qualifications to be built over time. In some universities, an executive certificate with no formal entry requirements, allows those with no minimal tertiary education a step up to the graduate programs.

Edith Cowan University, in Perth, Western Australia, makes this clear on its Web-page: 'The Executive Certificate in Records Management is aimed specifically at those who do not have an undergraduate degree, and are therefore not eligible for admission to either a Graduate Certificate in Records Management or Graduate Diploma (Archives and Records), but do not have the time to obtain an entire undergraduate degree through part-time study. There are no formal admission requirements for this course other than completion of Year 12 equivalent and/or relevant experience.'

The RMAA accredits some of the available qualifications, as do other professional organisations, and this information can be found through its Website.

## New Zealand 'choices'

In New Zealand, choices are few and far between. In fact, 'choice' isn't a word you can use, as there is only one complete qualification available in New Zealand. That is the Diploma in Records and Information Management, an undergraduate diploma offered only by distance education from the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand in Lower Hutt, near Wellington. It is the equivalent of a one-year full time second year level university study. The Diploma is newly established and has only been available from 2002, so no graduates exist yet.

Although not a qualification as such, you can also obtain a Certificate of Proficiency in records management (or in archives or preservation management) by completing the relevant course offered as part of the Master in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) programme at Victoria University of Wellington's School of Information Management.



School of Information Management has considered a masters level qualification in records and archives management, but has turned this option down by the university, and is now considering working towards an archives and recordkeeping diploma in the MLIS.

can also take a records stream in the Master of Information Management which is also offered by Victoria University of Wellington, but this is a post-experience managerial qualification, and requires substantial experience in the industry.

The next most feasible option if you are in New Zealand is to study at one of the Australian universities - either on campus, or more likely, by distance. Universities target international students as a specific category, and many of the Australian universities explicitly mention New Zealand students in the same category as Australian students - and there seem to be no barriers to New Zealanders enrolling for their qualifications, other than the substantial fees.

It implies that New Zealand choices are considerably greater than first appears and that there is a market for Australian qualifications in New Zealand - beyond just a particular profession. Certainly there exists a small but growing number of New Zealand recordkeepers who have Australian qualifications, usually earned from a distance.

So there is a range of choices. Prospective students should search around, consider the composition of qualifications, look at the levels of professional membership offered by the professional organisations, consider the accreditation of courses by the RMAA, the Australian Society of Archivists or the Australian Library and Information Association, and work out where you want your job to go. Recordkeeping skills at the highest levels are transferable across the information professions and vital to organisations. Go get 'em!

### Table Notes

The information in these tables was taken from the universities' Websites and is complete within the parameters I set myself. That is, it does not include library or archives qualifications, but does include those that seemed to me to have a strong relevance to records managers or basis in information management. The University of New South Wales is a good example here. I contacted each institution, and asked them to confirm that what I had located was what they offered and all they offered for records management.

The tables are meant as a general guideline only. Intending students should search the relevant sites themselves in order to locate the most up-to-date information and contact details. Universities do change courses and programs regularly, and no guarantees can be given that these courses will be offered next year.

### Footnote

1. Edith Cowan University webpage is at [http://www.ecu.edu.au/acserv/hb2002/pg/chs/school\\_of\\_computer\\_and\\_information\\_science/executive\\_certificate\\_in/records\\_management.html](http://www.ecu.edu.au/acserv/hb2002/pg/chs/school_of_computer_and_information_science/executive_certificate_in/records_management.html)

### The Author

Amanda Cossham has 15 years' experience as a librarian and library educator.

She is a lecturer in information and library studies at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, where she teaches an undergraduate course in library technical services and is developing a cataloguing and classification course and a three course Certificate in Cataloguing. She is in the process of upgrading a postgraduate diploma to a Master in Library and Information studies through Victoria University of Wellington, part of which involves this research project into the professional development needs of New Zealand's records managers. She is contactable at: [Amanda.Cossham@openpolytechnic.ac.nz](mailto:Amanda.Cossham@openpolytechnic.ac.nz)

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Faculty of Information Technology, School of Information Management and Systems

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Graduate Diploma of Science (Information Services)	12 month full time or equivalent part time study
Master of Information Services (Archives and Records Stream)	18 months full time or equivalent part time

In an email to the author, Mark Brogan, Lecturer, School of Computer and Information Science, wrote: 'Currently reviewing arrangements for the coordination of the knowledge management offerings' <http://www.ecu.edu.au>

### Curtin University of Technology

Division of Humanities, School of Media and Information

Bachelor of Arts (Librarianship and Corporate Information Management)	Undergraduate; Honours available 3 years On campus and distance education
Graduate Certificate in Records Management	1 semester full time. Available part time. On campus and distance education
Graduate Diploma in Records Management and Archives	1 year full time or equivalent part time On campus and distance education
Graduate Diploma in Knowledge Management	1 year full time or equivalent part time On campus and distance education
Master of Information Management (Records and Archives Stream)	Masters plus experience 1.5 years full time or equivalent part time On campus and distance education
PhD	By research

Curtin also offers Cultural Heritage studies. The Bachelor of Arts (Information Studies Stream) (Cultural Heritage Studies) has some relevant papers - one of which is an Edith Cowan paper. <http://www.curtin.edu.au>



## South Australia

### University of South Australia

Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, School of Communication, Information and New Media

Bachelor of Arts (Information Studies)	Undergraduate degree 3 years full time or part time equivalent. On campus
Graduate Certificate in Knowledge Management	18 units (4 courses) 1 semester full time or 2 part time
Graduate Diploma in Knowledge Management	36 units (8 courses) 1 semester full time or 2 part time, PLUS the Graduate Certificate
Master of Arts (Knowledge Management)	54 units 1 semester full time or 2 part time, PLUS the Graduate Diploma
Graduate Certificate in Internet Communication Strategies	18 units (4 courses) 1 semester full time or 2 part time
Graduate Diploma in Internet Communication Strategies	36 units (8 courses) 1 semester full time or 2 part time, PLUS the Graduate Certificate
Master of Arts (Internet Communication Strategies)	54 units 1 semester full time or 2 part time, PLUS the Graduate Diploma

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# Research report shock

## Serious lack of skilled and qualified records professionals in NSW



**Jenny Evans**  
ARMA

### Abstract

During late 2001, a survey of New South Wales members of the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA) was undertaken to gain an understanding of why there was some difficulty in recruiting skilled and professionally qualified records managers in the State. It was part of a research project for an Edith Cowan University Master of Information Services degree. A total 649 survey forms were distributed to members of the RMAA in New South Wales. The results reported are collated from the 297 returned, 46% of the forms distributed.

The survey found that a significant number of respondents did not feel any need to gain formal qualification. Some unqualified people with records management responsibilities were receiving salaries in excess of \$60,000. The results suggest there is still some way to go before records management can be considered a profession.

### Case for qualified records managers

The issue of qualifications and training records managers has been widely discussed. The literature reveals that there are many poorly trained records managers (Taylor, 1991, p.35<sup>1</sup>) who have often found their way into records management (Carroll, 1991, p.33<sup>2</sup>; Pemberton, 1997<sup>3</sup>) or been pushed into it. Many freely admit that they knew virtually nothing before entering the field (Pemberton, 1997).

According to Constantini (1994, p.30<sup>4</sup>) 'you can no longer leave school and consider your education adequate'. (Pemberton, 1997) believes the records field will change but not all records managers will change. Those who are unwilling to accept change will not be able to continue in the field at the end of their normal working lives. Pemberton believes those who see themselves as having just a job as opposed to a structured career path in records management need to look at variables including education, certification, and other credentials required now and in the future if they want a professional-level career in records management.

Due to the changes in records management over the last two decades there has been a constant need to update skills (Bennett 1996, p.42<sup>5</sup>; Conway 1996, p.38; Pember and Exon, 1996, p.14; Pemberton 1997<sup>6</sup>). Taylor (1991, p.39) also notes that 'decades of neglect cannot be undone and fixed in the space of a few years'. Whilst the literature recognises the need for short training courses it also argues strongly for those people working in records management and archives to obtain



nal qualifications (Caut 1992, p.19<sup>8</sup>; Birmingham, 2000, p.5<sup>9</sup>; McKemmish, 1995, p.8<sup>10</sup>; Pemberton, 1994<sup>11</sup>; Smith, 1993, p.2<sup>12</sup>; State Records Authority of New South Wales, 1998, p.21<sup>13</sup>).

## Why is there a shortage of qualified records managers?

Although the need for recordkeeping qualifications and continuing education has long been advocated, 61% of those responding to the survey of NSW RMAA members do not have qualifications in records or archives management. That is, a very high percentage of those who would otherwise be competitive applicants for advertised vacancies are ineligible because they do not meet advertised essential criteria for selection. This is a very significant factor contributing to the shortage of records management skilled professionals.

The survey questions were designed to elicit answers on a range of factors, aiming at obtaining a picture of the current demographics of active recordkeeping professionals, their qualifications or reasons for not attempting to gain a qualification, their interest in continuing education activities and their salary level. Questions were also asked about the number of vacancies in recordkeeping positions within respondents' agencies and the period these positions had remained unfilled at the time. Where possible, responses were cross-correlated to gain a clearer view of the workforce. For example, responses about qualifications were matched with respondents' salary levels.

## Demographics of recordkeepers

The survey showed that the average NSW RMAA member working in recordkeeping is just less than 38 years of age with nearly 13 years of experience. The recordkeeping workforce is 63% female. The largest number of salaries fell within the \$Au30,000 to \$Au50,000 range, with the average salary being \$Au42,146. A comparison of mean salaries for males and females shows males earn around \$6,885 more than females.

## Qualifications held

One hundred and eighty one people or 61% of respondents said they had no qualification in records or archives. A total 116 or 39% said they had qualifications. Of the qualifications obtained, 41% were from Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions, 18% were undergraduate and 34% were postgraduate level, 3% were master degrees, and 4% were other qualifications. The survey revealed 79 females and 37 males had qualifications in records and archives. There were 66% of males without qualifications as opposed to 58% of females. This is a significant finding as it reveals that a higher number of females hold qualifications, compared with their male counterparts, yet they are likely to earn less.

There are only two employment areas where organisations are more qualified than non-qualified people, these being State Government agencies and hospitals. More than half those working in local government do not have qualifications.

## Reasons offered for lack of qualifications

Those without formal qualifications were asked whether they had considered acquiring qualifications. The 49% who said they had not considered acquiring qualifications were asked to give reasons. Responses are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Reasons given for lack of qualification

Reason for lack of qualification	Number of people
Do not know how	6
Too expensive	11
No course in NSW <sup>14</sup>	2
Considered experience equivalent to qualification	50
Other	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>

The recordkeeping workforce is 63% female

Other reasons included: retirement near, or too old and not interested; not intending to stay in the field; qualifications in another field such as business or librarianship; overall or minor part of responsibility for area but their main job is not records (for example, an IT Manager with records functions reporting to their position); did not have university entrance qualifications; unaware of suitable courses; significant knowledge of their organisation considered to be sufficient; State Records NSW certificates completed; numerous short courses completed; boring topic; lack of time; don't need a qualification; and life is too short.

Some people gave more than one answer and their second reasons were: they considered their experience was equivalent to a degree; they had attained Associate membership of the RMAA; they could not go back to studying after so long, but have attended State Records short training courses; short courses are just getting a piece of paper and are not competency based.

The majority of the people who feel their experience is equivalent to obtaining a qualification work in local government. There is also a trend for older people to feel their experience is equivalent to obtaining a degree.



An undergraduate degree takes three years of full-time study or approximately six years part-time study. A postgraduate qualification takes a further year of study full-time or two years part time study. Yet, despite these time frames to acquire qualifications, some 44% of people with 10 years or less experience in records and archives believe their experience is equivalent to an obtaining a qualification. The results also show over 50% of unqualified people who have not considered acquiring qualifications have 11 or more years experience working in records and archives positions.

## The NSW Recordkeeping Workforce

Somewhere between 63% and 71% of respondents appeared to come within the jurisdiction of the NSW State Records Act, 1998. The uncertainty in percentage occurs because it was unclear which respondents were covered by the Act. Some 40% of respondents work for local government, 19% for State Government and 15% for private enterprise.

Respondents were asked to indicate the title of their position. Some of the position titles were grouped for the purposes of analysis. For example, those people with records team leader, records manager, records administrator, records coordinator, and records supervisor have all been grouped together to indicate that 27% of the population are Records Managers or equivalent.

Two per cent of the population was designated Archives and Records Managers, 17% Records Officers, 7% Managers, 3% Consultants, 2% had the title of Director including some company directors and a Director of Records, 3% are Information Managers, and 2% Information Officers. Other, less common titles included Freedom of Information Officer, Library and Records Manager, Knowledge Manager, Systems Officer, and Secretary.

## Salary

If remuneration was equal between males and females then females should outnumber males by nearly 2 to 1 in each of the salary ranges surveyed. However, a comparison of gender and salary showed that males generally earn higher salaries than their female counterparts. In particular, once the salary reaches over \$40,000 there is a shift towards males earning a higher salary than females. When the salary reaches \$60,000, males clearly outnumber females. There are also more unqualified than qualified people in this higher salaried bracket.

The survey revealed that older workers are less likely to have qualifications in records and archives management. Those with qualifications are likely to be in the younger age groups and there is a tendency for them to earn over \$40,000, although even without qualifications you can still receive a salary over \$40,000.

One can speculate that where organisations cannot recruit people with appropriate qualifications they will employ the best applicant that tends to place unqualified people in higher salary brackets. Another possible reason for the coincidence of lack of qualifications and higher salaries in older age groups is that people have been promoted to these positions through seniority of service. If this were the case, it would tend to reinforce their perception that a professional qualification is unnecessary. These higher salary positions are typically management positions with titles such as Records Manager, Records and Archives Manager, Records and Archives Administrator.

Those with TAFE level qualifications tend to earn salaries in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 bracket, whereas those with university qualifications are more likely to earn over \$40,000. Undergraduate and postgraduate degrees attract similar salary levels, although often the undergraduate degrees held are from other related fields and are not specific to recordkeeping.

## Continuing Professional Development

Respondents were asked if they attended short training courses in record management. The results show that had done one or more short courses. The most popular type was in record management fundamentals. This suggests strong demand for basic recordkeeping skills education. Other popular courses were thesaurus usage, developing dispute authorities, managing electronic records, managing a records disposal program, and managing a records management program. The least popular training courses were those relating to archives such as oral history, encoded archival description courses and local government and community archives.

Respondents were also asked whether there were areas in which they would like to enhance their skills. Potential courses such as strategic planning, records management, vital records, marketing records management, disaster preparedness planning proved to be popular choices, along with electronic messages, electronic records and metadata.

Surprisingly, some people stated on the questionnaire that they were not allowed to attend training courses. These respondents were from areas covered by the NSW State Records Act. Principle 7 of the NSW Standard on Records Management Program requires agencies to develop skills of existing and future staff through a training and development program (State Archives Authority of New South Wales, 1998, p.21). This Standard is currently being used as one of the measures to assess recordkeeping in the NSW public sector agencies by the NSW Auditor-General's Department.

## Vacancies

The survey responses indicated that thirty-eight organisations had vacant positions in late 2001<sup>16</sup>.



Table 2: Details of vacancy

Number vacant	Number of organisations	Total vacant
1	23	23
1.5	2	2 + (2 x .5)
2	10	20
3	1	3
4	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>56 + (2 x .5)</b>

The average length of time a position is vacant is 35 weeks, a significant period! A number of the positions have been vacant for much longer periods of time. The largest number of vacancies was in local government with some 14 councils reporting a total of 18.5 vacancies. The titles and salary levels of the vacant positions varied. There was no indication that vacancies were concentrated at any particular level. There were vacancies for records officers, records managers, document officers, archivists, trainees, and medical records officers. The salary range for the vacant positions was between \$6,000 to over \$80,000. The survey did not ask if recruitment had been attempted on these positions, nor did it ask why recruitment had failed if it had been attempted. Further research is required to look at why positions have remained vacant for so long.

By my own personal experience and other anecdotal evidence suggest recruitment often fails because applicants lack required skills and qualifications. Alternatively, whilst some applicants present well on paper they fail to answer the criteria at interview. In other cases applicants fail to address the criteria or to demonstrate they can meet the criteria and thus they are not selected for interview<sup>17</sup>. Despite there being an overall unemployment rate of around 7% in the community, records management vacancies attract very few applicants with skills and qualifications in records and/or archives.

Records management positions often attract applicants with experience and qualifications in other industries, suggesting there is a perception in the community that records work can be done by anyone. If an organisation requires a dentist, doctor or

engineer the vacancy will not be filled unless the person has appropriate qualifications. The same should apply to records management and/or archival positions. This is not the case in records management at present as it is possible to obtain a senior position without qualifications.

## Conclusion

The research has shown there is an increasing trend towards records managers obtaining professional qualifications. However, although records management is moving towards establishing itself as a profession, attitudes from the past still influence many people. That 50 respondents who have not considered acquiring qualifications consider their experience is equivalent to a degree in the discipline is a matter for serious concern.

Although the survey shows that a significant number of respondents are keen to improve or maintain their skills through ongoing education, the industry still cannot find sufficient skilled professionals to fill vacant positions. The fact that it is possible to acquire senior status and salaries in excess of \$60,000 without recordkeeping qualification provides little encouragement to newer records management staff to spend time and money obtaining such qualifications.

Moving towards professionalism requires untiring advocacy of higher standards, ongoing debate about appropriate professional education and further research. However, until practitioners accept the need for formal qualifications in their discipline, recordkeeping will not obtain the status accorded to other professions.

I am grateful for the assistance of Dr Karen Anderson, Senior Lecturer Edith Cowan University who has assisted with the preparation of this article.

## The Author

Jenny Evans is an Associate member of RMAA. She holds a BAppSc degree from UTS. For the past 15 years, she has worked in various records and information positions in local government, a university and government agencies. In the NSW public sector she has developed records management programs for two agencies. She has been responsible for compliance with privacy legislation and for managing an agency Intranet and Internet website. Jenny has completed various courses, graduating in 2001 with the Master of Information Services (Archives and Records) from Edith Cowan University. She is currently enrolled in the Public Sector Management Graduate Certificate Course.

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## Footnotes

- 1 Taylor, P. (1991). Training, managing and retaining records management staff. *INFORMAA Quarterly* 7(2), 34-39.
- 2 Carroll, E. (1991). In search of records management. *Records Management Quarterly*, 25(4), 32-36. Retrieved October 6, 2001 from Academic Elite Database <http://www.epnet.com/database.html>
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- 4 Constantini, J. (1994). Survival skills for information professional in the decade of turbulence. *Records Management Quarterly* 28(1), 26-30, 40.
- 5 Bennett, J. (1999). Achieving professional excellence for a new century. *The Information Management Journal*, 33(April) 1999, 36-42.
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- 9 Cunningham, A. (2000). What's in a name? Broadening the horizons in the pursuit of a recordkeeping profession that cherishes unity in diversity. Bridging the gap: Proceedings of the 17th National Records Management Association of Australia Conference. Retrieved March 20, 2001, from <http://www.rmaa.com.au>.
- 10 McKemmish, S. (1995b). Educating recordkeeping professionals for the 21st century: issues and challenges. *Redefining Records Management: Conference Papers of the 12th National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia*, Melbourne 18-21 September, 1995, 85-102.
- 11 Pemberton, J. (1994). Professionals and clerks: one happy family? *Records Management Quarterly* 28(2), 56-61. Retrieved October 6, 2001 from Academic Elite Database <http://www.epnet.com/database.html>.
- 12 Smith, G. (1993). What is the Records Management Association of Australia undertaking in dealing with the emergence of records management as a profession? *INFORMAA Quarterly* 9 (3), 21-25.
- 13 State Records Authority of New South Wales (1998). *What is records management? Records management in the New South Wales public sector* (revised edition). Sydney, Australia: State Records Authority of New South Wales.
- 14 From 1974 until 2000, NSW offered an archives course at the University of New South Wales and TAFE offered records courses from the early 1970's. However the records courses were often available in limited locations. Currently in NSW TAFE only offers distance education records courses. This may impose a problem for a potential student who would like to attend a face-to-face course.
- 15 Archives Authority of New South Wales. 1998. *Standards on records management programs*. Sydney, Australia: Archives Authority of New South Wales.
- 16 Survey results were collected from individuals rather than organizations. During the analysis of various positions an effort was made to include only one response per organisation by cross checking responses.
- 17 Perhaps the RMAA or a training provider could offer short courses on how to write job applications.

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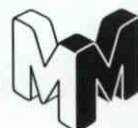
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At national and branch level in the Records Management Association of Australasia there is strong support for ensuring records management professionals continue to have access to as many learning opportunities as possible.

The RMAA Board recognises the demand for competencies in fundamental records management techniques as well as continued professional development in information management as a strategic objective.

The growth in demand for records management professionals continues and the RMAA regards records management education as a strategic priority to ensure members remain the most competitive candidates for jobs, contracts or consultancies.

RMAA branch education representatives (see names and contact list at left) met at the Adelaide convention to reflect on last year's achievements and agree education outcomes that would contribute to the RMAA 2002 - 2003 strategic object 'To be the focal point for networking, education, training and professional development in records management.'

The RMAA's support for the Australian Competency Standards was reaffirmed and plans were made to identify RMAA members with Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment qualifications. We plan to develop training opportunities based on the standards.

NSW continues to be the only state with a traineeship dedicated to records management. But all RMAA education representatives confirmed that members were training staff using a wide variety of business and administrations courses. The Education Committee, with the help of the experienced NSW branch, plans to improve records management traineeship coverage in all States. The first step to achieve this will be to provide assistance to branches to get traineeships up and running.

## Forum Participation

During the next twelve (12) months we will continue to participate in educational institution's consultative forums and other opportunities to support course development. Thanks to RMAA members working in education as educators and practitioners as well as current and past students, we have access to some of the best educational courses.

Members can refer to the RMAA Website for information about further education in Australia and New Zealand. We've had some really useful feedback on the RMAA's education Website. As changes are made to the Website let us know how we are going. Branch committee members.

Members who can help achieve our education objectives, need education advice or assistance can contact their branch committee member.

# Two old Archive friends engage in Function-Subject Debate

Oz strategist and NZ pragmatist spar over F and S words, but agree: No real Worries!



**Chris Hurley**  
ARMA



**Bruce Symondson**  
ARMA

## Abstract

Recordkeeping listservers can earn brickbats for the triviality of their discussion threads. But they prove their worth when, as happened on the Aus-Archivists and N.Z. Records lists recently, two trans-Tasman recordkeeping heavyweights discourse publicly on a subject that has caused much division, not so say strife, in the ARM community: the debate over subject - or function-based recordkeeping classification. Lofty Kiwi Bruce Symondson<sup>1</sup>, Archivist at Waitakere City Council, near Auckland, and the sturdy Australian archivist, Chris Hurley<sup>2</sup>, until the end of last September the General Manager at Archives New Zealand, discussed the theories and concluded that, complex as they are, they don't have to get in the way of successful recordkeeping.

'Pragmatic' Bruce Symondson opened the discussion wondering how to make his employers' human resources and property files fit his and its preferred function-based principals.

The opportunity has been taken to make minor improvements in the text, and a few changes to reflect the different context. The postings have been little edited in order not to alter the flow of ideas and relative informality of the original. The listserv thread included postings from several others, and Bruce received some off list comments. See the list archive at: <http://www.archivists.com.au/>

My local municipal authority and employer, Waitakere City Council, is some months into a corporate information management project that will be substantially following DIRKS methodology and strongly influenced by the work in New Zealand of the e-G unit. We are convinced of the functional approach opposed to subject approach.

There has been good progress in recording the legislative context, metadata, the functional hierarchy and analysis of business processes. But we have made less headway with the thesaurus where work done has confirmed the expectation that it relies on the functional hierarchy. Two related concerns have emerged.

The first is the level of the physical file and hardcopy systems where we are not convinced that subject is necessarily always wrong. Despite increasing use of electronic databases, receipt of information electronically and scanning of documents, we expect hardcopy to remain important at least the medium term.

Please assume we have complete metadata standards, functional hierarchy and analysis of business processes, so we also have a business classification scheme. We don't but these are being worked on, and we are trying to plan ahead. Also assume for all the standard reasons in the literature that the classification system files by function, activity, and transaction. The primary reason for all of this is user benefit. That benefit would also flow through to the functions-based retention and disposal schedules.



thing we have read seems to allow for exceptions to functional filing or a reversion to subject filing at any level. Yet I can think of two examples where this is justified. The first is with employee files. Functional analysis would show Human Resources to be responsible for a number of activities, processes, etc. However, filing is done with folders for each employee because virtually all the queries will be concerned with a person. Is the individual employee an activity or process? Surely in this lexicon the employee is a subject?

The second example is property files. Many of the responsibilities of local government are with properties or sites (the words are often used interchangeably). Consequently, many local authorities have a filing system of one file for each property. The file contains many processes but the advantages of one file containing all the information about that property are clear. Again, the property file is surely a subject file?

## All-in' files difficult to appraise

In these two cases users are very clear they want 'one file that has everything,' but the result can get unwieldy to use and difficult to appraise. It intermixes everything from basic building design that should be kept for the life of the building and may be archival, to notices that the grass is too high and get it cut please. I've come to the conclusion that such files could be divided into three main activities, but never had the chance to try it.

First is planning under the Resource Management Act, or its equivalent. Second are all building, plumbing and drainage records. Third is everything else. That would be easy to do for filing purposes. More than about five divisions would, I suspect, be impossible to file consistently. These three would be straightforward. They would improve access, as most users would focus on one of the three. The first would be archival, the second substantially so. Most

of the routine papers would be in the third category, admittedly with some long-term papers as well but at least for appraisal purposes there would considerably less to go through. I'm sure something similar could be done for staff files.

## 'one file that has everything'

One of the rationales underlying these ideas is that theory is vital but there is nothing wrong with a bit of pragmatism in application, especially where application of the theory without exceptions goes against the justification of the theory in the first place - which in this case is user requirements.

These are not issues just for hardcopy systems, despite the above examples being of hardcopy systems. While not applicable to databases they do apply to electronic documents in, for example, I-Drives.

All of which suggests that where user requirements justify it, the physical file is a subject, within a system that is functions based. In effect you have a functional hierarchy, business classification scheme and classification system but remain pragmatic to user needs at the level of the individual file. Is this a terribly heretical suggestion?

If anyone has asked the same questions and has standards, policies, etc that decided when to subject file and when to function file that would be great: standards, policies etc for the business classification scheme that determined filing ditto.

The second major concern is the thesaurus, and here I'm not sure I'm being very clear where we go. I realise I am simplifying enormously when I write the core of a functional thesaurus is the functional hierarchy, but given that the thesaurus is intended to assist access you then add all the additional terms that people might enquire on.

The NZ e-Govt unit has developed FONZ and SONZ (subject and function thesaurus tools) the latter being, (amongst other

things), the plain language terms that the normal enquirer might use. The metadata has function and subject as separate fields. However, in Waitakere, we have taken the approach that where we currently uses familiar functional terms, we will continue to do so. The concern is that we could end up with four thesauri, which is ridiculous. We are considering the idea of having the one despite the metadata complications. Have we missed the plot somewhere?

## Instances in a functional hierarchy

Leading Australasian archives strategist, Chris Hurley, was intrigued by the conundrum. He thought that 'in the world of information-ese', as he put it, it didn't matter much. People and property were neither 'subject' nor 'function'.

I think of a person, or a property, as neither a subject nor a function. If anything, these are instances in a functional hierarchy.

In the world of information management-ese, Person A can be the subject of a folder contained within a logical taxonomy, or the object, in documentary form, to which metadata tags are attached. In the world of recordkeeping-ese, however, he is a whole other person who must be documented within a contingent taxonomy and with metadata tags whose use is prescribed by recordkeeping rules and whose meaning is, preferably, managed in a metadata management system... what we used to call finding aids

Documents attached to the personnel file for Person B are not and cannot be the same as documents contained in a subject folder dealing with the same individual. They can have the same data value but they can't be the same because their meaning in a subject folder cannot be the same as the meaning they have when placed in an evidentiary sequence.

A subject folder may contain a Curriculum Vitae for A and yet another CV for him. Neither of these have the same meaning as

a CV he attaches to an application for a particular position on a particular occasion and in a sequence which relates that document with earlier and later documents in the same sequence. It could, of course, be part of several recordkeeping sequences simultaneously - one for person, one for position, one for the action in advertising the position.

## RK sequences are particular

Recordkeeping sequences are not singular but they are particular. The rules that determine the sequence of the documents are not based primarily on the identity of the subject since other documents on the same subject are excluded by the recordkeeping rules. It is the connection of the document with a (trans)action involving him that establishes the relevant sequence.

Recordkeeping sequences or 'relationships' are never sequences of things, for example, documents. They are always sequences of functions: activities, actions, acts, etc. This functional stuff is the organising principle for all relationships in records. The documents just come along for the ride. It is the fact that this is a HR file of this organisation for dealings with or about Person A or for dealings about something else in which A is involved. That determines what the sequence is and what documents can or cannot be part of it. AND the primary determinant of all the important things is not that it is a file about A, but rather that it is a personnel file that, in this case, happens to be about him.

Like all records, a HR file is an intersection between two processes - business and recordkeeping. The characteristics of the record partake (to a greater or lesser extent) of features of both. When we insert a person's name into the title of a HR file cover we were doing a recordkeeping process. The files might be incorporated into a numbering system that may also be largely based on recordkeeping processes but HR files were frequently filed alphabetically, by person's name. So, the person's name becomes the organising

principle for the series. So, maybe Person A is neither a subject nor a function; maybe he's a sub-series. (I'm only half joking here!)

In recordkeeping taxonomy, the significance of a personnel file is that it is an instance of an activity (part of a contingent functional hierarchy). The files containing 'everything on' Person B is the definition of one kind of transaction type - neither good nor bad, just possible. They don't really mean everything on, of course, they mean everything on this person in his/her dealings with this organisation. And, they don't really mean everything even in that sense. They mean everything of that kind relevant to the HR function(s) documented in this series.

## 'People files are transactions'

The file for Person A will be one instance, or (set of) transaction(s) of the same activity. It may well be labelled "Person A", but we must not let the naming convention delude us as to the kind of record it really is. The name, held as metadata, in a thesaurus, a folder structure, or simply entered, uncontrolled, on the file cover is simply an identifier. The file is an instance of an activity, a transaction or set of transactions. What distinguishes transactions involving A, and determines which sequence they go into is the identity of A combined with the ascertainable (but not foregone) conclusion that he was a relevant part of the transaction being documented in the particular act which is the next thing to be documented as part of that transaction.

In and of themselves, A and B are neither subjects nor functions. As actors or agents they may become involved in a documented business process. In the logical taxonomies of EDMS, they can't be anything but subjects because logical taxonomies can't handle functions, as recordkeepers can or should understand. In the contingent world of recordkeeping, A and B are identifiers linking the acts in which

they participate, or are subjects of, to series of actions making up transactional records which are themselves sequenced by activity... and on up the food chain to ambient functions.

## a HR file is an intersection between two processes

This is an important topic I am trying to grapple with in a series of articles titled "Relationships in Records" the New Zealand Archivist. up to Part II and I should reach this stage about Part VI or VII. As always, I dispute a conflict between theory and practice. The converse of practical is impractical, not theoretical. If you think there's a conflict between sensible practice and a theoretical why not conclude that the theory is lost rather than ignore it?

I think the "practical" applications you are discussing are perfectly explicable within the right theory. I happen to think that, so far, we lack a coherent theory for establishing series, its sequences/relationships, in cyberspace and that to develop such a theory is very important. In order to do this, we will have to shift the emphasis away from past practices of documenting recordkeeping processes and more on documenting business processes.

## Round Two: 'Inadequate theory'

Bruce Symondson expressed himself a little mystified by this thesis, but stuck to his argument. Conventional recordkeeping archival theory was inadequate to cover the point. He needed to use both 'subject' and 'function' theory, not have to choose between them.

I think I follow your reasoning on the HR file. Chris. Certainly documents go on the HR file as part of an activity or transaction. For example, applying to go to an ARAN conference sets off a sequence of documents that form a transaction. I'm not so sure I follow you after that.



may be right. One problem is to equate theory and the language that comes from that theory. One of my initial reasons for posting was that current theory was forcing me to choose between object and subject. I was asking for both.

A better answer again could be another one entirely. No discouragement from those working on a better theory, though you may not think that by the end of posting.

In previous postings I think I'm with you on the 'contingent world of recordkeeping'. I don't mind being called a sub-series. I've even been called a lot worse than that.

I have been following your articles in NZ Archivists. Where I think I disagree with you is on what kind of theory I expect, and what I expect of it. I do agree completely that the converse of practical is not theory or impractical. I certainly don't see it as a choice between the two. What I do believe is there are different modalities of theory. Even in those areas of science, where a theory is not accepted unless it explains all instances, it doesn't follow that a theory that doesn't explain all instances is entirely wrong or incorrect.

Newton's theory became shaky when some objects like the orbit of Venus were shown to be in conflict with it. Einstein comes along with a more encompassing theory in which there are no exceptions...

...at least, not yet

and it is looking very solid.

...that doesn't mean Newton is

now 'wrong' so much as

incomplete. Newton's theory

is still valid within certain

conditions... or should that be

contingencies?

To be honest I don't expect a recordkeeping theory equivalent to Einstein: an all-encompassing theory that allows for all instances. At last year's ARANZ conference<sup>4</sup>, Ray Grover<sup>5</sup> called me the 'ever pragmatic Bruce'. He classified me right there. I want a theory that guides, that allows the development of

effective and usable standards, rules, etc. I expect that, in the nature of recordkeeping, it will always be incomplete, adaptive and open to exceptions, while recognising the risk of allowing the latter. I expect that even the best of recordkeeping theories will allow for exceptions in application.

I'd be more than happy for you to prove me wrong and go beyond what I believe is possible. This assumes that I have your intentions right, which I may not. One of my concerns is that even if your modal of theory succeeded, the result would be something so complex and requiring such precise use of jargon that many practitioners like me wouldn't be able to use it because we couldn't understand it. Of course, that may simply mean the inadequacies are in me. I'm just being pragmatic. For recordkeeping, the best theory is no help if people can't apply it.

## Complexity argument 'important'

Chris Hurley thought there was little or no need for recordkeepers to worry.

The complexity argument is very important. How can most recordkeeping practitioners be expected to apply all that? The answer is, they needn't. The theories we have in the past had to apply were very simple. The theories of sequencing I'm talking about are more complex but don't have to be applied, maybe not even understood by individual recordkeepers even in cyberspace in place of the practices founded on earlier, simpler theories.

The simplistic filing and recordkeeping processes in applications to support simplistic applications. The problem now is that these processes, what David Bearman<sup>6</sup> calls 'archival methods', need to be founded on theories that are better... more complex... than those which were limited by their development in a paper world.

New theories are needed because e-records in some ways behave differently from paper records and the old theories don't help. When we develop new theories that do help, however, we usually find they illuminate things about paper records, which we never realised before. In other words, e-records in some ways behave exactly like paper records but both involve levels of complexity we never had to understand or deal with before we encountered the practical problems of e-records.

The implementation of those new theories into systems will be the first stage of "applying" the theories. The average recordkeeper won't have to do that. What the average recordkeeper will have to do - as the second stage of implementing the new theories - is use the systems which will come to the recordkeeper in the form of an applied theory: viz, a systems implementation of the functional requirements or, at least, as much of them as is "practical", founded on the new theory.

## Footnotes:

1. Bruce Symondson, Archivist, Central Records and Archives, Waitakere City Council, Auckland, N.Z. Email: Bruce.Symondson@waitakere.govt.nz.
2. Chris Hurley, former General Manager, Archives N.Z., Wellington. Email: churchy47@hotmail.com
3. ARANZ: The Archives and Records Association of New Zealand, PO Box 11-553, Manners Street, Wellington, N.Z.
4. ARANZ 25th anniversary conference, 'Records: The Power, Passion and Politics' (RP3), Wellington. August 23 to 25, 2001.
5. Ray Grover, Director and Chief Archivist, National Archives of N.Z., 1981-1991.
6. David Bearman, Director, Strategy, Research & Development, Art Museum Image Consortium, Pittsburgh, Penn. E-mail: dbear@archimuse.com.

# The e-Volution round about the good, the bad and the ugly recordkeeping



**Mike Steemson**  
ARMA

## Abstract

The 19th national convention of the Records Management Association of Australia, now the Records Management Association of Australasia, was held in Adelaide, South Australia, from 15 to 18 September 2002. Its theme was e-Volution -the new era. In this paper, Mike Steemson, Principal of The Caldeson Consultancy and currently editor of INFORMAA Quarterly, gives a personal view of the event in which speakers addressed the multi-faceted aspects of recordkeeping, the good and the bad.

It may be Trendy IT: 5; Records Management: Nil, said Rick Bowers. Knowledge management change is difficult to sustain, said Geoff Beckwith. Wendy Fewsdale had scary stories and nightmares to creep up on you and beware! They could let email grow and manage it, said Virginia Bolger. Records managers will be called on, said Mervyn Bowers. It's not about computers, it's commonsense, said Sue Vreugdenburg.

And so the e-Volution conference was round, warning, praising, cajoling and carolling the 460 or so Aussie and Kiwi delegates who made the journey to attend Adelaide's splendid new convention centre on the banks of South Australia's Torrens River for the 19th national convention of the Records Management Association of Australia and later to approve the renaming it to the Records Management Association of Australasia.

I didn't much like the two days of conference and one workshop format, restricted the all-important big, social networking events to the first two days only. But by the end, no one I heard was complaining about being short-changed. There was theory, practice, humour, horror and pathos.

Director of the South Australian Museum evolutionist Dr Tim Flannery, gave the conference its theme with a cheerful quirky paper on his subject, raising laughs and gorges with tales of exploding giant squids and fossil languages, shrinking brains and expanding horizons. 'Over the



200 years, the rate of evolutionary change has gone haywire. Culture, though technological change, is evolving more rapidly than ever and our physical bodies also seem set for an extraordinary 'out of natural selection' he forecast grimly, adding bravely to his dominantly female audience that 'human brains had shrunk noticeably, males' more than males'.

## paper can't hack it

As up to Melbourne's ebullient boss of Icon Australia Ltd., Dr Graham Pratt, to bring the convention down onto firm recordkeeping ground with talk of evolution beyond the paperless office, a concept I regard as likely to occur in the smallest office sooner than in any of the workplace kind. He sustained his thesis that the world is getting so cluttered with information that paper is reaching the point where it can no longer do its job as the medium of record. He cited the Land Information Office of New Zealand (LINZ), [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz), as a prime example of efficient, effective recordkeeping without using up a lot of head trees.

Geoff Beckworth's lesson in knowledge management was salutary. Geoff is Solutions and Product Manager for the ANZ Banking Group in Melbourne, a company committed to KM, but he warned that the business and cultural changes required for success could seem indefatigable to some organisations. But he had good news, too. From his own experiences at LINZ, he knew: 'The challenge of producing an effective KM program can be broken down into a series of specific business requirements.

Identifying technical solutions that meet these requirements ensures a sustainable and complete strategy.'

'You got Mail ... now what?' was Virginia Bolger's question. A good one! He's a project consultant at Brisbane's Siller Systems Administration and is currently undertaking a DIRKS project for a

Commonwealth government agency so she knows some answers, too. 'It's not enough to rely on technology to solve the problem,' she said. 'Organisations must plan the establishment and implementation of best practice strategies to provide for the adequate and effective capture... of email records within electronic recordkeeping systems'.

Delegates were startled by the roar of a Harley Davidson as Queensland's File Me Now consultant Marilyn Bowers, in leathers and helmet, rode in on her favourite transport to ask them 'So, what does a Records Manager look like?' I kicked myself for failing to get a photograph of her in her road gear, but her uplifting story of the life of an itinerant recordkeeper was exciting, records management in strange places from a storage shed 'like Alcatraz' to a lighthouse repair ship. Her message was positive: 'More and more records managers will be called upon to go out, as I have, and capture the corporate record in increasingly unusual and distant places'.

## IT is leading 5:nil

U.S. keynotes speaker, Rick Barry, wasn't so sure about that. The Washington D.C. information management consultant wondered: 'Will the e-Volution even include archives and records managers? The answer is not pre-ordained. It depends how well we read social, economic and workplace signals, warning signs and the information technology tea leaves. And it depends on what we can do about them and what we really do do about them.'

The game of survival was already at half time, he feared, with the scoreboard showing 5:0 to Information Technology. ARM, as he called it, could still 'turn the scoreboard around'. He said:

'To do so, however, we have many challenges at the personal, organisational, professional, national and international levels in the family of information and records management.

'Yes, management this and IT that, but what are we prepared to do to elevate our own self-image and our image that we see in movies, novels and on list discussions? When was the last time we seriously lobbied for legislative change to strengthen our hands? What have you done for yourself today?'

Serious questions, wanting serious thought and reactions. The quiet American signposted the way: 'In the responses we give, individually and collectively as a profession, we will find our own answers to the question of how and where we will fit into the certain and potentially very rewarding e-Volution.'

South Australian information services contractor, Sue Vreugdenburg, has found some of those rewards after plunging into recordkeeping following a fraught baptism of a year and half's records disposal taught her how little she knew. What did she learn? Well, amongst other things: 'I have learned that the science of recordkeeping is logical, practical, simple and commonsense; the value of a carefully constructed university course and the invaluable help from experienced archival in this technologically changing environment. And I have also learned that recordkeeping is not about computers but that records can be at risk from their improper use.'

## Shocking ethnic concerns

Two papers on ethnic recordkeeping, Meeting the needs of Aboriginal People, by South Australian public servants Jan Ferguson and Bruce Hammond, and Repatriating Records of Indigenous Communities, by Federal and State government consultant Helen Onopko, and a touching video presentation, made sobering listening. The speakers revealed dismayingly examples of harsh, thoughtless treatment of ethnic sensitivities but, equally, many good projects by agencies and recordkeepers concerned to right past wrongs and errors, initiatives like the South Australia State Records Aboriginal Access Unit, the Northern Territory Library and Information Services knowledge centres in

'You got Mail ... now what?'



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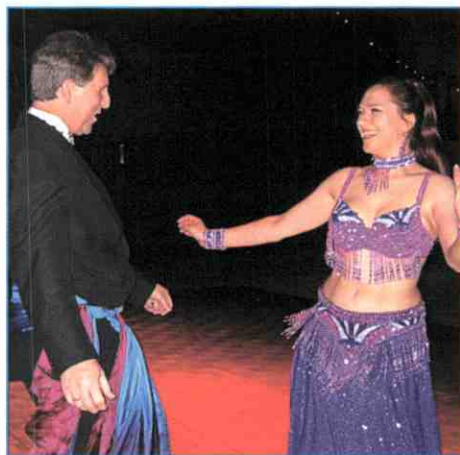
original communities and the Victorian  
Records Taskforce.

Papers were a jolting departure from  
more mundane subjects usually  
treated within our community. They  
focused on recordkeeping ethics and  
activities that, I believe, should be given  
greater exposure in our conferences,  
not just about these ethnic concerns,  
important though they are. We should also  
look for business and social ethics such as  
which have been so blatantly lacking in recent  
high-profile commercial causes.

The ethics theme continued with more  
recordkeeping horror stories, now in a  
delightfully light-hearted fashion, told  
by South Australian colleagues Wendy  
Wysdale, in heavy 'Kensington Gore'  
pattered Dracula make-up, and Brian  
Johnson hidden inside an all-enveloping  
ghostly gown and 'scream' mask. See  
him in the South Australian branch  
President Kristen Keley's report on page 43.  
His presentation was rib tickling, but their  
message was sober enough: unnatural  
masters, inadequate evidence, illegal  
practices and 'inappropriate disposal',  
mostly chronicled within Australia.  
The ghastly pair warned, they were  
horror stories which will better equip you in  
the preparation of a business case to  
decision-makers'.

I've complained about the reduced  
socialising, but I confess that the big  
Arabian Nights conference dinner was real  
blast... belly dancers and all.

Federal President Chris Fripp was pictured  
cavorting with one belly-dancing beauty  
who, I'm reliably informed, is not a member  
of the RMAA, not even an affiliate. Least  
readers should get a poor impression of our  
leader, let me tell you that he grooved  
sedately under the eye of his wife, Lois, who  
cheered his sporting display. Another in his  
element was Queensland's Kemal  
Hasandedic, the RMAA's two-meter-tall-  
and-built-to-match Company Secretary. He  
came dressed for the part in exotic turban  
and voluminous pantaloons, the very image  
of a Levantine pasha. Now, that's what I  
call recordkeeping in style.



RMAA Federal President Chris Fripp earns a  
round of applause as he grooves with a belly  
dancing vision at the Adelaide convention  
dinner.



Mighty RMAA Company Secretary,  
Queenslander Kemal Hasandedic, enjoying  
the sumptuous candle-lit Adelaide convention  
dinner.



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# The ASA Conference 2002:

## From Manly to the Fourth Dimension



**Michael Hoyle**



**John Roberts**

The Australian Society of Archivists' 2002 conference was one of the better events that we have attended in Australia and New Zealand in recent years. Held in Manly, Sydney, the program was well integrated with some strong, challenging and stimulating papers and an excellent mix of both theory and practice.

With the theme Past Caring? What does Society expect of Archivists? the events got off to a roaring start late Thursday afternoon with a superb keynote address by Professor Eric Ketelaar in which he explored the themes of the conference.

As part of this he looked at the role of the archivist as set out in the last Star Wars film and linked this into concepts of records as evidence, memory and archivists as the custodians of the past. Ketelaar wove his ideas around the statement from the film's Jedi archivist that 'the archives are comprehensive and totally secure', and explored such diverse ideas as the way people build their understanding of reality from the evidence in records, and the depiction of the archives as temple. George Lucas would have been amazed to see how much could be extracted from one short scene.

The next day began with a fairly meaty session, entitled the Veneration of Ruins within the Landscape of Memory with a paper by Professor James Young from the University of Massachusetts. Due to Prof. Young's illness, his paper was delivered by his colleague, Professor Paula Hamilton. His paper was based around discussion of the

holocaust, and considered the development of the role of camps such as Auschwitz as focal points for remembering the holocaust, the interplay between the camps, memorials and the communities in which they are located.

This paper was followed by two lectures by academics, Professors Konrad Kwiet and Colin Tatz, who explored similar themes and linked them back to indigenous people and other issues, such as the 'ownership' of memory and the role of 'otherness' in the construction of identity. To some extent this session had a museum focus and there was a lively discussion about how time and meaning can change sacred sites, the 'constructedness' of memory, and the role of memory tourism at holocaust camps.

Closer to home, the role of ANZAC cemeteries in the development of national identity and the use of such sites in political agendas around culture and identity, were explored. Port Arthur was raised as an example of a site with layered meanings acquiring new and powerful associations through time. It was a fascinating session and while there was little explicit reference to archives, the discussion was both relevant and stimulating.

### Challenges for educators

This was followed by a parallel session entitled A Spirit of Place and Professional Education: Who cares? In the educational session, Hans Scheurkogel and Theo Thomassen from the Netherlands gave an interesting summary of developments



and, exploring the relationship between archival education and the archival profession, between practice and curriculum. They also considered the role education had played in the professionalisation of archives in the Netherlands, and the challenges faced by educators in the knowledge society. Karen Pearson outlined activity at Edith Cowan University and particularly innovations in the development of assessment techniques in the use of technology to support distance learning.

At lunch there were again parallel sessions. Public Programs and Archives and Marginalised Groups. The latter session was very interesting, and at times hilariously funny. A paper by Graham Willett on the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives described the efforts of one community to document its activities, and the initiative's relationship to the major institutions. Another, by Margy Burn, investigated the role of archives documenting cultural diversity in Australia, finding that Australia's multiculturalism is poorly reflected in the holdings of the major collecting institutions.

The most memorable, however, was Craig Bannan's presentation on the Eros Foundation archive. A fascinating examination of the dramas and problems of trying to manage the sex industry archives at Flinders University, including a very amusing story of one person who brought something to the archive a huge quantity of videotaped videos from a deceased relative!

The day's final plenary session dealt with Recordkeeping, Reconciliation and Political Stability. Professor Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott summarised the issues covered in their paper from the joint ASA and Records Management Association of Australia 2001 Hobart conference. They then took that discussion further, exploring the role of a professional association on the basis that recordkeeping is a politicised tool used in the exercise of power.

As the program notes say, they challenged archivists working with continuum frames

of reference to complement their achievements in... the third dimension by building fourth dimensional frameworks that better enable records to function as accessible collective memory beyond spatial and temporal boundaries'. The 'who cares?' question, they argued, is located in the fourth, pluralizing, dimension of the records continuum. While some in the audience may have found the jargon somewhat confusing, the general ideas were clear and it did lead to some lively discussion about political realities. The discussion also explored the multiple contexts in which a record exists, and how these are represented in our models and influence recordkeeping decisions.

The Saturday started with a session concentrating on medical records. This explored issues of ownership, privacy, security and accuracy and the relationship with the media, the law and politics. One speaker, Dr Chole Williams, showed how the media and the legal industry can manipulate public opinion, irrespective of the evidence found in records. A second presenter, John McPhee, explored the wide range of uses to which medical records are put beyond the support of direct health care provision. An epidemiologist, Dr Alison Venn, explored one of these purposes and spoke of the barriers to her research in terms of Ethics Committee approval and of the privacy regime in general. Amanda Adrian, NSW Health Care Complaints Commissioner, who discussed the role of records in an accountable health system, rounded out the session.

## Audio-visual appraisal

An Appraisal for Historical Research session started with papers from Don Boadle and Dr Lyn Gorman and provided a background to the application of appraisal theory to audio-visual material. The second half of the session had a strong Screensound Australia focus. Meg Labrum and Dr Bob Pymm explored issues in audio-visual archives that were compared with those involved in other media, such as the Internet. Again,

questions of co-ordination and collaboration emerged in discussion around the representativeness and comprehensiveness of the nations archival resources. The parallel session, Taking it to the People, further explored the role of public programs, and was a highly entertaining session to judge by the frequent laughter heard through the wall.

Anne Picot next led a hypothetical entitled Deadly Disclosures which looked at issues surrounding whistle blowers, the media, the role of F.O.I. and the Ombudsman. It was a fictionalised account, starring Chris Hurley (as State Archivist), Tim Robinson (as FOI officer) Geoff Briot (as Ombudsman) and Robert French (as investigative journalist), of a financial and political scandal and although it started a little slowly, as the participants warmed up to their roles the ways in which the different systems interacted became clear, with some interest in the Ombudsman's use of raids — 'unannounced visits' — to obtain records. Robert did a sterling job as a late minute replacement for Quentin Dempster as the investigative journalist.

The final plenary session was on the Appraisal of Records with David Roberts and Barbara Reed taking prominent roles in their presentations on the history of appraisal and its overall future direction. Barbara Reed gave a virtuoso summary of a century of global appraisal theory and practice in 15 minutes flat, while David Roberts demonstrated how appraisal is central to ISO 5489, despite the term not being mentioned. This was followed by an Address in Reply by Dr Hilary Golder, which looked at the role of historians in the appraisal process. She acknowledged that on the basis of involvement in NAA processes, she had come to recognise the complexities of appraisal, and was no longer certain what role there might be for historians in the process.

Eric Ketelaar gave a wonderful summary of the conference, which included

**George Lucas would have been amazed**



descending into the audience with a microphone in order to elicit comments, and linked the various sessions back to the conference theme. Overall there was a very positive atmosphere to the conference, with debate on matters of access, appraisal, public programs, description and current recordkeeping interweaving as delegates reflected on the role of archives (both the records and the institutions) in society and in collective memory.

## Workshops range wide

The conference was preceded by a range of in-depth workshops and sessions, the Association's AGM and meetings of its various Special Interest Groups. The Electronic Records SIG organised a half-day session on managing e-mail, which targeted recordkeepers working in non-government organisations. The COFSTA Reference and Public Access Day explored the role of standards to support public access. Archives New Zealand's Access standard was presented by Michael Hoyle, and received a positive reception. Other speakers included Paul McPherson, Paul Dalglish and Alan Ventress and there were some lively shorter presentations from speakers from the states. The pre-conference sessions provided a good opportunity to meet a range of different people. Reflecting the prominence of issues involved with recordkeeping in electronic

business environments, the Electronic Records SIG held its meeting at a separate time from other SIG meetings. The session featured a presentation on Archives New Zealand's work on electronic records policy and strategy.

The International Council on Archives Section for Archival Educators had been hosted for a meeting the previous week in Perth. As a result, many educators from around the world were in Australia, and there was a strong current of discussion on professional education issues throughout the week. On the Monday, State Records NSW's Records Managers Forum focused on this area, and was opened to a wider audience. Speakers included David Roberts, Jeanine Angille, Stephen Smith, Jill Caldwell, Karen Anderson and Eric Ketelaar. A full day Recordkeeping Educators and Trainers Forum was aimed primarily at the educators themselves, and the conference program also included a session on this topic.

The organised social program centred on the conference dinner - a good-humoured evening with good food, and importantly a band that got people onto the dance floor. Manly's range of restaurants ('Out of Africa' was a highlight with live music - audience participation etc) and bars (why was there a live pigeon in the bar of the Steyne Hotel?) provided ample opportunities for groups to socialize throughout the week.

All up it was a great week, a very organised conference and tremendous opportunity to meet or catch up with colleagues from around Australia, indeed even a few from overseas. The weather by Wellington, New Zealand standards were benign, and despite strong sea swells, which in part caused cancellation of the Manly ferries for one morning, the smooth flow of the conference was not disturbed.

## The Authors

Michael Hoyle is the Manager of the Statutory Regulatory Group at Archives New Zealand. He has a Masters in Information Management and Systems from Monash University. He is Secretary General of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) and a past Chair of the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACAM). He is contactable at:

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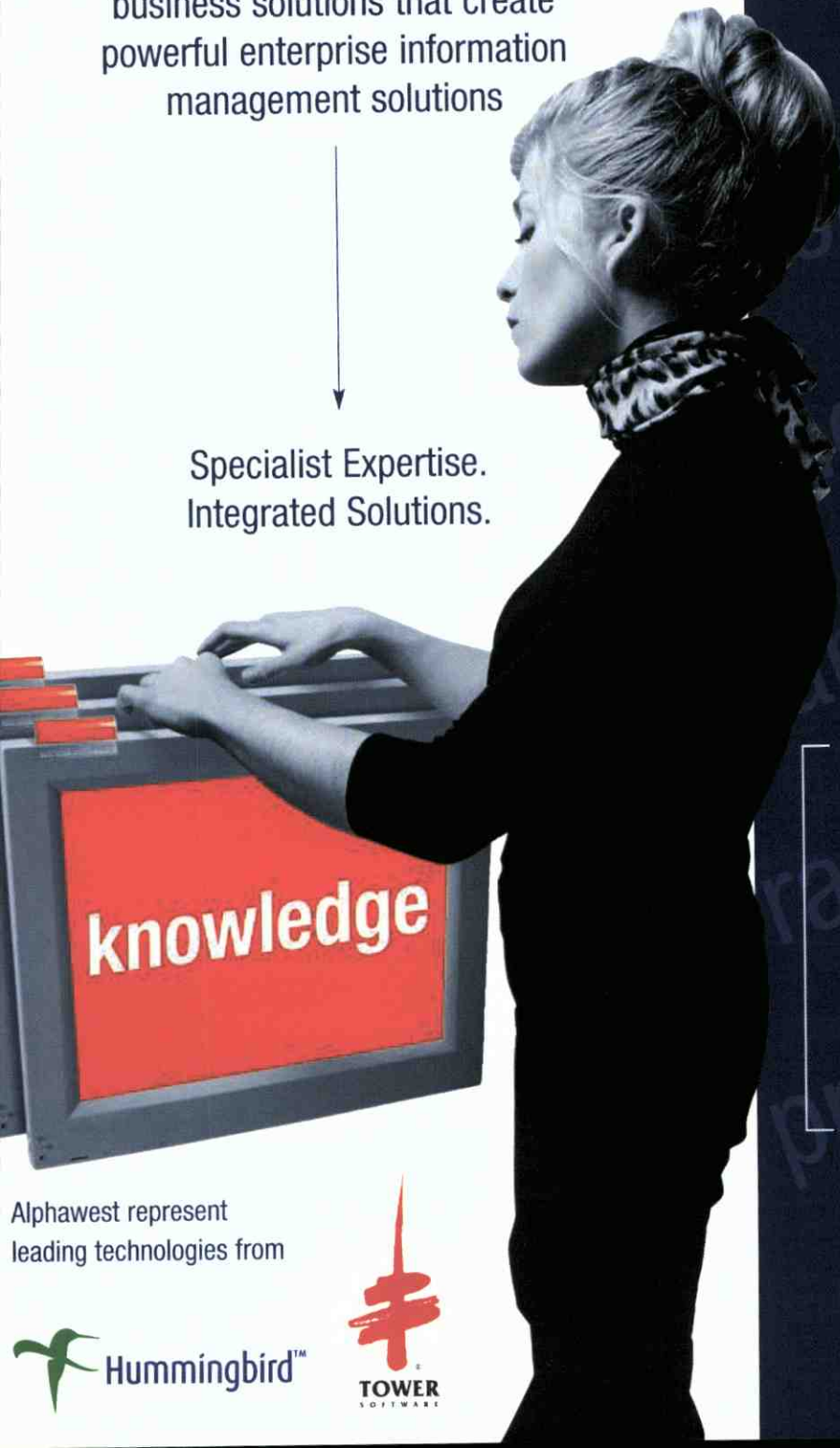
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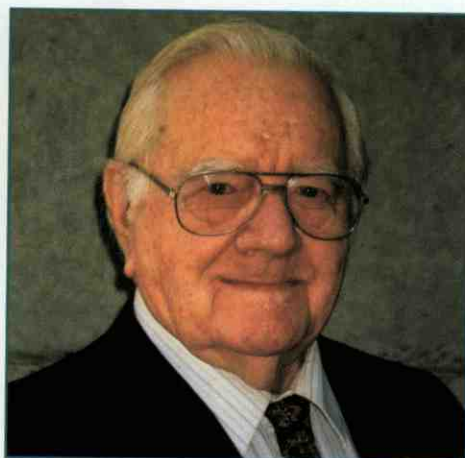
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# RMAA's J. Eddis Linton Awards

## For Excellence in Records Management 2002



**Linda Bell**  
ARMA



The 2002 J. Eddis Linton Awards for Excellence in Records Management were presented at the National Convention in Adelaide on September 16. Chris Friess, RMAA Federal President, presented the awards and spoke about the achievements of J. Eddis Linton (left), a foundation member of the Association, and the role of the awards in recognising excellence in records management. Chris encouraged members to nominate themselves and others for future awards.



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## Most Outstanding Individual Anne Cornish

< RMAA President Chris Fripp presents Records Solutions consultancy managing director Anne Cornish with the Eddis Linton Most Outstanding Individual Award for 2002.

The Most Outstanding Individual Award was presented to Anne Cornish. Anne has worked in the records management industry for twenty years. She has been active in the Records Management Association of Australasia, serving on her local branch for ten years and as a Federal Board Member for five years, where she served on three standards

committees. Anne has also lectured in Records Management at Swinburne College. In 1994 Anne founded Records Solutions Pty Ltd, which is a company that now employs over seventy people. Anne's consultancies include Electronic Document Management System Implementations at Melbourne Docklands Authority and Education Queensland.



## Most Outstanding Group Victoria's Department of Infrastructure for its VERS@DOI Project

< Department of Infrastructure's Gail Nicholson receives the department's Eddis Linton Award 2002 for Most Outstanding Group from RMAA President Chris Fripp.

The Most Outstanding Group Award was presented to Gail Nicholson on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure for its VERS@DOI project, which it began in 2000. The Victoria Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) is the Victorian Government standard that specifies a format for

long-term preservation of electronic records. The department was selected to implement the VERS solution as a Victorian government pilot. It was a catalyst for the new whole of Victorian government VERS initiative that recently received an \$8.2 million development grant.



## Most Outstanding Student Jillian Jones

< Western Australian BSc graduate Jillian Jones receives her Eddis Linton Award for Most Outstanding Student, 2002, from Federal President, Chris Fripp.

The Most Outstanding Student Award was presented to Jillian Jones. Jillian completed her Bachelor of Science (Communication and Information Technology) from Edith Cowan University in July 2002. Jillian has been working in records management since 1997 and is currently working as a Recordkeeping Consultant for the State Records Office of Western Australia. Jillian is

particularly interested in the challenges of records management including web-based business transactions.

Further details of the J. Eddis Linton Awards can be found on the RMAA website at [www.rmaa.com.au](http://www.rmaa.com.au) under the 'Awards' tab. Nominations for next year's awards will close at the end of August 2003.

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# National News

## Historic agreement signed with ASA

Australian Society of Archivists President Stephen Yorke, speaking to the RMAA Adelaide convention, emphasised the need for professional associations involved with records coordinating their activities 'to maximise the effectiveness of their activities'.

He and RMAA Federal President Chris Fripp had, at the RMAA's AGM on September 17, just signed the historic Memorandum of Understanding between the two societies.

The ASA leader told delegates: 'As professionals, we appreciate the significance of records not only to organisations but also to society generally. We know that without recordkeeping regimes and records, society as we know it would cease to function.'

He said the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provided means by which the associations would consult with each other about issues generally and to undertake mutually beneficial activities, adding: 'I wish to thank Chris for all his efforts to bring this Memorandum about and also to thank Adrian Cunningham, Past President of the ASA, who did so much to promote it.'

Discussions between the RMAA and ASA continue over further joint events, with early plans for back-to-back annual conventions at a common venue and possible future combined gatherings.

## Obituary Neil Harold Granland, ARMA

Neil Granland, ARMA, affectionately known to his friends and colleagues as Gran, died suddenly on May 11, 2002. Neil spent most of his working career with the former Western Power organisation in the contracting and records management areas. In the private sector, he was a Director of Totally Confidential Records Management in Perth, providing consultancy to government agencies and private companies in records management and advice on secondary storage.

Neil's dedication to the records management profession both in the private and public sectors never waned. His long commitment to the RMAA at Western Australia branch council level as President and Councillor, and at Federal Board level in positions of Vice President and Board Member could never be argued. Education was one of Neil's priorities. He was a member of the National Records and Archives Competency Standards Steering Committee seeing its advancement to Business Services ITAB level.

Neil will always be remembered for his joviality and enjoyment of life, and his affectionate, often cheeky smiles. The Federal Board and members of the Records Management Association of Australasia extend their sincere condolences to his family, Katie, Cecilia and Neil's partner, Carol, in this sad and untimely loss.

**Ray Holswich,**  
ARMA



## AA name change approved

RMAA is now called the Records Management Association of Australasia, its name change since formation. The change was approved without dissent at the Association's 2002 AGM during the Adelaide annual convention on September 17.

The change was recommended to accommodate the formation of the New Zealand branch after a recommendation by RMAA founding veteran, life member J. Eddison, who said it would 'make the New Zealanders feel this is really their Association and not part of a foreign organisation'.

RMAA President Chris Fripp told the AGM that the Federal Board had agreed the change. The extension into New Zealand was, perhaps, the first of several being discussed with other South West Pacific nations. The name change would widen the interest base of the Association and be more appealing to prospective new member branches.

## New Zealand branch created

The RMAA now has a ninth branch, New Zealand. The Federal Board approved the establishment of the Association's first overseas extension at its meeting in Adelaide in September.

The new branch formed after the dissolution of ARMA International chapters in Wellington and Auckland, opens with 45 members, including 16 with professional status. The transition was overseen by a steering committee led by Wellington consultant Trish Kane, [trish@swim.co.nz](mailto:trish@swim.co.nz), a director of the information management consultancy SWIM Ltd., [www.swim.co.nz](http://www.swim.co.nz).

INFORMAA Quarterly went to Press, the branch was undertaking its election of officers. The Branch Council will be based in Wellington. Members were planning a chapter for Auckland.

## RMAA Officers for 2002-3

Officers of the Records Management Association of Australasia appointed at the Annual General Meeting in Adelaide in September were as follows:

### Executive

**President:** Chris Fripp

**Vice President:** Kristen Keley

**Executive Secretary:** Kate Walker

**Treasurer:** Thomas Kaufhold

**Company Secretary:** Kemal Hasandedic

### Federal Board

**New South Wales:**

Chris Fripp and Geoff Smith

**Tasmania:**

Kate Walker and Lisa Mason

**Victoria:**

Jeanette Inglis and Peter Gaca

**ACT:**

Thomas Kaufhold and Veronica Pumpa

**Queensland:**

Phillip Taylor and Kemal Hasandedic

**Northern Territory:**

Linda Bell and Pauline Hollier

**Western Australia:**

Josette Mathers and Lesley Ferguson

**South Australia:**

Kristen Keley and Brigitte Stephen

**New Zealand:**

Elections in process.

## Archives NZ and Hurley part company

Veteran Australian archivist, Chris Hurley, has lost his post of General Manager at Archives New Zealand, after a major re-structuring programme by new Chief Archivist Dianne Macaskill.

The re-structuring follows a programme instituted by the Chief Archivist to identify improvements to the institution. This culminated in a report, Departmental Statement of Intent 2002-2003, that is available on the Archives N.Z. website at

[http://www.archives.govt.nz/business/outreach/publications/Statement\\_of\\_Intent2002.pdf](http://www.archives.govt.nz/business/outreach/publications/Statement_of_Intent2002.pdf)

In a further report released to INFORMAA Quarterly after Mr Hurley's departure, Ms Macaskill said the outcome of the work, that had involved extensive consultation with staff and other stakeholders, was an organisation re-design which covered systems, processes and structure.

Four new administration groups have been created within Archives N.Z. They are Access Services, (Jeremy Cauchi, Acting Group Manager), Government Recordkeeping (Michael Hoyle, Group Manager), Archives Management (John Roberts, Acting Group Manager) and Business and Finance Services (Group Manager, Lindsay Ferguson). The two acting positions were advertised later last month.

Ms Macaskill said: 'A number of changes have been made to the way the organisation operates. However, the one in which there is a lot of interest is the new structure, which came into effect on 1 October 2002. The previous structure was based on a policy/provider split. The new one has been aligned with the outcomes that we have identified need to be achieved.'

Mr Hurley, 56, in a statement released on the New Zealand Records Listserver, said that the Chief Archivist had not offered him any of the vacant positions.

Mr Hurley added that he welcomed the move by New Zealanders to merge with RMAA of which he had been a professional member for over 20 years.

Speaking to IQ, Mr Hurley said he had led the Archives N.Z. during a period fraught with tensions and difficult relationships. 'I did not always see things the same way as the Government bureaucrats. We had different agendas'. He was considering work in other public sector agencies, academia and consultancies.

Reaction to Mr Hurley's departure was swift and included a former colleague wrote: 'Your departure seems to me a great loss to Archives NZ. It is sad that things have come to this'.

# Industry News



## NEW FACES

### Michael Lurie

National Sales and Marketing Manager

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## New Systems for Local Governments

New South Wales' largest inland local authority, Wagga Wagga City Council, has selected information management tool DataWorks 2002 to capture and centralise information and provide better customer service. In Townsville, Queensland, the city council has held a DataWorks gala to introduce staff to its new recordkeeping processes.

Jim Cornall, Manager of Corporate Information and Support at Townsville, explained that installing DataWorks has resulted in greater efficiencies and faster delivery. For the public and the ratepayers it means a better level of service as well as quicker and more efficient accessing of information.

Wagga Wagga City Director of Support Services, Brian Pearson, said that a major attraction of DataWorks was its ability to integrate with the council's existing financial and geographical systems

DataWorks is developed by Queensland software and services company, Advanced Data Integration (ADI) which serves more than 100 councils across Australia and New Zealand. These include 30% of Australia's largest councils.

### Contacts:

Wagga Wagga C.C.  
Director of Support Services, Brian Pearson  
[brian.pearson@wagga.nsw.gov.au](mailto:brian.pearson@wagga.nsw.gov.au)

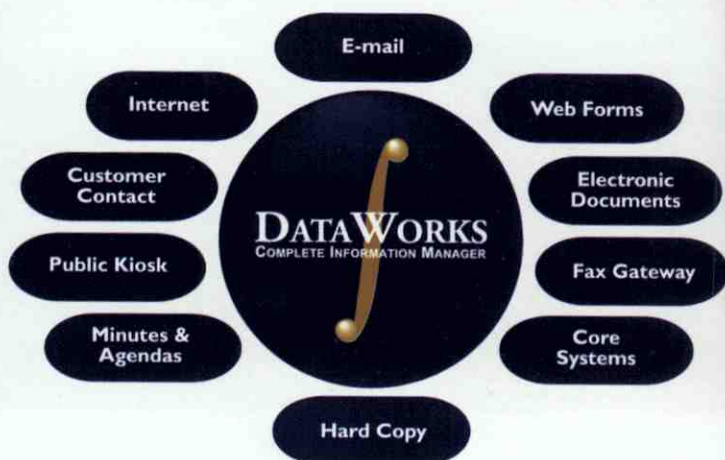
Townsville C.C.  
Manager of Corporate Information Support, Jim Cornall,  
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# Branch Reports

## New South Wales

Well, this is the first report of a new year on Branch Council. David Lilley and Sue Frost have both stepped down and we took the opportunity to thank David at our AGM with gifts of RMAA paraphernalia as well as a picnic set complete with two bottles of most suitable wine (Which ones, Geoff. Members should be told. Ed.)

Our newest professional member, Chris Colwell, has taken over as Branch Secretary and is rapidly learning the ropes. Joy Siller has taken on both the Marketing and Events roles, though linked closely are the most demanding. Mary Hooker has come back on Council and taken on Vice-President and Membership Status chair. Stephen Smith retains Education. I remain as President, Federal Director and IT person. Chris Fripp stays as Treasurer and fellow Federal Director. Kerrie Monzo retains the newsletter editor role. Anne Cummins was returned as Councillor and we have other folk who assist Council.

Another significant change for us is that we will have to move meeting venues. For several years now we have met in the basement of Workcover (very much nicer than it sounds) but with that agency moving to Gosford we have had to find another venue and our thanks go to David Roberts, Director of State Records NSW, for making facilities available to us.

We are heavily involved in planning our latest Technology Seminar to be held on 5 November. For several years we have run these, but in May. It was originally to be held in May as part of ARM week but due to circumstances beyond our control we had to postpone it. Now we are looking at holding it regularly in November, coinciding it with a technology seminar.

In August, I attended the ASA Conference at the Manly Pacific Hotel in Manly. A lovely spot from where we could see the sand and surf and a surprising number of surfers. For the three days of the conference I looked after the RMAA stand and was pleased with the number of people who chatted to me about the RMAA and the links between the two (2) organisations.

I should say I was there as part of my work with National Archives and not as an RMAA representative but filled both roles. It was very well organised, an excellent program, the venue wonderful, food first rate but not a lot in it for a records management person. The plus here is that our conferences don't really clash as they seem to cater to a different audience, a sizeable number who go to both. It was a good opportunity to catch up with some people I would normally only see at RMAA Conventions.

Unfortunately, in 2003 the two (2) organisations will have their conferences in the same week but in different cities. Hopefully, this will be a one-off.

**Geoff Smith ARMA**  
**Branch President, NSW**





Horrors: Adelaide's State Records Program  
iser Wendy Fewsdale and, behind the  
eam' mask, senior Experience Matters  
sultant Brian Nielson, begin their gripping  
of Records Management Nightmares at  
2002 national convention.

The RMAA 19th National Convention was hosted in Adelaide from September 15 to 18. A new format was trialled and met with mixed reactions. Overall the feedback from the 460 people who attended the Convention was extremely favourable. The SA branch and convention organising committee have received numerous responses from people who attended including one speaker who wrote to us saying 'Thank you to you and your committee for providing a truly practical and engaging conference. 'In addition to the content, everything had that wonderful Adelaide style - professionally smooth, yet always accompanied by a sense of relaxed warmth'.

Another letter from one of our delegates said 'I found the recent RMAA conference to be of enormous use and I just wanted to congratulate the Adelaide branch on their coordinating efforts. The speakers were interesting and informative, the venue was great and the dinner was superb'.

With a theme like e-volution, there was bound to be some interesting perspectives and the speakers proved to be entertaining, informative and sometimes just a little 'out there'. The traditional ground was covered with informative and interesting presentations as well as a few surprises, which included a presentation on records disasters aptly named Horror Stories where the speakers appeared to the tune of Skyhooks Horror Movie garbed as a Vampire and the ghoul from Scream.

Speaker Marilyn Bowers arrived on a Harley Davidson motorcycle and discussed her working experiences in unusual settings such as on oil rigs and ships, dispelling the myth of a 'typical' records manager. Some more unusual topics provided us with some memorable favourites including Dr Tim Flannery who taught us (among other things) about the mating habits of the giant Antarctic Squid. The combined efforts of Helen Onopko, Jan Ferguson and Bruce Hammond were awesome as they discussed the difficulties of repatriating Indigenous records, ending the session with a real life example and an unaccompanied singer giving a heart wrenching rendition of 'Brown Skinned Baby'. Other notable speakers were Tony Langman, Geoff Beckworth, Matthew Hall, Graham Pratt and Virginia Bolger.

The trade display saw more than 30 companies showcasing their products to more than 400 delegates over 2.5 days. We heard many people comment on how valuable the trade aspect was and how great an opportunity it was to view many new products and services during their meal breaks.

Of course, we cannot forget the social aspect of any Convention. The opening reception was held at the Old Adelaide Gaol, with 370 delegates being 'arrested' for crimes against good record keeping and transported for two hours 'hard labour'. While the '50's style band was a little loud for some, generally the event was well received.

The official dinner was an outstanding success with the Adelaide Convention Centre being turned into an enormous jewel coloured tent for the theme Arabian Nights. Some 420 guests were greeted at pre-dinner drinks by a fire juggler; a palm reader and a snake charmer complete with 5 metre carpet python. After entrées had been served, the guests were treated to a belly dance troupe that showed impressive skill. Several of the guests got to try their hand at belly dancing, much to our delight. The guests then partied on until 1am with local band Flaming Sambucas. Finally the farewell reception was a much quieter affair with a civilised wine and cheese tasting event consisting of five (5) local wineries and platters of local produce.

While we are extremely pleased with the Convention, we can also lay claim to a few additional firsts for the RMAA. Federal events that occurred during the Convention included the official signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the RMAA and the Australian Records Management Association and the adoption of the New Zealand Branch and the change of name from Records Management Association of Australia to the Records Management Association of Australia.

Now that things have settled down again we look forward to bringing members to some interesting events, starting the traditional Christmas lunch social event and a professional upgrade workshop.

**Kristen Keley**  
**President, South Australia Branch**

## Tasmania

The Tasmanian branch has moved into a new chapter with long term Councillors Howard and Jill Saunders stepping down to enjoy some of their limited free time. I would like to extend our gratitude for all the hard work Tina and Jill have done for the branch and the Association over their years of involvement; their work and support will always be remembered and appreciated.

The new look branch is busy planning activities and events for the coming year. We intend to hold a guiding workshop for professional status upgrades to assist the many professionals who deserve the recognition for their work.

This year we are also hoping to work a little closer with like associations and to also 'blend into' others to promote ours and records management in general.

Our major project underway is the re-writing of the TAFE records management units so they align with the new Recordkeeping Competency Standards. We have a small working group slogging their way through the masses of papers, but we hope that the end result will mean that more Tassie's will be able to achieve formal qualifications in recordkeeping.

We also have some Registered Trade Organisations (RTOs) that are providing training and assessing in accordance with the Recordkeeping Competency Standards - so we should be able to provide options to all professionals wishing to further their education.

As usual, our seminar and functions committee is hard at work, always on the lookout for a new speaker, or a new subject. We will be posting more of our seminars and workshops on the web and would like Associations to encourage attendance.

**Kate Walker, ARMA**  
**President, Tasmania Branch**



I am pleased to report that the Western Australian branch of the Records Management Association of Australasia continues to have strong membership with over 320 participating in professional development and other opportunities to network. To encourage eligible affiliate members to upgrade to professional status, we are planning to hold a membership upgrade drive this year.

The CPD committee continues to develop opportunities to network on three (3) levels. The popular breakfast seminars continue featuring speakers with industry experience or knowledge that provide members with learning and professional development experience. Focus groups have evolved from a demand for smaller informal discussion gatherings on records and information management issues. We continue to foster alliances with other industry associations and, at the upcoming 'Industry Xmas Get Together' we will be networking with a wide range of other information industry professionals.

Branch councillors continue to be represented in a number of industry roles including the Information Management Industry Alliance, State Records and Archives Committee, National Archives Perth Consultative Group, Archives and Records Management Week, Local Government, Education and Information Technology committees.

Earlier this year, the RMAA Board spent time looking at strategic direction. Our Branch Council has ensured the branch strategic direction is aligned with Board strategy. Our objectives include assistance with education and professional development of members, improved profile of records management, and assistance to research and development in RM.

When Neil Granland passed away we not only lost one of our branch councillors but the industry lost a champion for records management. It was impressive to hear from so many members speak about how well respected and loved Neil was. I'm sure he will remain in our memories. Branch Council is looking into an appropriate way for the Association to recognise Neil's contribution to our industry.

I would like to record the Association's appreciation of the work of the retired Director of the State Records Office, Mr Chris Coggin. Chris has been a strong advocate of good records management practices in Western Australia during his time at State Archives, the Public Records Office and, latterly, the State Records Office. He championed the new State Records Act and the establishment of a State Records Office overseen by Independent State Records Commissioners. We congratulate Chris on his achievements and wish him a fulfilling retirement.

**Lesley Ferguson**  
**President, Western Australia Branch**

## Northern Territory

Major achievements by the Northern Territory have been supported through financial assistance for six (6) members studying records management, and the activities of Archives and Records Management Week, members were told at the branch AGM held on July 31. The ARM week activities were well supported.

The AGM was well attended by members keen to support the Association in the coming year. The past year has been relatively quiet. Members were again encouraged to participate in the association, and if eligible, to upgrade their status.

Eight (8) members braved the cold and attended the National Convention in Adelaide in September. Congratulations to the Adelaide organising committee for a great convention and thanks for all their hard work. The convention dinner was a spectacular event that was thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees. Our members were delighted to catch up with the branch Past President, Barry Garside, who moved to Canberra late last year and was attending the convention as a representative of National Archives.

Northern Territory branch members are anticipating the implementation next year of Northern Territory's first piece of legislation that specifically outlines recordkeeping responsibilities for Northern Territory Government agencies. The Information Bill is a unique piece of legislation that deals with access to information (commonly referred to as Freedom of Information), information privacy, and records and archives management responsibilities.

**Linda Bell**

**Director, NT Branch**

## Australian Capital Territory

As new ACT President, I would like to thank my predecessor Stephanie Ciempka for her hard work and dedication over her three-year term. I am pleased to be the ACT Branch President for this financial year and I hope we can maintain a healthy and active branch to serve our members.

The year has started well with the 19th National Convention in Adelaide where a good proportion of delegates were from the ACT and where the branch was pleased to have supported Ross Thompson for Life Member after 23 years of continuous service to RMA. Well done, Ross! We are pleased the Federal Board accepted your nomination.

This year, our aim will be to continue to increase the level of professional membership and we hope to be organising activities to encourage this. The branch is currently negotiating with the ACT branch of the Institute of Information Management to coordinate some common interest projects for this financial year.

**Veronica Pumpa, ARMA**

**President, ACT Branch**



## Queensland

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The branch has been very pleased with the continued support given by members to the professional education program run over the last three (3) years. This year, the number of attendees has averaged around 30. Recent seminars have addressed issues in relation to records storage solutions, legislation and records management.

The branch was an active participant in the AIR Joint venture program held in Brisbane in October. A high quality program incorporating a full day conference and workshops sessions attracted wide attention. The first Queensland State Awards for Archives, Information and Records Management were awarded.

The North Queensland State Conference held in Townsville on July 25 and 26 was a great success. Attendees travelled from far and wide, one driving 500 kilometres. That's commitment for you! Congratulations to the Queensland Local Government Chapter for organising this activity for members in northern Queensland.

**Philip Taylor, MRMA**  
**President, Queensland Branch**

## New Zealand

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Formation of the New Zealand branch of the RMAA was approved at the Association's AGM in Adelaide on September 16, 2002, the culmination of several years' discussion amongst the two countries' recordkeepers and, finally, 12 months of intensive negotiations between Federal President Chris Fripp and the New Zealand steering committee led by Wellington RM consultancy SWIM Ltd director Trish O'Kane.

Other NZ steering committee Wellington members were Flying Filing Squad boss Helen Hancox, Archives NZ analyst Alison Midwinter, independent consultant Deirdre Wogan and Caldeson Consultancy principal Mike Steemson.

In preparation for the new branch, Chris Fripp and RMAA Vice-president Kate Walker held workshops in Auckland and Wellington to recruit members and assist their up-grades to professional status with the result that the branch starts with some 45 members, 16 of whom are Associates, the highest proportion of professional members in any RMAA branch.

Formation of the NZ branch followed the dissolution of ARMA International chapters in Wellington and Auckland. The NZ Branch Council will be based in Wellington and an Auckland chapter of the Branch is being planned by previous members of the Auckland Chapter or ARMA.

RMAA foundation veteran, life member J. Eddis Linton, welcomed the formation of the NZ branch in a special message to INFORMAA Quarterly, saying: 'The news that the New Zealand records people have decided to form a branch of RMAA is excellent news indeed. Our Federal President is to be congratulated for this initiative'.

The branch steering committee plans the founding branch meeting and inaugural AGM on Tuesday, November 12, in the 14th floor conference suite of the New Zealand Treasury building, No. 1 The Terrace, Wellington.

Contact: Trish O'Kane, Director, SWIM Ltd., Wellington, [trish@swim.co.nz](mailto:trish@swim.co.nz)

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