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Volume 16, Number 3, August 2000

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Federal President's Message



Think Nationally - Act Locally

This issue is the first for the new financial year. The long awaited GST is now in place and all branches should have now held their AGMs. After discussions with the various State Presidents, I am confident that this financial year will be even more positive, with branches looking at ways of providing the best member services possible. In this report I have stated a number of actions/initiatives that have been put in place recently.

GST

As stated previously, the GST has forced the Association to introduce a single point of contact for our finances. In the past, each Branch Treasurer has done a great job in maintaining the accounts of the Association; many of them are not accountants and do this in their own time. With the introduction of penalties for non-compliance with the GST, the Board felt that Branch Treasurers should not be put under that pressure and, as such, has amalgamated all accounts into two accounts: one account for operating expenses, and the other for investment opportunities.

Office Accommodation

In conjunction with the GST issues, the Board contracted Hall & Chadwick to undertake a strategic review of the Association's financial direction and the administration of the GST. Included in that report was the concept of having an official office. The National Finance Committee is presently reviewing a number of options with the office being based either in the ACT or in Queensland, and the Committee will be making a recommendation to the Board.

Renewals

Everyone would have received their renewals by now and hopefully paid them as well. Included in the renewal was a survey. If you have not sent the survey back, would you please do so? The Board is currently looking at ways of cutting costs in printing and postage areas, and making better use of the Internet. The Board also wants to include email addresses in the membership database so we can

disseminate information to members quickly. Email addresses were also asked for in that survey. If you are a corporate member, you will be pleased to see that the Board has increased the number of nominees to four. This was previously set at three, so for many of our members who had four nominees, this is actually a cost saving of \$90. If you presently have three, and wish to increase to four, please let our membership office know.

MOU

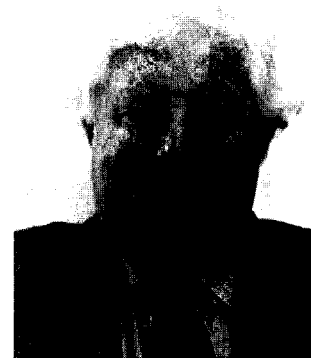
In April, the Federal Executive met with the ASA Executive and has acknowledged the commonality of purpose between our two organisations. This commonality of purpose reflects the fact that our two organisations are recognised as the peak professional bodies in the recordkeeping sector in Australia. As such, we have committed our organisations to maximising cooperation, communication and collaboration on issues of joint concern. This was achieved through the writing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This subject has generated much discussion over the years and this document is seen as a giant leap forward. A copy of this MOU can found within this journal and also on our web page <rmaa.com.au>.

ISO 15489.1, International Standard on Records Management

In May, Mike Steemson represented the RMAA at a meeting in Berlin. This meeting went very well with the standard to be (hopefully) approved in Canada in May 2001. People like Barbara Reed, David Moldrich, and other RMAA members, as well as the international delegates, have put in a lot of effort to get to this point. A summary report by Mike Steemson is also included in this issue.

Chris Fripp MRMA, MAICD
Federal President

Editorial



The overarching theme in this issue of the *INFORMAA Quarterly*, is the development of new principles and processes in records management and recordkeeping. In Australia, activities to promote legislative endorsement of the Australian Law Reform Commission's recommendations to Government for an integrated policy and regulatory framework for Commonwealth recordkeeping, are described by Ted Ling. And, in anticipation of that legislation, the National Archives of Australia's promulgated 'e-permanence' suite of policies and directives, referred to in my editorial in the May issue, is being actively promoted with comprehensive education and training programs being foreshadowed in Kerrie Scott's article.

Internationally, the process of developing the international standard on records management is progressing through the essential stages required to ensure multi-national and multi-cultural acceptance of agreed principles, processes and, not least, terminology. Mike Steemson, the RMAA representative at the May 2000 Berlin meeting, provides a historical summary of the activities of the ISO TC46/SC11, and brings us up-to-date with their achievements. His article does, by implication, impose on us an appreciation of the dedication, competence, and personal effort expended by those who have been representing the Australian recordkeeping community in this endeavour.

The retirement presentation by Mike Leigh, one of the founders of the Records Management Association of Australia, is a poignant reminder of our beginnings. In his presentation, provided to the *INFORMAA Quarterly* by the Western Australia Branch, Mike acknowledges his colleagues who worked so diligently and with such commitment to form and develop the Association. In particular, he refers to the efforts of Tom Lovett and J Eddis Linton and their longstanding dedication to fostering best practice in records management. This acknowledgment complements the recognition by the Association at the National Convention in Darwin last year, of J Eddis Linton's lifetime contribution

to our profession, and now, the announcement in this issue of *INFORMAA Quarterly* of the J Eddis Linton Awards for Excellence in Records Management.

Increasingly, RMAA State and Territory Branches are recognising the imperatives for the recordkeeping community of eBusiness and eCommerce. This is reflected in the themes for seminars and Branch discussions and meetings. The ACT Branch March Seminar is reviewed in this issue by Mike Steemson, himself a keynote speaker at the Seminar. Perhaps the Western Australia Branch Seminar, *e-Commerce or e-Chaos? Managing Records in the New Millennium*, could be similarly shared with the broader membership. Also reviewed is the 1998 edition of *Managing Electronic Records* by William Saffady in which Allan Connelly-Hansen identifies the differences that still exist between the Australian and American appreciation of records management.

With this issue, having completed two years as the National Editor of this journal, I will be relinquishing the position, and have so advised the Federal President. I had set myself some quite specific objectives, some of which I have achieved, and some that I will now have to leave to my successor. I have valued the support of my Editorial Committee, and thank them for their help. I have also valued the professionalism and long-suffering accommodation of overtaken deadlines by the two staff members of our publisher, MAP Marketing, who have worked closely with me in preparing the *INFORMAA Quarterly* for publication.

Anthony Eccleston
National Editor

A New Commonwealth Archives Act: What's Wrong with the Old One?

AUTHOR

Ted Ling

Ted Ling has been with the National Archives of Australia for 25 years. He is currently Director, Legislative Development. Previously, he spent three years as Director of the Archives' Darwin Office.

He is the author of a number of works on archives buildings including *Solid, Safe, Secure: Building Archives Repositories in Australia* and *Guidelines for Mobile Shelving for Archives, Libraries and Museums*.

His current position involves an assessment of the final report prepared by the Australian Law Reform Commission following its review of the *Archives Act 1983*, and the preparation of proposals involving future legislative change.

ABSTRACT

The *Archives Act 1983* was drafted during the 1970s with a fundamental objective being 'the preservation and use of [Commonwealth] archival resources'. At the time, however, the complexities of outsourcing, privatisation, and most importantly, electronic records and their management were not foreseen. To accommodate the changing environment, in 1996, the Australian Law Reform Commission was asked to review the Act. Of its 223 recommendations, published in 1998, the report proposes replacement of the 1983 Act by a new Archives and Records Act, and the establishment of the National Archives of Australia as a statutory authority with responsibility for recordkeeping standards and guidelines. Three specific areas are

considered as meriting further consideration, recordkeeping standards and the proposed divided custodial and access regimes.

Introduction

The Commonwealth Archives Act was only passed in 1983, yet after just seventeen years, the National Archives of Australia hopes that in the near future the Act will be replaced by a new one. This paper focuses on why the present Act is deficient and why the Archives is keen to see it replaced by a new Act.

The Archives Act 1983

The Archives Act was first tabled in the Federal Parliament in June 1978. Shortly after, it was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, and would not be passed until 1983. Yet the reality was that the Act was first drafted in the mid-1970s and over the years, there would be five or six drafts before the legislative process was concluded.

The Commonwealth environment of the 1970s was a far cry from that of today. It was a time of strong centralisation within the Australian Public Service. Powerful agencies such as the Public Service Board, exercised vast influence.

In the 1970s, paper was the main medium for government records. Such records would pass from the care of records managers in Commonwealth agencies to storage at the Archives - to be held for a certain period and then destroyed, or retained as archives. The Archives was merely the end player in a process over which it exercised little control.

It was a time before concepts such as **outsourcing** and **privatisation** of Commonwealth functions came into vogue.

The Act was drafted as part of an administrative law package, which also included the *Freedom of Information Act*. Its philosophy was strongly influenced by this package, especially with its public access and appeal provisions. This is especially evidenced by its short title 'an Act relating to the preservation and use of archival resources'.

Since the Act's proclamation, the management of electronic records has emerged as a major issue. The Act does not cope adequately with these records nor with the creation, accessibility and disposal issues that they raise in the dynamic environment of modern business.

And last, another of the Act's deficiencies has become evident over the last decade with the corporatisation and/or sale of a number of Commonwealth agencies. The distinction between Commonwealth records and private records, and what happens to records when a Commonwealth agency is sold, have raised many issues that are not readily resolved by the Act.

In essence, the Act reflected the time and environment in which it was drafted, and the very passive role that records managers and archivists played in the 1970s. It was very strong on preservation, public access and rights of appeal. Yet, it says basically nothing about records management.

This was not entirely the fault of those who drafted it. The Public Service Board saw records management as its exclusive preserve and lobbied

successfully to ensure that it was not included within the Act. Having won its case, the Board proceeded to do little about providing guidance on records management, and the standard steadily declined throughout the Commonwealth. Ultimately, the Board was abolished.

The Review of the Archives Act by the Australian Law Reform Commission

When passed in 1983, it was expected that the Act would undergo a review seven years later. That review never happened. As the state of Commonwealth recordkeeping declined, it became increasingly apparent to the Archives that a review was needed.

At the request of the Archives, in 1996 the Attorney-General asked the Australian Law Reform Commission to undertake a complete review of the Act. The Commission was asked to enquire and report on the following matters:

- (a) to identify what the basic purposes and principles of national archival legislation should now be
- (b) whether the Act has achieved those purposes and principles or whether it requires amendment.¹

Over the next two years, the Commission held hearings in all capital cities, received over one hundred submissions, presented two interim reports and then, a final report in mid-1998. That report, *Australia's Federal Record: A review of Archives Act 1983*, contains 223 recommendations.

The final report identified a central role for the Archives as the Commonwealth's recordkeeping authority - providing a policy framework, supported by standards and guidelines. The Commission's principal recommendations can broadly be grouped under five headings:

- the present Act should be replaced by an Archives and Records Act;

- the Archives should position itself as the Commonwealth's recordkeeping authority, and should become an independent statutory authority with a governing council;
- the Archives should be responsible for the issue of standards and guidelines for all aspects of records management throughout the Commonwealth;
- there should be a divided custodial regime, with the Archives having custody of that portion of records that have archival value. All other records would be managed and stored by agencies, or their contractors, to Archives' standards; and
- in line with the divided custodial regime, there would be a divided access regime. Access to records held in agency custody could be provided by those agencies, again to Archives' standards, if an agreement was in place with the Archives.

Implementing the Australian Law Reform Commission's Recommendations

Some of the Commission's recommendations have already been implemented. Others can be implemented administratively, but some will of course require legislative change. Many of these latter recommendations are quite far reaching and would have considerable impact on both the Archives and the Commonwealth, if they are implemented.

There are three particular areas that merit further consideration; they are recordkeeping standards, and the proposed divided custodial and access regimes.

Recordkeeping Standards and Guidelines

Many archivists and records managers will remember some of the more celebrated cases where Commonwealth recordkeeping, or the lack of it, was in

the media spotlight; for example, the pay television scandal of 1993 and the so-called 'Sports Rorts' affair of 1994 with its infamous whiteboard. During its deliberations, the Commission noted these and other examples. In fact, the number of instances it examined, and their serious nature, led the Commission to refer to the present 'parlous state of recordkeeping in many Commonwealth agencies'.² The Commission also noted that more than 52% of performance reports completed by the Australian National Audit Office had adverse comments about recordkeeping.

The Archives would issue recordkeeping standards

To help overcome these deficiencies, the Commission foreshadowed the need for standards and guidelines, with the Archives having a pivotal role as the Commonwealth's standards setter. The Archives would develop and issue standards applicable to all aspects of Commonwealth recordkeeping. While the current Act gives the Archives no specific responsibility to issue, monitor or report on records management standards, the Archives has issued guidelines to agencies for some years, and has been a keen supporter of the Australian Standard, *AS4390 - Records Management*.

The Archives believes that best practice requires adherence to standards. In the current climate, where Commonwealth agencies are adopting various managerial strategies, it is important for both the government and the Australian people that there be a level of consistency in the way agencies manage their records.

Standards would be mandatory and have legislative backing

As envisaged by the Commission, standards issued by the Archives would be binding on all Commonwealth agencies. Equally, they would apply to records created by contractors providing functions or services on behalf of the

Commonwealth, as well as Commonwealth associations and companies. However, where a function is fully corporatised, only pre-existing records would be subject to legislation. Last, standards would apply regardless of where the records are held - whether by the Archives, by agencies or by their contractors.

While standards can be implemented administratively, the Commission felt it is necessary that they be underpinned by legislation to ensure their acceptance and compliance. This fact has been recognised by a number of governments. In the past few years, the New South Wales and South Australian Governments have passed legislation whereby their respective archival authorities are authorised to issue standards for government agencies in those States. In 1999, both the Western Australian and Queensland Governments introduced into their Parliaments archival legislation which expresses similar sentiments.

Chief Executive Officers would be responsible for compliance with the standards

It is especially noteworthy that the Commission has proposed that Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) would be responsible for ensuring their agency's adherence to the standards. Information is, of course, an asset that in a structured way becomes records. Increasingly, there is now an appreciation that information, like any other asset, needs to be properly managed. Given the extent of current poor information management within the Commonwealth - as opposed to information technology management - the Archives believes that it is vital that this be coordinated at the highest level, with the support of CEOs.

Compliance with the standards would be audited

The Commission recommended that compliance with the standards should be audited, but not by the Archives.

This is somewhat different to the practice with some archival authorities where they have the dual responsibilities of setting standards and then, auditing compliance. The Archives agrees it would be inappropriate to undertake both functions as it could give rise to suggestions of a possible conflict of interest.

The Commission suggested that the Australian National Audit Office could perform this task. This is one possibility, but there may well be others.

The Archives would report on Commonwealth recordkeeping in its annual report

And last, to further complement the above activities, the Commission has recommended that the Archives comment on the state of Commonwealth recordkeeping as part of its annual report to Parliament.

The Divided Custodial Regime

The Commission saw the Archives' custodial role confined to that portion of records that have archival (that is, permanent) value. All other records would be managed and stored by agencies - at their own cost - although such management would be in accordance with the Archives' standards. This represents a complete reversal of a practice that existed for many years whereby the Archives provided storage facilities for whatever records an agency wished to deposit.

The Commission further recommended that legislation should stipulate that all Commonwealth records be appraised and sentenced no later than at twenty years of age, unless the Archives has given the relevant agency a dispensation. Cost penalties might even apply if this was not done.

The Archives supports the proposed divided custodial regime and has already taken steps in this direction. In fact, from the mid-1990s, it has placed

limits on the type of records it would accept into custody, beginning with short term temporary value records. The Archives believes that archival value records should be in its custody, but equally, it should not be mandatory for non-archival value records to be stored by the Archives, again provided they are managed at all times to archival standards.

The Archives regards custody as forming part of a good recordkeeping regime, so that policies and practices within agencies ensure that custodial arrangements are in place, appropriate to the value of the records concerned. The critical custodial decision is the one involving appraisal, with records being stored appropriate to their value. Hence, the Archives is also supportive of recommendations dealing with appraisal of records no later than twenty years. There are a number of benefits to this proposal. It would prevent unnecessary storage of unevaluated records, and it would ensure that archival value records are brought into the Archives' custody at the earliest possible opportunity.

Corporatised and Privatised Agencies

The Commission has accepted the fact that the present Act does not cope adequately with records created by agencies that are later corporatised or privatised. It has recommended that they be subject to legislation to encompass their pre-sale records. Conversely, the Archives would be permitted to declare that certain records, belonging to newly corporatised agencies, are no longer Commonwealth records and could be disposed of, if necessary.

The increased number of corporatised or privatised Commonwealth agencies in recent years has created many difficulties for the Archives and the agencies concerned, as well as for members of the public seeking access to those agencies' records. The Commission's recommendations would ensure that where an agency is

corporatised or privatised, its records are still subject to archival legislative provisions, if appropriate.

The Divided Access Regime

The Commission's report confirms the right of general public accessibility to Commonwealth records after thirty years. Yet, in line with a divided custodial regime, the report also recommends a divided public access regime. While determining access to archival value records would normally be the responsibility of the Archives, access decisions could also be determined by agencies, if agreements were in place with the Archives. Where an agreement could not be reached over responsibility for access decision making, the Minister responsible for the agency concerned would resolve the matter.

Public access to official records is, of course, fundamental to the principles of open government and accountability that underlie the Archives Act. The Archives believes that the highest of recordkeeping standards are of little value unless complemented by an effective and equitable public access regime. At the same time, Commonwealth agencies must be assured that sensitive information can be protected where necessary. While the present Act may have some failings with respect to records management, its ability to protect sensitive information has been tested and proved in external reviews by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

For records over thirty years of age, equitable public access and reliable protection of sensitive information derive from consistent, informed and soundly-based decision making. The Archives believes that this can best be achieved by responsibility for access decisions remaining with one agency (the Archives), and that agency having core responsibility for this function. Consultation with agencies over

particularly sensitive access issues would continue, as it does at present.

Where to now?

The Commission's report and its recommendations have far reaching implications and would certainly have a significant impact on both the Archives and on the Commonwealth. But for the moment they are just that - recommendations only.

In response to the report, the Archives has initiated discussions with several Commonwealth departments on a number of issues raised by the Commission, prior to developing proposals that would involve legislative change. Undoubtedly, much discussion and debate lies ahead. The picture is further complicated by the fact that some recommendations within the report have already been implemented.

Future legislative change would emphasise the role that the Archives plays, but would also indicate that good recordkeeping is a responsibility for all agencies. It would bring added responsibilities, but of course there are benefits, too. Good recordkeeping supports communication and decision-making and is fundamental to the successful implementation of online business, so important in today's

environment. It is also essential for accountability. Last, it is essential to the public's understanding of the role of government.

The Commonwealth Government has had a significant impact on the course of Australian history and the lives of individual Australians. The records of the Commonwealth are the principal means by which its actions and decisions can be studied and understood, now and in the future.

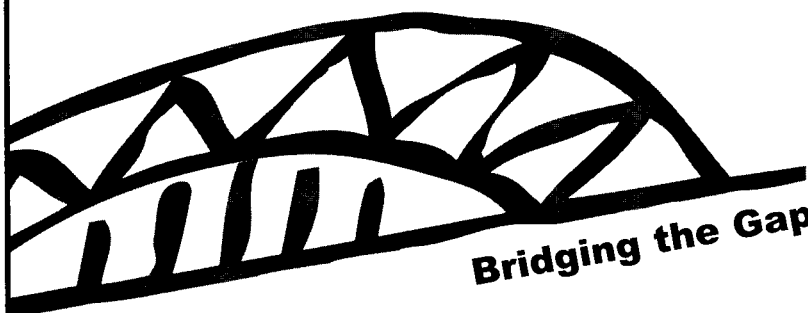
With the Centenary of Federation fast approaching, the Archives believes that this would be an appropriate time to ensure that best practice archival legislation is in place so that records created now are managed appropriately, and would continue to be available both to agencies and the public in the second century of Federation.

Endnotes

¹ Australian Law Reform Commission, *Australia's Federal Record: A Review of Archives Act 1983*, Terms of Reference, at <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/alrc/publications/reports/85/tor.html>>

² Australian Law Reform Commission, at <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/alrc/publications/reports/85/ch3.html>>

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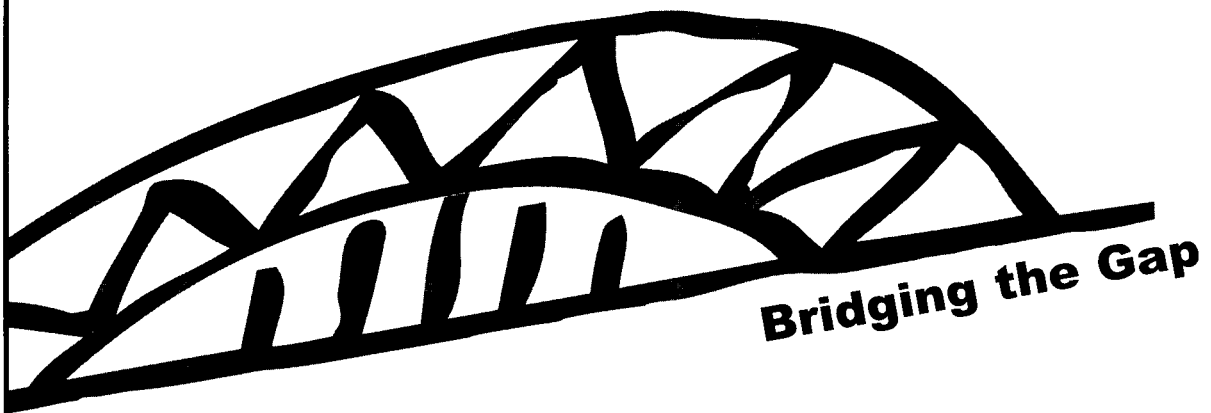


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Reflections on My Years in Records Management*

AUTHOR

Mike Leigh

When I first encountered records management, I was a Systems Development Officer with ACI in Melbourne. It was early 1968. My boss gathered the team around one day and told us there was a problem in the Records Department on the 1st Floor. He asked for a volunteer. I didn't even know there was a Records Department on the 1st Floor, and no-one else seemed interested, so I volunteered. Little did I know that my whole life was about to change!

I didn't feel uncomfortable walking through the batwing doors on the 1st Floor. This wasn't my first job, and I'd had an introduction to filing systems back in the UK. I looked at the racks of files, ceiling high, occupying one end of the room while at the other end, were the mail sorting benches and pigeonholes. There were two desks in the room. A lady sat at each one. Both were knitting!

I introduced myself and asked about the problem. The senior lady told me they couldn't find files. Sometimes they searched for days. More often than not, the wanted file had never reached the Records Department in the first place. I asked how often they received requests for files. 'Oh, we can get two or three a week', one said.

My preliminary report included some common-sense solutions. My boss said I should get a second opinion! 'Go talk to BHP across the street, and the PMG's Department round the corner in William Street, and surely there's an "association" that deals with filing systems.'

I contacted BHP and met a Murray Bassett, then went on to the PMG and met a Peter Mulquinney. Neither offered

a short cut to happiness. Couldn't find an association in the directory.

Then I remembered an old colleague in Sydney by the name of Tom Lovett. Tom and I had worked together some five years earlier. He was now Editor of the *Modern Office* journal. I wrote and asked the question. 'No', he said; he knew of no association, but coincidentally, he had recently returned from a conference in America on 'records management'. In fact, he had started running a course on the topic, and in the light of my letter, had asked his students whether they thought a 'records management association' might be a good idea. They had all said 'Yes'. One of the students was a gentleman by the name of Eddis Linton.

Tom suggested that he place an ad. in *Modern Office* inviting expressions of interest. He suggested I respond to it and I said I would. It was probably May 1968 when the ad. appeared. I dutifully mailed my 'enquiry'. A week or two later, Tom called me and said he had received half a dozen enquiries from Melbourne. He would fly down for a meeting.

The meeting was held over a sandwich lunch at the Windsor Hotel in Spring Street, Melbourne, in July.

Besides Tom and me, there were Norman Davies from Davy Ashmore, Bernie Munro from U&I Insurance, Ken Pearce from ASCO, and a gentleman from NCR whose name I do not remember because we never saw him again.

We listened to Tom's idea of starting an association and most of us were willing to give him support. He then suggested we form a Pilot Committee and appoint a Chairman and a Secretary/Treasurer. At that time, I was trying to stop smoking cigarettes and had brought a

large cigar (it was said to be a cure!). Norman said, 'This fellow with the cigar looks like chairman material'. Bernie seconded the motion. I trembled with anticipation and then dobbled in Norman to be Secretary. Suddenly, we were on our way.

The RMAA's first Branch was born at the RAAF Club in Melbourne nine months later, in March 1969, with 70-odd members. A governing council was formed which included Murray Bassett of BHP and Peter Mulquinney of the PMG's Department, Norm Davies as Secretary/Treasurer and myself as President. Another ring-in was Bert Baensch of the Repatriation Department whose dexterity had given us inauguration at the RAAF Club. Unfortunately, after too short a period the much loved Bert won one of the first TattsloTTos and we never saw him again!

Notwithstanding the number of new members, we were still a little short on the Council. It was a few weeks later when Norm called me and said he had had a phone call from a fellow called Harry Nunn who said he was the Chief Archivist for Victoria. Harry had suggested he should not only be a member of the new RMAA, he should be on the Council. Norm asked: 'What shall I tell him?' I said, 'Grab him, we need all the manpower we can get'. Harry Nunn was grabbed, and that was the way it was.

The NSW Branch was inaugurated three months later in Sydney, with Tom Lovett its first President. A Federal Council was formed soon afterwards, also with Lovett as President. I followed him two years later. One of its roles was to help people in other States to organise into affiliated State Branches. In the months to follow, we formed an International Federation with Associations in North America and South Africa.



Mike Leigh & Shirley Cowcher

Again, Tom was elected its first President. I was fourth in 1977/8, following Bill Benedon of ARMA and William Osburn of IIMSA.

I was personally involved in all of those things. Of course, I hadn't set out to get involved. All I wanted to do was solve the filing problem on the 1st Floor. I ended up using the same common sense I had offered before. It just took longer.

However, life suddenly became a great adventure to me and I thoroughly enjoyed my years as an office holder of the RMAA and IRMF.

Within two years of launching the RMAA, I was head-hunted by Ansett, ostensibly to start a Records Management Program, but nothing materialised immediately. Meanwhile, I was being asked frequently to do consulting work, mainly in the public sector, and devoted my annual leave each year to such calls for help and consequently, was not getting any breaks. In late 1976, I left to start up as an independent Records Management (RM) Consultant.

Development

Ever since the RMAA was founded, the RM world has been undergoing continual development, and I believe it still has some way to go.

In the beginning there was no standard RM terminology, no education in RM, no RM software, little knowledge of retention law, and the people in RM, for the most part, had been shifted there because they couldn't do anything else.

We all flew by the seat of our pants. We organised the first RM courses but the lecturers were not academics; they were practitioners who were explaining what they had learned, more from practical experience than from what they had ever been taught. I myself lectured for almost fifteen years, not on the diploma courses which RMAA members designed for professional records personnel, but in one-day courses which would bring, more quickly, useful RM practice to wider interest groups.

In the 1970s and 80s several developments occurred to the benefit of RM.

One of the first developments was in standard terminology in subject filing systems. The concept of a standard vocabulary for subject terminology exercised a lot of minds, including my own. Eddis Linton published his first book on Keyword Filing, and the first thesauri were reaching draft completion by the mid-1970s and were being tried in some Government Departments.

Another interesting thing that happened in the mid-70s resulted from the attention being drawn to computer technology, leading to fears about a Paperless Office. I thought it would be a good idea to put on a seminar or two at which the Computer Society, the Microfilm Association and the RMAA could discuss on centre stage the probabilities, if any, of a Paperless Office. I brought over the distinguished American RM lecturer, Bill Benedon, to keynote the subject. This was in 1976. The seminars dispelled any expectations of a Paperless Office in the foreseeable future. But, I found myself in trouble when Channel 7 News in Brisbane, under the assumption that I was a paperless office freak, challenged me in

an interview to answer all sorts of social questions on the Paperless Office, such as 'What will the poor old lady do when she walks into the Welfare Office and finds there are no forms to fill in?'. I had nightmares over those questions I can tell you, not to mention the answers I gave!!

Also in the 1970s, a strong push was made by the Quality Assurance Association for a national Quality Standard. I was invited to speak at some of their seminars because of the QAA's interest in the importance of records. Finally, a set of Quality Standards was introduced which incorporated an accreditation process. As you well know, to be 'quality accredited' demands that a company has implemented a records retention system, at least for 'controlled records'.

In 1980, the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) began to take an interest in RM. I had already been conducting one-day courses in RM privately for some five years, and was invited to assist the AIM to develop a series of short courses for their Melbourne and Sydney training programs. The result was a series of one-day courses in three different areas of RM - Forms, Filing Systems, and Retention - which were conducted two or three times a year in both Sydney and Melbourne. Consequently, RM was introduced to quite a large number of businesses over the next 10 years. Eddis Linton was able to take over the Sydney courses from me after a short period, and also took them to other States.

Meanwhile, I had been giving a lot of thought to providing a formula for Retention Scheduling which would include both the law and best practice, with the object of making it available at a low price to industry generally. This was finally accomplished in 1982 with the publication of the *Australian Record Retention Manual*. Record Retention Scheduling had always been the most neglected part of RM, in my experience. Records stored in basements, attics and

old warehouses were out of sight and out of mind. Yet, as long as there was no standard approach to record cataloguing and storage, such storage practices were often a health hazard, retrieval was nearly impossible, and the heap just kept on growing as no-one threw anything away.

More than that, retention law was often taken too literally, without regard to overlapping laws or the laws of limitation or evidence laws. As a result, records were often destroyed too soon, putting a company at serious risk.

In 1983, Australia elected a new Government and whether you liked them or hated them, the new Government immediately began to review the laws relating to Occupational Health and Safety, Industrial Relations, Environment Protection and Anti-Discrimination, all of which affected every business. The revised laws required that records be kept and huge penalties were introduced for non-compliance. The States followed, of course, with their own legislation.

RM was given a boost by the mere existence of those new laws and we were able to keep subscribers up-to-date through the *Australian Record Retention Manual*.

The 1980s also became a busy time in the development of RM software which rapidly gained attention, especially in the area of Active Records and Centralised Records and Registry Systems. This was entirely appropriate because there was a dire need to replace the old, unreliable card systems used in government departments, and now that the thesaurus had come of age, there was little to stop the new RM software programs from wide acceptance.

In the early 90s, the Trade Practices Act was revised. This, too, impacted on record retention because it lengthened the limitation period for legal action to 10 years for a wide variety of business records. It also made industry generally more aware of their duty of care. Again, these changes were incorporated into the

Manual and it is worth mentioning that in more recent years, there has emerged a practice, in framing a lot of new legislation, of including a requirement for duty of care or due diligence.

In other words, you can not only be sued for negligence under civil law but you can be taken to court under criminal law if you have failed in your duty of care, and quite often, it is your records that will protect you or condemn you. If you haven't got them or can't find them, the risk of a conviction and a large compensation payout can be very high indeed.

More recently, law firms across Australia have been promoting due diligence programs and legal compliance programs, both of which require that a record retention system be in place, properly maintained and subject to certification, audit and review.

Finally, in 1996, a set of RM Standards was adopted, designed to advance 'best

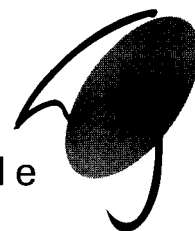
practice' in a more formalised way. Those Standards include guidelines on record retention as well as active RM.

So, RM has come a long way. From lowly beginnings, we now have:

- education for the professional and to a lesser extent, the broader business community;
- good RM software, except perhaps for smaller business; and
- standard terminology that has come a long way, although perhaps not far enough in terms of its application.

And for Record Retention Systems, we have:

- the Quality Accreditation program which demands a record retention system;
- the *Australian Record Retention Manual* which brings good RR practice to within reach of every organisation and lists laws and provides procedural guidance;
- a growing requirement in law for duty of care and due diligence;



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- successive Governments increasing the penalties for non-compliance;
- major law firms actively promoting due diligence and legal compliance programs; and
- the RMAA adopting a set of RM Standards.

A period of 32 years may appear to the young as a long time, but to some of us it hasn't been very long at all. The beginnings of modern RM in the 60s and 70s remain clear in my mind, but both old and young have contributed to its growth and development in so many ways.

Is that it? Have we reached RM Utopia yet? No. I don't believe we have. In fact, the future seems to be just as challenging as were the 70s and 80s when the RMAA was born.

- And the Future?

Looking into the crystal ball:

I see a slow but sure movement away from the paper record in favour of the computer record. I believe that business people are accepting this drift in full knowledge that there may be risks; for example, there is a risk that electronic records may never have the legal weight of paper records. There is a consequent risk that businesses may be more vulnerable to claims brought against them.

On the other hand, they are being aided and abetted to a large extent by government departments which are themselves embracing the same technologies, so there is no stopping that drift.

However, at the end of the day, there is still plenty of paper. Where there isn't any paper (unless you press the print button), the record still exists, even though the computer record may not prove to be as reliable in the legal sense as the paper record.

The laws of evidence seem to be changing to accommodate the drift, and if you take them in conjunction

with the due diligence recommendations coming from the legal fraternity, we are led to the following general conclusions. If a business:

- keeps a log of computer work and job time allocations;
 - keeps a log of interruptions to that work;
 - keeps records of systems additions and changes;
 - keeps an operating plan that reflects one's 'normal course of business';
 - keeps programs and back-ups;
 - keeps a history of operating procedures;
 - keeps a history of job descriptions;
 - keeps a history of staff training;
 - keeps a record of compliance or certification; and
 - keeps audit and system review records,
- then one has gone some way towards exercising due diligence and duty of care. (Some laws of evidence still provide specific requirements for record retention.)

The 'record' remains paramount because the 'record' is proof of business dealings, whether they relate to customers, suppliers, personnel, shareholders or Government.

It seems to be accepted that the computer record, whilst perhaps not having the same legal weight as the paper record, offers economic and other advantages lacking in the paper record.

I do not believe that the paper record will disappear altogether. I do believe, however, that the overlap between IT and RM will continue to grow and that it will benefit both RM and IT professions to encourage and involve each other through education and training.

If I were starting out in RM in my 20s or 30s and felt the least bit entrepreneurial, these are some of the things I would concentrate my attention on: the RMAA, RM software, smaller business, and education.

1 The RMAA. I would want to be involved in it. I would want to run a project committee. I would want to

get on the Council. I would want to take an interest in national and international RM matters. I would want to set objectives in the advancement of RM and achieve them. It's useful. It's fun and one meets a variety of people, plus, contributing to something develops the soul! If you have been thinking about it but haven't done anything yet, don't be a wuss! Stand up and participate in the RM profession in an active way.

2 RM Software. We now have excellent RM software programs, but in my view, they are too technical and too expensive for smaller business. Moreover, there appears to be no software dedicated to retention scheduling. I have invested over \$20,000 in two attempts to produce such software, but both failed to meet specifications and I pulled the plug on both of them.

I believe there is a huge opportunity here for someone to contribute in this area.

3 Small Business. RM is not just for larger business and government. Ninety-five per cent of our businesses are rather small, but their obligations under the law are just as great.

One of my ambitions as an office holder in the RMAA was to bring RM to all businesses, both large and small. That, we failed to do.

Membership in the RMAA has always come from larger businesses and government. The larger storage companies and RM consultants came in later. Small business was never represented during my tenure, either on the Board or among the membership, and I was never able to attract others to support some kind of professional platform from which smaller business could be served.

I believe it could be done and should be done to the nation's advantage. The

best I could do was to make the *Australian Record Retention Manual* available at a low price, but even that needs more work to fit in with small business needs.

4 Education. There are two levels of education. Records managers need certain skills. For records managers, qualifications provide opportunities. For business in general, qualified records managers are an asset. To a large extent that need is being fulfilled, but we are witnessing an important overlap with IT. There needs to be a greater interchange of knowledge between RM and IT.

The other level of education involves the familiarisation of executives and other non-records personnel, including IT personnel, in the essentials of RM law and due diligence. I have given hundreds of people a one-day course on RM, but there are hundreds of thousands whose businesses would benefit from it.

In addition, perhaps all management, administrative and secretarial courses and every seminar that deals with any business principle, may be incomplete without an element of RM legal compliance and due diligence. I would want to encourage the RMAA to make that happen.

If one were to attempt to delineate between IT and RM, perhaps we should first understand that despite IT, we still have paper records.

IT graduates are concerned principally with the application of technology. Generally, they prefer not to enter into such areas as:

- training in paper records management;
- the law and paper records;
- procedures for the retrieval, protection and disposition of paper records;
- audits of paper systems;
- annual reviews of paper systems (after IT improvements); and
- certification of paper records practices.

On the other hand, the records manager is interested both in those things, PLUS

- sustaining proof of a transaction;
- privacy and freedom of information;
- retention periods and disposal of the record; and
- retrievability to meet legal obligations.

Those four latter areas of interest do not automatically give jurisdiction to the records manager, but where you have both IT and RM activities in-house (and who doesn't?), it seems to me to be very important to delineate precisely where jurisdiction lies, particularly in job descriptions, and to provide proper training.

The spectre of IT is sweeping aside all before it - except, that is, the good sense of due diligence and duty of care which are fast becoming the foundation of business respectability and to which RM is inevitably linked.

Retirement

I can now announce (now that RM is getting harder!) that I am retiring.

In retrospect, I was there by accident or default at the birth of the RMAA. I feel I have contributed to the growth of modern RM and perhaps in some small way, to Australia which adopted me in 1962.

In Perth on 17 May 2000, not without some melancholy, I handed over ownership of the *Australian Record Retention Manual* to Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd, a company that is growing from strength to strength under the leadership of Shirley Cowcher, for whom I have the greatest respect and admiration, not just because she likes jumping out of aeroplanes (Shirley is also a sky-dive instructor).

RM provided a career for me at a most unexpected time. I poured myself into it, grew with it, made many wonderful friends, participated in all kinds of projects, travelled

around Australia numerous times, lectured overseas on several occasions and produced the best work of my life. I am proud to have been involved and would like to thank the hundreds of people who over the years, have made me feel that I was somebody. To me, each of you was *somebody*, too.

A special mention to Tom Lovett who started it all, Eddis Linton who contributed so much, Jim Varghese who tried to teach me about politics and I wouldn't listen, Norm Davies for his staunch friendship (Norm is now in his 70s and living in Melbourne), and Murray Bassett, now a neighbour of mine on the Gold Coast. Thank you all.

*** Editor's note: This is the text of a presentation (with minor editing) by Mike Leigh at a function in Perth, WA on 17 May 2000.**

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ISO Records Management Standard: Another big step forward

AUTHOR

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Mike Steemson heads the Wellington-based Caldeson Consultancy in business information management after 35 years in London journalism. In the 1990s, he was for two years chairman of the Records Management Society of Great Britain, and chaired a London-based consortium of IT consultants, vendors and academics that created the British Standards Institution's 1996 code of practice for the legal admissibility of electronic documents, PD0008.

In New Zealand, he helped form and was appointed chairman of a committee creating a *New Zealand Guide to AS4390*, the Australian Records Management Standard. Mike joined the International Standards Organization's Records Management sub-committee last year as a member of the Australian delegation. He may be contacted at <mike.steemson@caldeson.com>.

Status of the Draft International RM Standard

The good news is that work on the International Records Management Standard ISO15489 is complete and, subsequent to the ISO TC46/SC11 Berlin meeting, the Draft International Standard (DIS) was released in July 2000, only 26 months after the ISO authoring committee started its work.¹

After translation of the DIS into French, the document is being distributed to the ISO National

Member Bodies (NMB) for "Yea" or "Nay" decisions, processes taking some nine months in total.

An informal survey of NMB representatives attending the Berlin meeting in May,² indicated that all would approve the DIS. If this is reflected across the appraising community, the DIS is likely to be confirmed as an international standard at the May 2001 meeting of SC11.³ Final publication of the approved Standard will follow some months later, probably towards the end of the year.

Leading up to the first Committee Draft (CD)

The Berlin re-drafting was the second major re-write of the Standard since the original Australian RM Standard AS4390 was adopted as a basis for the international model in 1998. The first overhaul came last year in Paris, when the international prototype was split into two parts after ISO member countries could not agree on the Australian implementation processes. The result was the creation of a Standard describing only high-level records management principles, and a Technical Report explaining varieties of implementing procedures.

Drafts of the high-level principles document were widely circulated and, as a consequence, attracted some heavy criticism. Foremost amongst the critics of these earlier drafts was Professor Luciana Duranti, the outspoken head of the Master of Archival Studies Program at British Columbia University's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. In the December issue of the *Records*

Management Journal, the quarterly publication of the British library and archives consultancy, Aslib, she expressed her concern that 'interest groups within the records professions ... often try to put forward guidelines riddled with jargon, inconsistencies and outright errors'.⁴ She suggests that 'any such standard must have a strong conceptual basis, include a clear definition of terms derived from the theory of the records, and comprise consistent sets of decontextualised procedures with an explanation of their purpose and function'.⁵

She related these comments to the proposed *Records Management - Requirements* standard ISO/CD 15489-1 (1997) which, she stated, was 'in conflict with the most basic theory of the records, does not define its terms, most of which are inappropriate and inconsistently used, and recommends procedures that are badly conceived, applicable only in a few environments, simplistically and inconsistently presented, and either so general as to be useless or so detailed as to be inappropriate for most contexts'.⁶

Professor Duranti's reference to the standard being 'in conflict with the most basic theory of the records' is, apparently, a reference to her theories of "archival diplomatics", which she describes as an analytical technique for determining the authenticity of records.⁷

The archives and records management world knows Professor Duranti does not mince her words. The Italian-born academic is not a member of the Canadian ISO member body.

The Committee Draft

The first "rough cut" after the Paris separation, went through extensive refining and a number of rough drafts before the next meeting of SC11 in Melbourne last November. From that meeting came the Committee Draft of the Standard.⁸ It was the first draft released officially for comment by world authorities and all participating ISO NMBs.⁹

Support for last year's release of the CD has been robust. In April's edition of ARMA International's *Information Management Journal*, for instance, contributing editor David O. Stephens, Vice President of the records management consulting division of North Carolina's Zasio Enterprises, wrote: 'It is hard to overstate the new standard's significance'.¹⁰ In commenting on the Committee Draft of the Standard produced in the Melbourne meeting, he described the ISO project as 'probably the most significant initiative in records management today', adding: 'The standard provides an officially endorsed benchmarking model of best professional practices for global emulation. In its entire history, the RIM discipline has never had anything like this . . . It has the potential to add a stamp of global legitimacy to records management as a business practice and elevate it to a new level.'

'The standard has potential general relevance to multi-national companies' efforts to implement world-class RIM programs. Multinationals would do well to monitor the standard's status, determining what is relevant to their RIM program implementations.'

NMB's responses to the CD were mostly very positive and included an extensive re-structuring proposal from the Ottawa-based Canadian ISO group, led by the Canadian Office of Government Records senior project officer, Catherine Zongora.

The SC11 Berlin Meeting

All these comments preceded a major re-working of the Standard draft by the authoring sub-committee, ISO TC46/SC11,¹¹ chaired by Australian consultant David Moldrich, at its meeting in Berlin in May.

The re-drafting has improved the document enormously. Its tenets are now set out in more logical order. The last vestiges of duplication have been removed and unnecessary detail deleted or, in some cases, moved to the Standard's Technical Report. A number of its terms have been more carefully defined. Some others have been dropped, SC11 members considering they needed no descriptions beyond those given in contemporary dictionaries or other ISO Standard – notably ISO5127 *Information and Documentation Terminology*.

The Standard Editorial Group, led by Sydney consultant Barbara Reed, endorsed the new approach and the re-design was agreed. The committee re-arranged a number of clauses in the CD and made some textual additions and amendments. Working right up to the last minutes of the three-day schedule, SC11 finally approved the new format as the draft international standard.

After the Berlin meeting, the SC11 delegates were happier with the re-designed Standard. ARMA representative and head of the US delegation, Diane Carlisle said: 'The Standard has been strengthened in many areas ... it establishes solid records management guidelines for both national and multi-national organisations'.

British delegate, Wellcome Trust Records Manager/Archivist Robert McLean, commented: 'It will underpin the future development of records management both in the UK and internationally'.

The DIS changes

Opening the discussion on the responses to the CD, Barbara Reed told the sub-committee that the Editorial Group had received suggestions from NMBs 'and other stakeholders such as the ICA Committee on Electronic and Other Current Records'. Since the CD release, the document had been through at least four stages of drafting and two major rounds of commenting by the Editorial Group.

In response to "consistent comments", the Editorial Group had 'attempted to string the concept of metadata more appropriately throughout the document, mainly in sections 4 and 7 as high level requirements, rather than overwhelming the document with references'.

In addition to the Canadian re-drafting proposal, SC11 made changes in many parts of the draft. Fuller details of alterations are available on-line,¹² but the changes centred mainly around the Committee Draft's clauses 3. *Terms and definitions*, and 4. *Requirements*.

The new list of terms and definitions is shorter, simpler and more useful. A number of the CD terms have been omitted because they no longer occur in the Standard's text. The DIS list omits the terms "elusive evidence" and "virtual records", for instance, as neither are now referred to in the text, although they may be included in the Technical Report which may carry its own, short list of exclusive terms.

Other terms disappear from the Standard because the sub-committee considers they do not need further definition. The phrase "records capture" and the term "storage" are examples.

Some terms have been extensively redefined. "Metadata" was originally defined as simply "data describing data". The DIS definition is more informative: "Data describing context, content and structure of records and their management through time".

The definition of "records" is now "documents created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an agency, organization, or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business". In the CD, the definition began with the word "information" not "documents".

The word "document" is defined to link more precisely with this new "records" definition. The new description makes clear it refers only to the noun "document" as opposed to the verb. Instead of "structured units of recorded information, logical or physical, not fixed as records", it describes a "document" as being "recorded information or object which can be treated as a unit".

Extra clause: RM benefits

The DIS comprises 11 sections, an increase of one on the Committee Draft. The increase is created by the splitting of the CD's chapter, 4. *Requirements*, into two: 4. *Benefits of Records Management* and 7. *Records Management Requirement*.

In addition, one part of the CD's clause 4. *Requirements* has been moved to the re-numbered chapter 8. *Design and Implementation of a Records System*.

Clause 4. *Benefits of Records Management* has a new opening part setting out the purposes of Records Management. It was added after the round of comments on the CD suggested stronger directives on records management purposes. The new clause introduction describes the purposes as setting policies, assigning authorities, establishing guidelines, records services, systems and business integration.

Clause 7. *Records Management Requirements* is made up of two parts of the CD's clause 4. Its purpose is to illustrate the differences between the

features of records management and the records themselves from those required of a records management system.

Among minor clause 7 differences, the sub-clause on *Integrity* has been usefully clarified. The wording now makes clear that it refers primarily to protection against *unauthorised* alteration and removes the CD's reference to "complete" records, a confusing if not meaningless concept when discussing active records.

Clause 8. *Design and Implementation of a Records System* and the following clauses are, of course, all numbered higher through the introduction of the new clause 7. Many small alterations to clause 8 were recommended and accepted.

For example, the sub-clause *Reliability* has been extensively re-written and re-constructed to clarify its purposes and meanings. Bullet points have been introduced to simplify description of the procedures. The sub-clause now includes the all-important imperative of documenting evidence of the continued reliability of the system. It also requires attention to changing business needs and record migration security.

Sub-clause 8.3.4 *Distributed management* is a new section, introduced from suggestions by the US member body. It allows for retention of management responsibility by organisations no longer physically in the possession of records.

Sub-clause 8.3.6 *Access, Retrieval and Use* has been expanded to show that audit trails should not only be provided but also maintained to ensure protection.

Clause 9. *Records management processes and controls* has similar tweaks. A wordy sub-clause title *Determining how long records are required to be kept* has been changed to a more sensible *Determining how long to retain records*. The title was originally written in order to simplify earlier even clumsier wording and to avoid the words

"disposal" or "disposition", use of which SC11 could not agree here.

A sub-clause, *Records capture* has been changed, largely to rid it of the CD's reference to "fixing" records. There was no agreement on the meaning of "fixing records", for much the same reason as the concern about references to "completeness". The required processes are covered in new bullet points.

And so on ...

So, what's next?

The next meeting of SC11 is scheduled to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 14-16 November, primarily to work on the Technical Report (TR) as the Standard will still be out for appraisal by the NMBs at that time.

Development of the TR has continued. The document is currently some 33,000 words and 100 pages long, considerably reduced after the authoring group members' comments were excluded. But much work has still to be done on it. SC11 aims to publish the TR simultaneously with the Standard.

The TR clause numbering and subject matter follows the Standard's. Members of the Standards Australia Committee IT/21 working on the Commonwealth submissions for the TR include: Jill Caldwell (National Archives of Australia), Kate Cumming (State Records, NSW), consultant Judith Ellis, Justine Heazlewood (Public Record Office, Victoria), and Mike Steemson.

Endnotes

- ¹ The first meeting was in Athens from 13-15 May 1998.
- ² The meeting was held at the headquarters of the German standards authority, Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN), from 9-11 May 2000.
- ³ The venue for this meeting has yet to be arranged.

- ⁴ Luciana Duranti 1999, 'Concepts and principles for the management of electronic records, or records management theory is archival diplomatics', *Records Management Journal*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 153-175.
- ⁵ Duranti 1999.
- ⁶ Duranti 1999.
- ⁷ See Luciana Duranti 1998, *Diplomatics: New uses for an old science*, SAA, ACA and Scarecrow Press, Chicago IL, and *Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records*, at <www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/>.
- ⁸ See 'First draft: First light for eagerly awaited ISO 15489', *INFORMAA Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 36-37, (February 2000), and Mike Steemson 1999, 'The International Records Management Standard ISO15489: You're gonna need it - so remember it!', *INFORMAA Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 10-13, and at <www.caldeson.com/iso15489.html>.
- ⁹ Countries participating in the creation of ISO 15489 include Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.
- ¹⁰ David O. Stephens 2000, 'International Standards and best practices in RIM', *Information Management Journal*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 68-71.
- ¹¹ ISO TC46/SC11: Sub-Committee No. 11 (Archives/Records Management) of ISO's Technical Committee No. 46 (Information Technology).
- ¹² See Michael Steemson, *ISO RM Standard: Another big step forward*, at <www.caldeson.com/~.html>.



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Commonwealth Recordkeeping: Campaigning for change!

AUTHOR

Kerrie Scott

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ABSTRACT

The 'e-permanence' campaign, launched in late March 2000, besides promulgating a comprehensive 'new standard in recordkeeping', promoted a significant increase in the responsibilities assumed by the National Archives of Australia (NAA) for recordkeeping policy and direction to be applied in federal agencies. The assumption of these responsibilities reflects the expectation that legislation will ultimately endorse the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission Report No 85. As part of the program, the NAA has established an Agency Promotion and Training Framework that is directed to changing agency attitudes towards recordkeeping, understanding recordkeeping, and building recordkeeping expertise.

Introduction

'e-permanence' is the latest buzz-word in federal public sector administration. It is the invention of the National Archives of Australia in its quest to put

recordkeeping back into the lexicon of the federal public sector, from where it quietly slipped since the heady days of the Public Service Board (PSB) and the Registrars' Handbook.

The e-permanence campaign, launched by the National Archives in late March 2000, also publicly marks a significant expansion to the recordkeeping territory that the Archives claims, and redefines the relationship between the Archives and the federal agencies within its jurisdiction. In this article, I intend to briefly reflect on some of the environmental changes that provided a catalyst for the challenges the Archives has set for itself, but mostly to describe the strategies that it is employing to meet those challenges.

Where we have been!

For many decades, the role of setting recordkeeping standards was the responsibility of the Public Service Board. It is unclear when this role was relinquished. Certainly any active role has not been apparent for some considerable time, and I recall that the general legislative mandate for this function was finally buried, without ceremony, in 1988 when the Board exited and the Public Service Commission came into being.

For many decades, the National Archives' role in recordkeeping has been officially confined to what is sometimes described in the business as 'search and rescue' missions; that is, assisting agencies to identify and transfer records to the Archives that were mostly past their 'use-by date' for current administrative purposes. The services provided by the Archives to government agencies were authorising

disposal and providing storage for non-current records including, but certainly not limited to records of archival value. The Archives has now withdrawn wholly from the business of providing storage services for agencies and now limits its custodial role to records of archival value. In other areas, the Archives has significantly expanded its role and activities.

Change factors

During the last decade, the Archives has given a great deal of attention to defining its purpose and role, particularly in relation to government agencies. While there have been many factors which have shaped its decisions and actions, significant among these is the rapid take-up of computer technologies for the conduct of government business. Dr Allan Hawke, Secretary for Defence, in his address at the e-permanence launch, captured the essence of the Archives' concerns when he said, 'If there have been shortcomings in the [recordkeeping] practices of the past, these are likely to be magnified by a combination of technological development and complacency in the face of things like e-commerce and on-line transactions'.

This scenario reflects a significant step back for recordkeeping. Once, the concern of archivists and records managers was to ensure that existing records remained accessible and useable. The new challenge, which is shared by both the Archives and federal government agencies, is to ensure that the 'documentary evidence' of communications and transactions is

captured, can be maintained, and will remain accessible for as long as it is



Steven Stuckey & Dr Allan Hawke at the launch of 'e-permanence'

needed. The application of technology will be to facilitate this aim, not, as has often happened in the past, to hinder it. The culture of benign neglect that pervaded the paper world, while never ideal, is no longer tenable.

Another factor, which gave credibility to the Archives' decision to pick up the baton dropped by the PSB, was recommendations made by the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) in its review of the *Archives Act 1983*. The ALRC Report No 85 recommended legislative reform 'to provide an integrated policy and regulatory framework for Commonwealth records management across the board'. In practical terms, the ALRC recommended that the Archives should be responsible for the issue of standards and guidelines for the creation, maintenance, evaluation, custody, storage, preservation and access to all Commonwealth records. While legislative reform is still being contemplated, the Archives sees no impediment to continuing down this path in the expectation that greater legislative support for these activities will come about in the future.

The publication of the Australian Standard for Records Management - AS 4390 was not only a significant change factor for the National Archives but also provided the framework for the recordkeeping policies and guidelines it has developed. The Standard has also afforded opportunities for collaboration across governments and industry in developing standards and specifying processes and systems. The National Archives' collaboration with the State Records Authority of NSW (SRA NSW) in developing a manual for the design and implementation of recordkeeping systems (DIRKS) based

on the Standard, is one such example. The use of KAAA Thesaurus, produced by SRA NSW, by Commonwealth agencies under general licence issued to the National Archives, is also a way of leveraging the use of expertise and resources across the government sector.

These factors and others of the political and economic kind, have shaped the Archives' new direction, and required a different relationship to be cultivated with government agencies. We now see our relationship more in terms of a partnership with agencies for the purpose of delivering to Government and the public more efficient and accountable government administration, through improved recordkeeping.

Making the transition

In 1998, the Government Services Branch of the Archives embarked on a three-phase plan. Firstly, staff needed to be trained in modern recordkeeping theory and techniques. A substantial amount of staff time was dedicated to undertaking a year-long course of study specifically designed for the Archives by Monash University. In December 1998, the Archives advised agencies that it would be limiting or discontinuing some services in preparation for its new approach. While this preceded the availability of the requisite tools for more than a year, it was necessary both to enable resources to be redirected to developmental work and also to forewarn agencies to expect a significant change in what they could expect from the Archives in the future.

In the second stage, covering all of 1999 and early 2000, the tools to assist agencies to implement best practice recordkeeping were developed, and strategies were devised to promote these to government and the industries that support government recordkeeping. At the time of writing, June 2000, the Archives is now in the third phase of the plan - ensuring that best practice recordkeeping is understood and implemented in federal government agencies.

Campaigning for change

The Agency Promotion and Training Framework had its genesis in 1999 in a small newly-formed section of the same name, established within the Government Services Branch of the National Archives. The objective of the framework and the core responsibility of the section were to ensure that best practice recordkeeping was widely accepted and implemented across the Commonwealth, and that agency staff acquired the knowledge and skills needed to achieve this.

The framework was premised on the Archives assuming the role of standard setter and advocate for best practice recordkeeping, and a consciousness that the Archives needed to promote this new role and the new policies and tools it had devised. The framework focuses on three main aspects. These are:

- changing attitudes towards recordkeeping;
- promoting knowledge of policy, guidelines and standards to a range of audiences; and
- assisting agencies to use the recordkeeping tools and services.

Changing attitudes and perceptions

Changing attitudes to recordkeeping in the federal government was identified as critical to improving recordkeeping. The challenge was not so much about creating a need for good recordkeeping; it is obvious that this need already exists. The challenge is to convince senior managers in particular, that many of the solutions they are now seeking for managing information, communications and business transactions in the electronic world can be found within the recordkeeping discipline.

Recordkeeping in government agencies is still often identified solely with the physical management of paper-based files. This is probably because this aspect is visible and can easily be quantified in terms of office and storage

space, and in staff resources. As a consequence, it is a function that is targeted for outsourcing under current government policy to market test corporate services. What is not widely understood is that recordkeeping is a critical component of all business systems and processes. Only now are a few enlightened agencies drawing the threads together under comprehensive information management planning frameworks. These agencies recognise that all information assets generated or collected by an organisation need to be managed in structured and integrated ways so they can be recalled, communicated, shared and exploited, many times over.

The Archives takes the view that while some recordkeeping activities can be outsourced, the success of doing this is based on agencies having comprehensive recordkeeping policies, practices and systems in place, and making sure these are rigorously maintained. Tasks such as the development of business classification schemes and records disposal authorities can be outsourced, as long as they are managed by senior staff who have a good appreciation of the National Archives' requirements, the processes involved and the outcomes that need to be delivered both for business purposes and for accountability. Safeguarding an agency's information assets is still an important management responsibility.

The Archives has identified that it needs to inform and foster willingness among senior managers to implement best practice recordkeeping, and many of the activities we have undertaken to date have been targeted at this audience. They include:

- the e-permanence campaign consisting of a major event supported by media and promotional materials to launch the new approach, and branding of all NAA recordkeeping products and services with the e-permanence logo and tag line;

- regular promotional activities when new products are released;
- seminars and promotional material to explain the benefits of adopting the new approach;
- requests to Secretaries and CEOs to nominate senior managers to be responsible for recordkeeping matters in their agency; and
- holding forums and meetings for group or individual discussion.

While the Archives expects that senior managers will come to regard recordkeeping as an important responsibility which is integral to good performance and accountability, we still recognise that other means can also be used to influence them. The Archives has sought and received support from the Auditor-General, whose office has identified poor recordkeeping as a problem in more than 60% of performance audits in the last five years. The existence of recordkeeping standards will assist auditors to understand and be able to specify these issues more precisely. Also, the Archives has tied aspects of its regulatory role in disposal and transfer to ensuring compliance with the new standards.

Another key audience targeted by the Archives is the industries that provide recordkeeping products and services to government agencies. With the trend to outsource many recordkeeping activities, this group has a significant amount of influence over government recordkeeping. The Archives has also included this group in the general promotional activities to date, and intends to extend current relationships and forge new ones through further consultation and partnership arrangements. High on the priority list is a scheme to accredit consultants and contractors who have demonstrated that they understand and can apply the Archives' standards.

The Archives also intends to refine its strategies by gathering information on attitudes and perceptions of recordkeeping across government from

recordkeeping practitioners and government employees who create records. A survey has been circulated to approximately eighty federal agencies and so far, has attracted a good response.

Understanding recordkeeping

Today, the federal public sector requires staff and managers to have a wide range of skills and knowledge. Knowing how to manage information resources is as essential as knowing how to manage human or financial resources. The Archives aims to increase the knowledge of its policies, standards and guidelines and how they support good performance and accountability by promoting awareness and making them easily understood.

The recordkeeping tools it has produced have been made available on the Archives' web site. The web pages that are dedicated to recordkeeping were designed so that information and tools are presented in an accessible and integrated way. The web site also provides various levels of information for different audiences. For managers, there is an overview and summary information about recordkeeping policies and responsibilities. Recordkeeping practitioners can access the Archives' policies, standards and guidelines via the web site and download them in html and pdf formats, if necessary.

The Archives sees the web site as a strategic tool in informing and educating government agencies about its standards. It is actively promoting links to its pages through other web sites such as Fedinfo, which provides comprehensive access to information resources needed by federal government employees.

The Archives is using many other forums to promote knowledge of its standards. Since April 2000, seminars have been held in every capital city in Australia, attracting more than 500 agency managers and records staff. These seminars are designed to provide a broad

overview of the policies, standards and guidelines, the benefits of implementing them and the way forward for agencies. These seminars have proved very successful. At least 25% of all government agencies have now nominated to undertake projects using the new standards to develop recordkeeping products and systems. Other forums for records practitioners have also attracted large audiences. There is clearly support from them for continued opportunities to share knowledge and experiences.

Other audiences are being targeted through professional journals and forums, using promotional techniques such as advertising and trade displays.

Building recordkeeping expertise

The training strategy was devised in recognition that the new approach to recordkeeping being promoted by the Archives would create a significant demand for the knowledge and skills to successfully implement the standards.

The Archives training strategy involved the development of a range of training modules to cover all aspects of current recordkeeping. Those either completed or under current development include:

- an overview of best practice recordkeeping;
- a technical core covering designing and implementing recordkeeping systems (DIRKS) (being developed jointly with SRA NSW) and the preparation of a business classification scheme and records disposal authority;
- materials for agencies' or consultants' use in providing general recordkeeping training for record creators;
- sentencing, transfer and preservation;
- an introduction to the new Administrative Functions Disposal Authority based on KAAA; and
- developing a functions thesaurus.

The Archives aims to ensure that the training is professional and targeted at those individuals who are in the best position to make use of it to improve

federal public sector recordkeeping. These training modules have been developed with advice and assistance from educational specialists and the Archives will be charging agencies moderate fees for participation. The fees will enable the Archives to continue to invest in training as well as cover the costs associated with its presentation. The training is also available to private consultants and ultimately, the Archives will be seeking to involve consultants in delivery of the training as well.

The Archives will continue to review the training needs of agencies and the best ways to meet these needs. This may include, for example, the development of interactive web-based training in some aspects of recordkeeping.

Conclusion

In the few months since the launch of the e-permanence campaign, the Archives believes it has made a significant start to improving recordkeeping in the federal government. The interest shown nationally and internationally, and the response we have received from government agencies and the recordkeeping industries have been very positive. We are confident that the Archives' partnership with government agencies in implementing our recordkeeping standards will contribute much to more efficient and accountable government administration.

The use of marketing tools and strategies to promote recordkeeping has also been an illuminating and worthwhile experience. The e-permanence logo and tag line "the new standard in recordkeeping", have successfully branded the 'new look' Archives and its future role and relationship with government agencies. So, if you, too, want to find out what it is all about, visit e-permanence on our web site at <www.naa.gov.au>.

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Managing Business Information - Content in Context

AUTHOR

Geoff Moore

Geoff Moore is the Group Marketing Manager of TOWER Software. He has recently returned from the United States where he established TOWER's US office. Geoff has been involved in the development of information systems since 1984.

ABSTRACT

Most existing Document Management systems overlook a critical information retrieval concept by relying on document content as the primary search mechanism. The discipline of Records Management and the requisite management of document context holds the key to precise and relevant retrieval.

Since the late 1990s, the widespread use of computer technology and the advent of electronic business have profoundly affected the way in which business information is created, disseminated and managed. The adoption of word processing, email and eCommerce technologies have resulted in the deployment of document technologies including imaging, workflow, electronic document management, integrated document management, and corporate portals. These technologies assist users to draft, disseminate, and find information more efficiently. While the uptake of these technologies has been rapid, the value of these systems has been significantly reduced by the over-reliance on content as the major (and in most cases the only) document management attribute.

This reliance on content as the primary information management attribute has

been promulgated in document management technologies from "free text retrieval" products through today's "corporate portal" technologies. The use of content for indexing and retrieval is attractive as it allows an organisation to manage information with minimal user intervention and with relatively simple database schemas. There are, however, inherent problems with the approach. These problems are particularly evident as the volume of information increases. While the content index will return individual items that meet specified selection criteria, the reliance on content precludes the system returning groups of related documents, unless all documents meet the specified content criteria. Many of the items returned may be irrelevant to the user. Further, and perhaps more significantly, many relevant items are not returned. The content focused approach ignores two equally important document attributes: context and structure.

According to the Canadian Description and Classification of Government Records Working Group 'context and structure is as important and, in some respects even more important than content. A record by itself is of little value. It is only when it is combined with other records to document (or provide evidence of) a given activity that it will assume value. As a result, records must be described in sufficient detail to ensure that the relationships between records . . . other related records and . . . related business processes and activities can be understood.'¹ Similarly, the Australia Records Management Standard AS 4390 states that in order to be meaningful, 'the contextual linkages of records must carry necessary information to correctly understand the transactions that created and used

them. It should be possible to identify a record within the context of broader business activities and functions. The links between records that document a sequence of activities should be maintained.'² Unfortunately, automatic classification based on content does not ensure that appropriate contextual relationships are captured and preserved.

In the vernacular, to be taken "out of context" indicates an omission of facts or a "twisting" of the truth. The use of information systems that do not provide users with information in context will result in information being used "out of context". Frequently, this information will be used to make or justify business decisions. Logically, it follows that decisions based on incomplete information may result in less than optimal business outcomes.

Knowledge management technologies are major users of information content. The knowledge management industry seeks to deliver the right information to the right person at the right time. Knowledge management systems attempt to achieve this goal by providing users with personalised information from various data sources. The algorithms used to retrieve this information for users are largely (and in some cases exclusively) based on document content. If the information is to be of real value to the user, then context and contextually related materials need to be integral components of the knowledge system. Capturing and recording context is not, however, a simple task. Often the context of information may only be apparent to the intended recipient. While recipients may have prior knowledge that enables them to process the information appropriately, capturing this contextual information can frequently

be extremely difficult. Many users will not perceive a need to transcribe context. At a minimum, in order to preserve the context of a document, it is necessary to preserve associated documents and to establish document relationships. In some instances it may be necessary to record additional contextual metadata on the document profile. The additional effort required to annotate contextual information will often be neglected.

The development of information management systems that preserve the contextual relationships between the otherwise disparate information objects will result in a number of benefits for information retrieval. Most importantly, the use of context will enhance the precision of searches and the relevance of the search results. If context can be combined with content during the initial search, then the result set will contain fewer irrelevant entries in the search results. This will enable the user to more quickly identify relevant information. Significantly, once a single, relevant document is found, the user can (by navigating contextual relationships) immediately find all of the related documents with minimal effort. This capability enables the user to quickly filter the information presented to view only items that are relevant. In terms of information retrieval effectiveness, the use of context will improve both the precision and relevance of the search result.

The importance of context in information management is by no means a new phenomenon. The use of functional or subject based file-folders for grouping related correspondence items is fundamentally a means of contextually relating correspondence. Similar grouping mechanisms can be applied to electronic documents to ensure that contextually related items are easily retrieved as a single collection.

The nature of information (and of information in documents specifically)

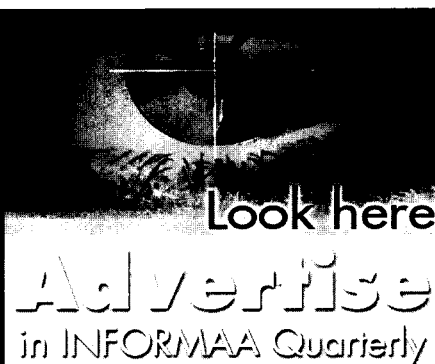
is that a single item will often be relevant in multiple contexts; that is, people other than the original creator will find value in the information. Further, while the information is usually provided in a particular context, over time the information may become useful in other contexts. The capacity for the information system to capture the initial context and support additional context relationships as they evolve will greatly facilitate information management and retrieval of information.

The need to manage information in context appears to have been overlooked by many of today's document technology solutions. The over-reliance on content as a primary management and information retrieval technique will result in information repositories from which precise and reliable information cannot be extracted. The discipline of records management provides a number of fundamental information management principles that can be effectively applied to the management of digital information.

Endnotes

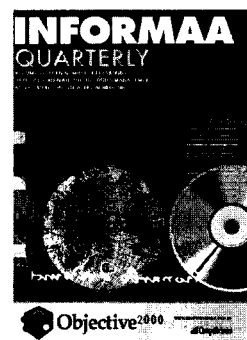
¹ Canadian Description and Classification of Government Records Working Group 2000, *Approach to the Description and Classification of Government Records*, available at: <http://www.informgi.gc.ca/new_docs>.

² Standards Association of Australia 1996, *Australian Standard: Records Management*, AS 4390.3, p. 6.



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eBusiness Transactions: Providing Accountability through Effective Recordkeeping, RMAA ACT Branch Seminar, March 2000

REVIEWER

Mike Steemson

Principal, The Caldeson Consultancy,
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Face it: e-Biz is here to stay and it's making records!

They said it all. Electronic transactions are the stuff of the future. The Web is a multi-billion dollar revenue source to business. The Australian Government aims to be doing almost all its business electronically by the end of next year. By then, Australian eBusiness will amount to over \$1 billion a year. eCommerce offers a perfect opportunity for archivists and records managers to address serious record issues.

And they warned harshly. Expansion of e-information seriously challenges the modern recordkeeper. There is no certainty about who will be capturing the records. The recordkeeping profession is not properly reading the opportunities eCommerce offers.

The speakers: specialists from the top of Australasian industrial, commercial, academic, legal and public service sectors. The event: the third annual seminar of the Records Management Association of Australia's ACT Branch. The subject: *eBusiness Transactions: Providing Accountability through Effective Recordkeeping*.

Bob McMullan MP, the Shadow Minister for Industry and Technology, formally opened the Seminar, expressing his personal concern at the lack of attention being given to the accountability issues inherent in the adoption and conduct of eCommerce.

It was the subject of the moment, delegates were told. Within the month, all over the world, the information industry was talking about it. The biggest IT exhibition in the world, CeBIT 2000 in Hanover, Germany, had just heard papers like 'E-mail support: a logical consequence for successful eCommerce'. A London pharmaceutical information forum, an Amsterdam business information conference, a Japanese seminar, an information management workshop in Wellington, and political conflict in Washington, all centred around eBusiness challenges.

The challenge of eBusiness

Many of the ACT speakers picked up the challenge theme. **Steve Stuckey**, the Assistant Director-General for Government Services at the National Archives of Australia, gave the strongest possible warnings, saying: 'The role of records managers and archivists is more than to act as noble soothsayers of the virtues of accountability. It is important continually to highlight the prominence of our recordkeeping requirements for eCommerce and it is crucial that those noises are in the right forums with a message that will be heard'.

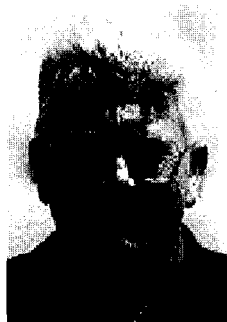
Styling himself an 'imperialist, a strong proponent of a monolithic recordkeeping industry', the Assistant D-G cautioned: 'Records managers and archivists need to be realistic about their status as a small and marginalised professional group and the constraints this places on advocating a message. We need to be visionary and creative about how we get the message not only heard, but also delivered with the right focus. We need to have cost-effective solutions that marry the outcomes we seek with the outcomes government agencies seek in the delivery of electronic services'.

He gave the clue to achieving this, saying: 'More broadly, the rise of electronic transactions offers the perfect opportunity for archivists and records managers to reassess our approaches in promoting our concerns and expertise to strategic legislative and policy levels of government. We need to consider realistic responses that still retain the main focus of our message to address serious records issues, but at least have some hope of success.

'We can do this by marketing our expertise and promoting the acceptance and uptake of recordkeeping systems at the senior levels of government, but with the understanding that standards and practices we advocate are about implementation issues.'

Sydney records management consultant **Barbara Reed**, and a leading Monash University School of Information Management Studies lecturer, had strong words for the profession, too. She told delegates that as electronic service delivery became increasingly all-pervasive, the old, passive notion of information was changing.

The process began in the 1980s and 90s, she said, when, despite vilification and amazement from their peers, Australian recordkeepers 'undertook a deeply introspective look at what records were as the digital revolution approached us. This fundamental re-evaluation of the constitution and role of records has paid dividends over the last five years, as we have been able to define with clarity and certainty what records are and how they need to be protected. Australians have been prominent in the re-definition of records functionality and requirements. Our coherent theoretical basis has united many collaborative community



Mike Steemson

projects resulting in strongly adopted standards on records management which are now being translated into the international standards environment.'

She had a warning, too. Barbara counselled: 'The world of managing electronic transactions as evidence of action is merely visible to us through a gap, which is currently open only a little way, but which is widening daily. We had better be ready for it. To be ready for it, we need to have some idea of where we might be going, even if the road maps need to be radically overhauled on a continuing basis. The ubiquity of electronic business is coming very fast. We'd better get used to it.'

Delegates were left in no doubt as to the urgency of the subject. Australian public and private sectors are both plunging into eCommerce with world-leading enthusiasm and expertise.

Government and eBusiness

The Federal Government wants to improve the way it does business and is committed to giving strong leadership through the adoption of new technologies, **Gary Allan**, General Manager of the Business Improvement Group in the Office of Government On-line (OGO), told the seminar. He detailed government plans for e-marketplace trials, electronic payments, single point supplier registration and tender discoverability, marketing, communications, and taxation. Gary amplified by stating that 'Governments around Australia have online procurement on the agenda. Our strategy will be

consistent with the *Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Commerce in Government Procurement*, which was agreed last year by the Australian Procurement and Construction Ministerial Council, a body with representatives from all our government jurisdictions.'

He said that the Australian Government is committed to online procurement and wishes to become a leading-edge user, commenting: 'We will not re-invent wheels, and will capitalise on existing initiatives under way in business, in other governments and within the Federal Government. However, we will innovate where necessary, for instance by establishing new electronic trading communities. Implementation has begun.'

The eCommerce Adviser to the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade), **Helen Monro**, told delegates that Australia ranks third in the world, after the U.S. and Finland, in per capita use of the Internet, 'and is recognised as being at the leading edge of eCommerce'. She came up with some pretty remarkable statistics about growth in Australian eBusiness.

- Australian eCommerce predicted to more than double from \$61 million in 1997 to \$1.3 billion in 2001.
- Business web sites in Australia doubled between 1996 and 1998.
- Annual revenues have doubled or better in recent years for several Australian Internet systems and knowledge suppliers.
- 1.7 million Australian households (25% of total) online by November 1999, an annual increase of 37%.
- Around six million Australian adults (44%) accessed the Internet in the year to November 1999, a 13% rise.

Helen said the race for eBusiness raised big questions for information managers. She classified these as: 'How do we establish trust in online business transactions? Which

national or international rules apply to transnational trade? Where is the point of sale? What legal coverage applies? Which taxation regimes and intellectual property rules? Where does the business record need to be maintained, by whom and according to which criteria? How to provide the necessary level of offline client support in Australia and overseas, services like e-payment records, policies for returns and servicing, complaints, compliance with regulations on labelling, and content.'

The legal pressures

Legal implications for recordkeepers were highlighted in a paper prepared by **Anthony Willis**, a Partner in the national law firm, Dunhill Madden Butler, but delivered by an associate, **Brendan Ding**, as Anthony was incapacitated at the time. He detailed the measured processes of legislation that, in Australia, were slowly bringing home to both the public and private sectors their responsibilities for accountability, access and security, privacy and openness, and evidential integrity of information.

He said: 'The law, and the legislature which controls it, are now coming to terms with the opportunities and risks associated with the information age. Despite the long lead time, the government seems finally to be getting close to dealing with the major issues of the electronic age.' He picked up the changes faced by recordkeepers, saying that 'the ability of organisations to capture, collect, sort, store, retrieve and reuse ever increasing amounts of information and data is one of the most important changes which is occurring in the modern world. The emergence of the Internet and the increasing amount of information that is available online is multiplying exponentially the challenges for modern recordkeeping and information managers.'

The necessary technology

Two technologists, **Nigel Carruthers-Taylor**, Senior Business Analyst, and **Roger Hogg**, Senior Solutions Architect, both from Solutions6 - Implementation Services, provided a highly intellectual and concurrently, very entertaining presentation. Starting with an explanation of the technical requirements to establish an effective system, they then set out some of the enabling technologies which offered a 'great opportunity if records managers would grasp the concepts', including:

- Electronic data interchange (EDI): It pre-dates the modern Internet but used extensively for business transactions like banks transferring information between each other;
- TCP/IP: The protocol of the Internet, intranets and extranets;

- XML and XFDL: The new Internet coding 'extensible mark-up language' and 'extensible forms definition language';
- PKI: Public Key Infrastructure, cryptographic procedures that could be used across a network;
- SSL and SET: Data security programs like Secure Socket Layers, and Secure Electronic Transactions, which were emerging as the industry standard.

And another technologist turned salesman, TOWER Software's new Marketing Manager **Geoff Moore**, gave good advice. He told delegates: 'The development of eCommerce systems requires that adequate records management functions are included in the delivered system. This can be achieved by adding Records Management functionality to eCommerce

applications with custom-built controls or by integrating the eCommerce with existing records systems.'

And he had his own warning for recordkeepers. 'If records staff are not involved in the development and implementation of eBusiness applications, including email, then there is the potential that the systems will be implemented without records management discipline. In some places, they already have been. Records staff need to make management aware of the records management requirements of eCommerce. The records medium is changing, but the need to manage records remains.'

Which, pretty much in a nutshell, is what the Seminar was all about.

(Left to right) Brand Hoff, Managing Director, TOWER Software, Catherine Zaal, Marguerite Ranicar, Elaine Eccleston (Lecturer in Information & Records Management, UC), and Tony Eccleston (Seminar Chairman, and Lecturer in Information & Records Management, UC).



At the 1999 ACT Branch Seminar, Mr Brand Hoff, Managing Director of TOWER Software, announced the sponsorship of awards and scholarships for students attending the University of South Australia and the University of Canberra. At this year's ACT Branch Seminar, Mr Hoff presented the first of these awards to University of Canberra

students. Ms Marguerite Ranicar received an award for outstanding achievements in her studies in electronic recordkeeping, and Ms Catherine Zaal's outstanding study achievements were recognised and she was presented with an incentive award to continue her studies and research in electronic recordkeeping.

(Left to right) Brand Hoff, Managing Director, TOWER Software, Catherine Zaal, Marguerite Ranicar, Elaine Eccleston (Lecturer in Information & Records Management, UC), and Tony Eccleston (Seminar Chairman, and Lecturer in Information & Records Management, UC).

Managing Electronic Records, by William Saffady, ARMA International, Prairie Village, 2nd edn, 1998

REVIEWER

Allan Connelly-Hansen

Recordkeeping System Project,
Information Management
National Archives of Australia, Canberra

Dr William Saffady is a professor, consultant and author in the field of information management. This second edition of *Managing Electronic Records* (MER2) is intended for professionals responsible for the creation, maintenance, management, control, and use of electronic records. Saffady claims that, on completion of the book, the reader should understand:

- physical and application characteristics of electronic records;
- records management issues and problems associated with electronic records;
- factors that influence the stability and durability of electronic records;
- principles and procedures for inventorying and scheduling electronic records;
- methods of protecting vital electronic records against damage and destruction; and
- guidelines for the daily management of electronic records as working information resources.

This is an impressive list of claims, but it should be noted that the intended audience of Saffady's work is American. As this review is intended for an Australian publication, it is at times critical of the American-centric vein of the book, and the narrow appreciation of traditional life cycle model limitations in addressing the issues surrounding the effective management of electronic records.

The book is arranged into seven chapters, each covering a different aspect of electronic records management. In the first chapter Saffady defines electronic records, discusses their growth and importance in information systems, their relationship to conventional records, and special issues and concerns associated with their management. The issues include inadequate controls over creation and maintenance of electronic records, technological dependence and obsolescence, storage media instability, and remote access security complications.

The second chapter offers a descriptive survey of the physical and application characteristics of electronic storage media employed by computer, audio and video systems. The third chapter presents file format concepts that records managers must understand to deal effectively with electronic records, including advice on file compression and video recording standards. These two chapters are quite technical and detailed. In typical style, however, Saffady's prose makes for easy reading even where the subject is more technical. The text is also supported with useful charts, illustrations, checklists, and tables. For example, chapter three includes a table titled 'Magnetic Media and Formats' that provides a breakdown of media type against the recording material, storage capacity and information management application of each.

The fourth chapter presents a checklist with the key descriptive elements to include in a survey of existing electronic records. The associated text includes descriptions of each element's purpose and some examples. The purpose of a records inventory is also discussed with a four-step methodology for planning and conducting one provided. Practical considerations for records managers in

conducting these steps are also offered, such as setting a manageable scope for the inventory and considering the relative resource intensiveness of different survey techniques.

There seems to be an underlying assumption, however, that records managers (in the U.S. sense) are only ever tasked with entering a dusty repository or the like, conducting an inventory of electronic records in various antiquated formats, appraising the records against operational and regulatory retention criteria (research criteria is alleged to be the concern of archivists only), and deriving an appropriate disposal status and storage option for those identified as worthy. Indeed, the seven chapters of the book reflect a progression through these very steps.

The importance of senior management support and liaison with program unit officers to the successful survey and management of electronic records is also highlighted in chapter four. Some helpful hints to achieve that are provided, and have applications regardless of environment or jurisdiction. This is not, unfortunately, the case for all of Saffady's advice. Not surprisingly, given the intended U.S. audience, Saffady's description of the survey process reveals the different approaches to managing records under the life cycle and continuum models.

A clear example of this paradigm gulf in MER2 is the perpetuating traditional focus on records in terms of physical format. According to the continuum paradigm and the *Australian Standard for Records Management* (AS 4390), records stem from, and serve as evidence of, the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs they document.¹ And the key components of a record (structure, content, and context) do not

rest in the medium itself.² The bottom line is that the focus for arrangement of records throughout this work is formats, a position Australia has been trying to remove itself from, instead considering records regardless of format as evidence of the activities and functions they document. This illustrates a marked chasm between records management approaches in accordance with AS 4390 and the U.S.-based Saffady approach.

The advice on description, analysis, arrangement and classification is also structure-based (expressed in terms of 'program units'), not functions-based. The tendency for modern organisations to undergo frequent restructuring can quickly render a structure-bound classification system obsolete and result in significant maintenance implications. The incidence of change to an organisation's functional responsibility or general area of business, however, is significantly less common, and so a functions-based classification system should prove more stable over time.

In chapter 5, Saffady defines and describes retention and disposal schedules, explores general retention concepts and provides some pointers on the identification of recordkeeping requirements stemming from regulatory and other authoritative sources. Although Saffady does consider records beyond their administrative business and legal purposes, including reference to 'potential research use', unfortunately, he expresses that research-oriented retention criteria are secondary value and principally, the concern of archivists and librarians rather than records managers.

This attitude dismisses the convergence of responsibilities in the management of electronic records being witnessed elsewhere in the world, and in case studies implementing the continuum approach. Demarcation of roles promotes operational considerations for creation and preservation over other retention criteria. Further, electronic records may not survive or maintain

their authenticity until scheduled for appraisal under the life cycle approach, which is ironic given Saffady labours on the point of technological obsolescence and storage media instability throughout the text. The nexus between the traditional records management (administrative) and archival (historical) roles is promoted in AS 4390, viewing each as 'recordkeepers' to circumvent this issue and others. Recordkeepers are jointly responsible for appraising records for archival value at the time of their creation, or even beforehand in the design of recordkeeping systems, and to maintain their evidential characteristics throughout their existence.

Saffady makes some solid points in outlining the key purpose and importance of legally mandated recordkeeping requirements, some with worldwide relevance. For example, the issue of legislation containing clauses written in a fashion that implies or assumes that the required information will be contained in paper documents. The U.S. *Uniform Preservation of Business Records Act* and its synonymous use of the terms 'records' and 'business papers' is cited as an example. The remainder of this section is America-centric, highlighting U.S. legislation with significant recordkeeping requirements and examining revisions to U.S. laws and regulations to accept electronic records for retention. Disregarding the strong American bias, similar requirements and revisions are likely to exist in legislation in other jurisdictions. Australia has witnessed considerable legislative review activity surrounding recordkeeping and evidence over recent years.

Saffady then ventures into the realm of admissibility of electronic records as evidence, including suggested records management procedures to facilitate compliance with the necessary authentication requirements. He outlines the key to acceptance of electronic records as evidence in a court of law - it is not the 'record' itself that is

examined for its authenticity and reliability, but the 'systems' that created and maintained the record, the associated compliance and procedural documentation for those systems, and any required metadata. Note that 'metadata' does not appear as a term *per se* anywhere in the book! Other key terms (in my opinion) missing from this work's index include: classification, indexing, titling, thesaurus, training, and the list goes on.

The advice throughout MER2 assumes that the responsibility for electronic recordkeeping is centralised, without a suggestion of the reality of distributed recordkeeping - a reality brought about by electronic mail, if nothing else. But then, there's no mention of transactions conducted in the 'e-Conomy' via 'e-Commerce' that might result in records either. And what about web sites? There is growing support for the view that web sites potentially constitute, or are comprised of elements that constitute, record status. Regardless of Saffady's mention of electronic records growth in the opening chapter, he fails to offer any advice on records stemming from new technological trends. These trends do not necessarily result in new record formats *per se*, but rather, result in new ways of doing business which still require records that serve as evidence of that business activity.

With distributed recordkeeping, it is imperative that staff are aware of their recordkeeping obligations and responsibilities, and the purpose and benefits underlying why records are created and kept. This requires training in how to meet recordkeeping obligations. In turn, change management is an integral aspect of implementing any regime for the management of electronic records. Recordkeeping practices are often conducted on a legacy basis, "because we've always done it that way!" These same practices can also stem from redundant policies or guidelines and are most likely far removed from best

practice recordkeeping as set out in AS4390, for example. Saffady offers no advice targeted at training and change management, I suspect because of the lack of recognition for the distributed recordkeeping reality.

The fifth chapter finishes with yet another explanation of the issues surrounding the high dependency of electronic records on unstable storage media, and their interdependence on software and hardware prone to rapid technological obsolescence. Some limited advice is provided on how these issues are addressed through the migration process, involving conversion of records across changes in software, hardware and storage media technologies, but anybody actually attempting such a process would need to supplement the advice provided here. For example, there is advice available at the National Archives of Australia's web site <<http://www.naa.gov.au>> under the Recordkeeping tab. It reflects a modern methodology for creating and managing records in the new electronic environment.

In chapter 6, Saffady describes a vital records management program and the steps involved in establishing one. He examines how to identify vital records, the purpose of risk analysis, risk assessment techniques, risk control measures to minimise loss probability, and how to prepare a disaster recovery strategy. A key point made is that vital records protection programs must include compliance auditing. The advice in this chapter is essentially along the lines of advice you would find in AS4390, Part 6 - Storage.

Saffady returns to what shines as his area of expertise in chapter 7, namely the technical aspects of managing different file and media formats. The advice covers directory structure management, identifying information for removable media, media filing equipment, the purpose of storage copies, and media handling. Again, this chapter is fairly

technical. For example, the suggestion that 'systematic file grouping and labeling practices are prerequisites for effective management of electronic records' is not referring to the use of business classification schemes or controlled vocabularies for file and document titling, as it may seem. Rather it refers to 'file' in the IT sense, going on to describe how unrelated files should not be intermixed within media, directories, or subdirectories.

MER2 completely ignores many other key issues that exist in both the theoretical and practical environments with respect to managing electronic records. These include, but are not limited to, the impact of outsourcing, integration issues between recordkeeping systems and other specialist applications that generate records, and the importance of metadata standards.

It is a shame so much that is relevant to current issues in electronic records management is simply missing from this work. Fortunately, Saffady includes an appendix with additional readings which supplements the lack of 'how to' advice in the main body of the text. The recommended publications include some insight into the need for convergence of professions, even more detailed advice on file and media formats and storage standards and considerations, a range of material relating to admissibility of electronic records as evidence, retention concepts, and the compilation of record inventories. Also included in the additional readings section are a number of references that examine broader policy issues associated with the transition from paper-based to electronic recordkeeping systems, and procedural recommendations that address those issues.

In summary, MER2 is a good introductory read for general electronic records management issues, but lacking in advice on the actual 'how to'. The exception rests in storage-related issues, to which the considerations of the book are strongly skewed. Otherwise, whilst

MER2 adds **some** practical 'how to' advice and 'meat-on-the-bones' to the AS 4390 model for records management, it could hardly be said to flex the muscles of Mr Universe.

Endnotes

- ¹ For a continuum-based definition of a record, see Standards Association of Australia 1996, *Australian Standard: Records Management*, AS4390.1, s. 4.21, p. 7.
- ² For an elaboration of this statement, see Greg O'Shea 1994, 'The medium is not the message: Appraisal of electronic records by Australian Archives', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 68-93.

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Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd

Quality x Teamwork = Award² (Reward)

Since 1986 Information Enterprises, and now its management company *Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd (IEA)*, has been providing quality services within Western Australia in the provision of high quality consulting, training and employment services specialising in records and library management.

There comes a time in everyone's professional life when they find themselves part of that amorphous group known as The Team. You are given a charter to work as part of The Team, to take responsibility for the success of The Team, and to give and receive feedback to and from The Team. There are even books written by management gurus on The Team and Team Dynamics.

Now, we all know that working as part of The Team can either be a wonderful or woeful experience. I am sure that many of you have stories to tell of your own experiences in working in a team environment.

Here is my story . . . which actually begins with an end.

On Saturday 10 June 2000, *Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd* won the Commonwealth Bank "Business with less than 10 employees' category" in the Hartley Poynton Fremantle Business Awards 2000. The awards were presented at a gala dinner arranged by the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce and held at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle. In her acceptance speech, Shirley R Cowcher accepted the award 'on behalf of the Information Enterprises Australia Team . . . without the support of each one of them I and Information Enterprises Australia would not have achieved this recognition.'

The Hartley Poynton Fremantle Business Award 2000 acknowledges IEA's business success and the growth the company has undergone since its early beginnings in 1986. However, the award symbolises much more than this, as it is also in recognition of the strength of a team in action. Not just any team, but a team, which achieved not only the honour of winning the small business award, but gained accreditation to ISO 9002 in six months!

The 30th of July 1999 will always remain in the corporate memory of IEA as the day the employment services was awarded accreditation to ISO 9002 by Bureau Veritas Quality International with zero non-compliance! When the euphoria finally died down, we realised that our quality program had indeed formalised many of our procedures. It had made us look critically at the when, why, what and the how. In reality, it

formalised and strengthened many of the procedures we had in place already. Quality became part of the overall management structure that was in place without any of us even realising it!

Our Quality Coordinator, Kay Hack's 'subtle brain washing' on the benefits of quality certainly worked!

So what makes us different to any other team? Well, our competitive edge lies in the combined knowledge of the IEA team. Our team members are experts within their own fields and between us, we have library and information science, computing, quality, human resource, business and records management qualifications. Members of our corporate team have worked as administrators, managers, librarians, library technicians and records managers in roles ranging from hands-on to management level. We know our industry; its language and how to interpret the needs of our clients into cost effective and efficient solutions.

Our corporate team has a very close working relationship and we are extremely supportive of each other in both our personal and working lives. We knew intuitively that we had that "special something", but it was not until we received the results from our Myers Briggs analysis that we could put a name to the winning group dynamics we had recognised from the moment each member joined the core group.

We have found that the right people come to us when we need them. It is a holistic approach to business. We call it Karma.

Which brings us to the present, the year 2000 in which *Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd* is still growing and expanding to include the diversification of our services and the pursuit of new challenges. The next one our team is keen to take on is the Small Business Development Corporation's Small Business Awards, which IEA can now enter as the result of our win in the Hartley Poynton Fremantle Business Awards 2000.

Our recent award and quality accreditation can be viewed as

Quality and Teamwork = Award² (Reward).

Both these achievements can be seen as the 'sum' of IEA's success, and our recognition within the business community. However, the 'formula' which ensured the successful equation was the combined efforts of the Team itself. Membership of that Team is a reward.

The *Australian Record Retention Manual* Finds a New Home

On 17 May 2000, Mike Leigh, one of the founding fathers of the RMAA and the developer and supplier of the *Australian Record Retention Manual*, announced his retirement at a breakfast meeting in Perth, Western Australia.

After presenting a paper on the past and future of records management to an audience of more than 90 people, Mike concluded by announcing his retirement and that the *Australian Record Retention Manual* was now owned by Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd.

Mike stated that he '... is confident in the future of the *Manual* under the control of Shirley [Cowcher] and the team at Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd'. The breakfast presentation arranged by Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd, had been advertised as an opportunity for the records management community in Perth to benefit from Mike's experience. There was only a handful of people present who were aware of the announcement of Mike's retirement and the subsequent transfer of ownership.

Shirley Cowcher and her team at Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd are very excited about their new acquisition and have faithfully promised Mike that the *Manual* shall be looked after with tender care.

Although early days, there are plenty of ideas floating around the office for the future production of the *Manual*. Specialised industry editions, an HTML version, and other exciting innovations are all on the drawing board! However, for the moment, the product will remain in its current format and the new edition will appear shortly.

We have had a wonderful response to our new acquisition and as a result of some marketing, have even sold copies internationally! In the meantime, as we are celebrating the acquisition and promoting the product Australia-wide, we are making the 1999 version of the *Manual* available at a significantly reduced cost. Please contact RACHEL MOYLAN on (08) 9335 2533 if you would like to know more about the *Australian Record Retention Manual*.

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Perpetua introduces eVigilCorporate, an off-site data storage solution that makes disaster recovery very easy.

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eVigilCorporate is a new product from Perpetua, a leading Business Continuity firm with a ten-year track record in providing an unmatched range of services, from on-line backup for small enterprises, through to fully dedicated, state of the art, off-site, 200-position Recovery Suites and consulting services.

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Ph 02 9420 6999
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TOWER Software Pty Limited

TOWER Software New Product Announcement

TRIM PA™ - Invisible record keeping

- Automatic capture of corporate information
- Automatic application of proper recordkeeping processes
- Compliance with legal recordkeeping requirements
- No interface!

Perhaps the greatest impediments to electronic recordkeeping implementation are the change management issues. TRIM PA™ is an 'invisible', end user record capture and classification utility developed specifically to overcome this obstacle.

Instead of requiring the user to learn another product, TRIM PA™ utilises existing directory and email folder structures to automatically capture corporate information (records). By simply doing their job, using the tools already existing on their desktop, staff can ensure that the recordkeeping responsibilities and requirements of the organisation are met. No learning curves, no extra training.

TRIM PA™ is an extension to the TRIM Captura electronic recordkeeping system developed by TOWER Software. The extensive records management and archival functions and capabilities of TRIM are automatically applied to the records captured by TRIM PA™

TOWER Software New Web-based Service

TOWER Software and TRIM Captura are proud to announce innovative and flexible training delivery via the Web.

TOWER Software's new online training courses have been grouped into a package of two - the TRIM Inquiry course, and the TRIM TopDrawer course. These are introductory level TRIM courses aimed at the occasional TRIM desktop user.

How the Web-based Training Works

Trainees are given a login and password that allows them access to the courses through a standard Web Browser.

Each individual can work their way through the courses in their own time at their convenience. Each introductory course is designed to fit into a workday morning or

afternoon. Trainees can interact with an online tutor via e-mail. Trainees are expected to complete dynamic Web-based quizzes and a final assignment, all submitted online. When the course is complete, a certificate of attainment is sent to the student by e-mail.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the availability and cost of Web-based training, please contact our training coordinator via e-mail at training@towersoft.com.au.

If you are a customer and have access to our customer Web site, you can order courses online (password required).

RMAA Notes

Notice of RMAA Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Records Management Association of Australia will be held on:

Tuesday 5th December 2000.

**It is to commence at 11.45am and will be held at the
Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre Darling Harbour.**

To all Members

In accordance with the Articles of Association, notice is hereby given of the date and time of the Annual General Meeting of the Association. **The closing date for acceptance of any motion of business not relating to the ordinary annual business of the Association will be 5.00pm on 17th November 2000.**

Business Proceedings of the Annual General Meeting

1. To receive and consider the duly audited statement of the accounts;
2. To receive a report from the chairperson of the activities of the Company in the proceeding year;
3. To receive the report of the auditor;
4. To appoint the auditor for the ensuring year;
5. To transact such other business as shall have been included in the notice convening the meeting; and
6. To elect the Board for the ensuring year.

**Michael Hangan MRMA
Executive Secretary**

RMAA/ASA Statement of Joint Purpose and Cooperation

The Board of Directors of the Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA) and the Council of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) hereby acknowledge the commonality of purpose between our two organisations. This commonality of purpose reflects the fact that our two organisations are recognised as the peak professional bodies in the records sector in Australia. As such, we commit our organisations to maximising cooperation, communication and collaboration on issues of joint concern. In making this commitment we recognise that there is a greater likelihood of success in tackling such issues if we pool our energies and resources and share our ideas.

Specifically, we commit ourselves to cooperation and collaboration in the following areas:

- Explore options for reciprocal membership fee discounts and encouraging dual memberships;
- Maximise reciprocal arrangements for annual conferences, including:
 - reciprocal members' rate reductions in registration fees
 - reciprocal provision of trade exhibit booths and brochure mailouts
 - free registration for the Presidents of the respective organisations
 - free advertising of conferences in our respective publications;
- Maximise cooperation in political lobbying and public policy issues, especially in relation to the issuing of joint statements and media releases;
- Continue and wherever possible increase cooperation in the area of standards development and promulgation;
- Encourage information sharing and communication between counterpart portfolio officers on our respective committees of national governance;
- Maximise cooperation in the area of continuing professional development including investigating the possibility of establishing a joint professional development committee with a view to jointly mounting a formal professional development scheme for members of both organisations;
- Encourage branches of both organisations to increase the number of joint workshops and seminars, with the fees for such joint events being set at levels that would be accommodating to the members of both organisations;
- Establish a joint committee to plan and organise a formal survey of employers' attitudes to records professionals;
- Harmonise the course accreditation policies and procedures of the two organisations so that future rounds of course accreditations can be carried out by single joint RMAA/ASA panels;
- Establish a joint committee to plan a campaign aimed at promoting the benefits and importance of recordkeeping, both short and long term, to the business community in Australia;
- Commit to working together to forge strategic alliances with other associations and organisations that have an interest in records, information management and documentary heritage matters;
- Commit to publicising reports about activities of our respective organisations in the publications of the other organisation;
- Commit to conducting a formal review of progress on this Statement no later than 30 June 2002.

Chris Fripp
President
Records Management Association of Australia

Adrian Cunningham
President
Australian Society of Archivists Inc.

19 May 2000

The 2000 J Eddis Linton RMAA Awards for Excellence in Records Management

Background

The inaugural RMAA Awards for Excellence in Records Management were presented at the 1999 Convention in Darwin. These awards focus on individual and group excellence and achievement in the profession. The 2000 awards will be presented at the Sydney Convention in December.

It is with great pleasure that the RMAA announces that, from 2000, these prestigious national awards will be known as the J Eddis Linton Awards for Excellence in Records Management (the 'LINTONS'). J Eddis Linton is thought by many in the profession to be the 'father of records management' in Australia. At the Darwin Convention, Eddis was presented with a special award honouring his Lifetime Contribution to the Records Management Profession. For over 50 years, Eddis has been a major player in the field of records management. Early in his career, he formulated ideas about the need to manage business records in an organised and systematic manner. He developed and implemented these ideas incorporating keyword filing systems, inactive records storage and micrographic programs long before they became mainstream practice. Eddis has published and consulted widely in the field and has been heavily involved in education and mentoring programs. Eddis was a founding member of the RMAA and has a deep and abiding commitment to spreading the gospel of best practice records management. Who better to honour in the records management profession?

Award categories

1. Outstanding individual contribution to the records management profession
2. Outstanding group contribution to the records management profession
3. Student of the year award

Only financial members of the RMAA may nominate or be nominated for an award.

1. Outstanding Individual Contribution to the Records Management Profession

Criteria and process

- This award is open to individual members holding professional status who have achieved excellence in records and information management and have made a significant contribution to the profession.
- The award is not self-nominating. Individual professional members are nominated by their peers/colleagues.
- The achievement or contribution may be in his or her own workplace or to the profession as a whole.
- The nominator, who should also be a member of the RMAA, is required to provide details of the outstanding achievement of the nominee in no less than 1000 words.
- Supporting documentary evidence should accompany application.

The outstanding contribution should demonstrate one or more of the following

- An example of best practice or innovation in the records management field that extends the boundaries of common practice.
- Evidence of an increased commitment to records and information management issues leading to increased motivation, involvement and improved business performance. Key internal personnel will need to verify that initiatives made a significant strategic and practical contribution to the organisation.

- A significant innovation or development in the field that increases the awareness of the profession to those outside the RMAA.
- A level of achievement that results in an increase of RMAA members or displays an outstanding degree of dedication and commitment to the profession.

Examples of nominations

- An individual who has promoted and supported the interests and/or development of a special interest group (SIG) within the records management profession.
- A person who has promoted awareness of records and information management within their own organisation, or nationally or internationally.
- A person who has been a leader in the field in some area of records and information best practice, etc. This could be a government employee who has instigated a major initiative affecting the profession federally or within his or her own state. As an example, a representative from the VERS project in Victoria may be considered the main driver of this project and worthy of nomination.

2. Outstanding Group Contribution to Records Management Profession

Criteria and process

- This award is open to groups, committees (not RMAA), vendors, business units or consultants (minimum size of group to be 2) who have achieved excellence in records and information management and made an outstanding contribution to the profession.

- The award is self-nominating.
- Project leaders must be financial members of the RMAA (but not necessarily all participants).
- Nomination form to be completed by the respective group, signed by a representative who will accept the award if nomination is successful.
- The nominator is required to provide details of the outstanding achievement in no less than 1000 words.
- Supporting documentary evidence should accompany application.

The outstanding contribution should demonstrate one or more of the following

- An example of innovation or best practice within the records management field that extends the boundaries of common practice.
- Evidence of an increased commitment to records and information management issues leading to increased motivation, involvement and improved business performance. Key internal personnel will need to verify that initiatives made a significant strategic and practical contribution to the organisation.
- A significant innovation or development in the field that increases the awareness of the profession to those outside the RMAA.

- A level of achievement that results in an increase of RMAA members or displays an outstanding degree of dedication and commitment to the profession.

Examples of nominations

- A vendor/company or agency who has been particularly supportive throughout the year, encouraging and promoting awareness in records management, education etc. This award will not be judged on financial contributions.
- A committee (non-RMAA) that is contributing to the profession in a significant manner.
- An agency or group who has been particularly successful in implementing a recordkeeping innovation in an individual agency or across a range of agencies or sector of government.

3. Student of the Year Award for Excellence in Tertiary Studies

Criteria and process

- Nominee to have achieved highly as a student in a dedicated records and information management course in the previous 12 months (may be at undergraduate or graduate level).
- The award is open to student members studying in a full or part-time mode at any university in Australia.

- Student can be of any age and is expected to continue his/her career within the records management industry.
- Nomination form to be completed by nominee (self-nominating award) and countersigned by a lecturer from the relevant educational institution.
- Certified copy of supporting academic record should accompany application.
- The nominee must indicate his/her personal vision of the future of records management (1000 words).
- Additional supporting documentation may be submitted if thought appropriate to application.

Closing date


1 September 2000.

Applications

Applications should be made on the appropriate form and forwarded with supporting documentation to:

RMAA Awards Committee
RMAA Secretariat
PO Box 97
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Coordinator Reports

MEMBERSHIP AND STATUS REPORT

It is very pleasing to see that the membership is still growing. The Association has made a conscious effort to increase member services by providing newsletters, a quarterly journal, member meetings, seminars, workshops and national conventions. In addition to this, the RMAA is also developing an effective membership database, which now includes email addresses and is linked to our financial package. A number of changes to our web site will be soon available, in particular, a new 'members only' section where you will be able to access forms for upgrading professional status, submit change of member details, seminar papers, and more. So keep visiting our web page **rmaa.com.au**.

The Federal Membership and Status Committee met in June to revise and update the guidelines for upgrade to professional status. A number of changes have been made including the introduction of a technician level. The guidelines and application forms will be soon available from the RMAA web site. In conjunction with this, the Committee will be introducing a continuing professional development program that will work in conjunction with existing status levels. This program will be optional for those who wish to maintain their knowledge and skill levels. Participants will be able to use (Cert - for certified) after their ARMA, MRMA or FRMA after a qualifying period, and the submission of electronic diaries. More detailed information will become available in the next edition of the *INFORMAA Quarterly*.

New members since 1 July 1999	230
(increase of 17 members since March)	17

Individual Branch Membership Numbers
As at 1 May 2000

This quarter, the Membership and Status Committee received one application for upgrade to Fellow status and appraised an existing application. Congratulations to Chris Simpson QLD on his successful upgrade to Member status.

Chris Fripp MRMA, MAICD

NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
747	550	426	391
ACT	SA	TAS	NT
278	237	151	104

Total Professional Members
As at 1 May 2000 332

Individual Branch Professional Member Numbers
As at 1 May 2000 (overall increase of 5 since Jan. 2000)

NSW 67	VIC 54	QLD 83	WA 28
ACT 17	SA 28	TAS 35	NT 20

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Security, viruses and virus hoaxes

Computer security: are you or your organisation concerned about computer security? I suggest the following that appeared in a recent issue of the *Australian Financial Review* on 20 June 2000.

- 1 Develop a computer security policy and ensure it is communicated throughout the company.
- 2 Install a firewall: it can be hardware or software, or a combination of the two. And remember to monitor it.
- 3 Implement an intrusion detection system to monitor networks and send an alert when an intrusion is taking place.
- 4 Guard against disgruntled employees or former employees. Can especially be a problem if people enter the system via the Internet.
- 5 Put together a computer emergency response team (CERT).
- 6 If a small business, consider outsourcing this function.

With computer viruses, add to the above, 'have anti-virus software in place with up to date definitions and operating'. Viruses typically come via email either as an attachment (beware of attachments with a .vbs extension and .exe extensions can also cause problems). Viruses can also come hidden in macros in documents. The normal rules about getting emails from people you don't know should apply, but the newsworthy viruses these days are spread automatically from an infected computer. There are thought to be 10 new viruses a day being created. Be careful.

How to identify a virus hoax. Having myself received earlier this year what I took to be a very obvious hoax, I include the following advice. There are several methods to identify virus hoaxes, but first consider what makes a successful hoax on

the Internet. There are two known factors that make a successful virus hoax. These factors comprise firstly, technical sounding language and secondly, credibility by association. If the warning uses the proper technical jargon, most individuals, including technologically savvy individuals, tend to believe the warning is real. For example, the Good Times hoax says that '...if the program is not stopped, the computer's processor will be placed in an nth-complexity infinite binary loop which can severely damage the processor...'. The first time you read this, it sounds like it might be something real. With a little research, you find that there is no such thing as an nth-complexity infinite binary loop, and that processors are designed to run loops for weeks at a time without damage.

When we say credibility by association, we are referring to who sent the warning. If the janitor at a large technological organisation sends a warning to someone outside of that organisation, people on the outside tend to believe the warning because the company should know about those things. Even though the person sending the warning may not have a clue what he is talking about, the prestige of the company backs the warning, making it appear real. If a manager at the company sends the warning, the message is doubly backed by the company's and the manager's reputations.

Individuals should also be especially alert if the warning urges you to pass it on to your friends. This should raise a red flag that the warning may be a hoax. Another flag to watch for is: when the warning indicates that it is a Federal Communication Commission (FCC) warning. According to the FCC, they have not and never will disseminate warnings on viruses. It is not part of their job. (Source: <<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html#netscapeol>>) Also check: <<http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html>>

Geoff Smith ARMA

Branch Reports

TASMANIA

This has been a difficult year for the Tasmania Branch as, due to work and family commitments, members find it more difficult to devote time to RMAA activities. However, the faithful keep on and my thanks to all those who have supported the Branch and the RMAA.

The AGM is to be held on Tuesday 18 July 2000 and will be preceded by a seminar touching on such topics as data warehousing, metadata, the Tasmanian Evidence Bill and the Tasmania Online Project. These are all matters of particular relevance to recordkeeping in Tasmania. For those who have not viewed the new Service Tasmania web site, it is available at <http://www.servicetasmania.tas.gov.au/>.

The RMAA Tasmania Branch, in conjunction with the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. (ASA), has arranged for a presentation on the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy in August, and several lunch time seminars covering a range of subjects. Branch members have also been working closely with the ASA in preliminary arrangements and negotiations with speakers for the ASA and RMAA Joint National Conference to be held in Hobart in September 2001.

In addition, members have been busy with input into the Review of the Records and Archives National Competency Standards.

Jill Saunders ARMA

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Now that the fallout from the Association's 1999 National Convention, held here in Darwin, is well and truly behind us, the NT Branch Council (who were also the Convention organising committee) are able to concentrate on promoting the Association in the Northern Territory - acting locally after thinking nationally, some might say!

A recent Branch networking luncheon attracted an encouraging 18 members and it's good to remain in contact with our grass roots - our local membership - after being focused nationally for the best part of two years. Also

encouraging is the fact that five members have applied for, and been approved, associate status in the last six months. These five new associates include people with library, education and private sector backgrounds. This diversity is welcome in an association representing individuals and organisations in many varying fields. The next push will be to recruit associate members to Branch Council so, anybody with their hands out of their pockets at the Branch AGM in August, had better look out!

Barry Garside ARMA

QUEENSLAND

The Branch is organising its 2000 Queensland State Seminar to be held on 1 August. The theme is "A Framework for Records Management in a new era". The seminar will address issues such as records management - where to now, the impact of technology and the business process, FOI, ethical issues for records managers, knowledge management, managing electronic records, developing a strategic framework for records management in Queensland public sector, and initiatives of the National Archives of Australia. Details are on the RMAA web page www.rmaa.com.au/branches/qlld/.

The Branch has continued with its successful seminar series. Recent presentations have been made on records disposal, secondary storage and preservation.

The Local and State Government Chapters have both recently held successful meetings with an increasing number of participants at meetings and functions.

The Branch is lucky to acquire the skills and knowledge of Julie Apps FRMA on the Council, following her recent move from interstate.

Philip Taylor MRMA

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

We are now entering another new financial year with the implications of GST and eBusiness now impacting on us more and more. I thought I would take a couple of minutes to reflect on what we, as a Branch, have tried to achieve during the year.

Firstly, I would like to thank our Branch Councillors who gave of their time willingly and voluntarily. The last twelve months has seen the ACT Branch conduct ten Seminars on topical issues: this is an outstanding achievement. A special thank you goes to our sponsor/business partners for the past twelve months. Your support to our profession is greatly appreciated. To our members who have supported our Seminars, our thanks. We appreciated your time and know how hard it is to get away from the office with limited resources. It has been a busy year mostly, and I would like to acknowledge our employers who support all of us in our roles on Branch Council.

The Branch held its Annual Dinner 2000 at the 'Chifley on Northbourne' on 31 May 2000. The guest speaker was Jeremy Vickers, Director, Record Management, Australian Taxation Office. Our sponsor for the evening was Intershred. Thanks to David, Diana and Simone, and the team at Intershred. We especially enjoyed our classified waste bins full of chocolates. A great night was had by all, and a stimulating presentation by Jeremy made us start thinking outside the square.

On Thursday 15 June 2000, the Branch held a follow-up members meeting with National Archives of Australia at the Canberra Club at 12.15 pm. A good attendance of 40 people was able to ask questions of the panel regarding the new records regime of 'e-permanence'. The panel consisted of Mr Steve

Stuckey, Ms Kerrie Scott and the entourage from NAA answering questions with Mr Thomas Kaufhold and Ms Jan Fisher representing the ACT RMAA Branch. Again, our thanks to NAA for their generous sponsorship of providing a light lunch.

During the last three months, the Branch received with regret the resignation of Mr Ray Holswich who has transferred back to the Northern Territory. Our thanks go to Ray for his valuable input to the ACT RMAA Branch Council. Our loss is the Northern Territory's gain.

The Olympics are fast approaching, and so is our 2000 Convention, *Bridging the Gap*. I trust that as many of you as possible will be able to attend. Should you have forgotten the dates, they are Sunday to Wednesday, 3-6 December 2000. Please remember to check the web site for details <<http://www.rmaa.com.au>>. This Convention should be one of the largest RMAA has ever held - so, see you there!

The ACT Branch Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 26 July 2000. This will complete my first year as the ACT Branch President - the time has passed quickly. Someone said to me just after the election last year that I didn't know what I had let myself into. I think they were right. I'm just starting to settle into the role now. My thanks to all, especially Branch Council, who have assisted me during my inaugural year as President of the ACT Branch.

Stephanie M Ciempka ARMA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Here we are again with another Annual General Meeting completed, and new opportunities identified by the time you read this report. A **sad** time, this Perth AGM, but at the same time, an **exciting** time with the opportunity to have new Councillors on Branch Council. A sad time in as much as we are having a changing of the guard with a number of long term Councillors who will not be standing for Council for the 2000-2001 year. An exciting time because we have the opportunity for new professional members to take the opportunity to absorb the wealth of experience provided to individuals in being on Branch Council. I wish to thank the following current Councillors who will be resigning at the end of the 1999-2000 year.

Margaret Pember, your current Branch Vice President, who has been on Council and also a Federal Director for many years, will now be concentrating her energy to pursue higher educational activities. Vicky Wilson, a Councillor for many years and the Chairperson for the 1997 National Convention in Perth, and the Chairperson for the Mentoring group, who also will be pursuing higher educational activities. Norma Easthope, a Councillor and the Branch Secretary and Treasurer for many years, will be concentrating on her expanded role at Telstra, flitting across the country racking up a multitude of frequent flier points. Gail Murphy, a Councillor for many years and the Editor of the wonderful WA BRANCH INFORMAA plus Minute Secretary, will be concentrating on her expanded role at Information Enterprises. Trevor Yardley, a more recent member of Council, will be concentrating his effort on a roll out of a new Information & Records Management system at Woodside. To all and every one of the above, my sincerest and heartfelt thanks for your efforts over the years which would require not only the branch report space in this edition but the whole of the edition to document. The above brief outline of these Councillors' recent activities is but the minimum of coverage of their ongoing contributions to the Branch over the years. My only request is that the Council for 2000-2001 is able to call on your years of experience and knowledge when required.

Now, a call for all of the those future leaders in this exciting profession to take the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and capabilities by the experiences offered by being a professional member and to sit on Branch Council. There are fifteen positions in total available for those

willing to improve their opportunities and to grow with this dynamic profession.

The 14 June 2000 one-day Seminar '*e-COMMERCE or e-CHAOS? Managing Records in the new millennium*' has come and gone. A great success by all accounts based on the feedback from attendees. With one hundred and thirty-five attendees and excellent presentations by all presenters, the event will be one to be referred to over time. The event was captured on video by Edith Cowan University and the video will be available from ECU once the work of editing has been completed. Watch the RMAA web site, WA Branch page for the announcement of the availability of the video. It is intended to publish the presentations and the PowerPoint slides on the web page as soon as possible. We are working to have them posted on the RMAA site by the time you read this report.

The State Records Bill 1999 is still in the parliamentary process, and your Branch Council and I are pursuing the passage of this legislation with the greatest of effort. All good things come to those who have the patience to stay the distance.

There have been discussions with the Western Australian Local Government Records Management Group (LGRMG) about the possibility of creating a Chapter of the WA Branch of the LGRMG. I was given the opportunity to speak to the Group at one of their meetings to outline the features and benefits of establishing a Chapter within the Branch for this Group. The LGRMG is formulating their views about the desirability or otherwise of proceeding with this proposal.

The Branch has been in contact with the Bunbury Region section of the LGRMG, and a commitment has been made to provide a Training Workshop in the Bunbury Region later in the year, with November being the current timeframe.

The Branch Council welcomes the opportunity to work with Records Management Groups within and outside of the metropolitan area in providing educational support in remote locations with the provision of financial subsidisation of these types of activities, based on their merit. It is our intention, subject to funds being available, to expand this activity in the future.

Congratulations are appropriate for a new Associate member: Larry Knowles, who has been awarded status upgrade to ARMA. The presentation was made to Larry at the 11 July AGM.

The Mentoring Group's meeting was held on Thursday 29 June, 'Possibilities, Practicalities and Pitfalls - first steps in implementing EDM'. With the absence of Vicky Wilson, the meeting was chaired by Josette Mathers, with assistance from other members of the group.

Thought for the Month:

A change of emphasis this month.

The recent receipt of an email of Dilbert's Rules of Order provided the following rule with which Records Management professionals would have an ongoing experience.

Rule 3: Tell me what you need, and I'll tell you how to get along without it.

Laurie Varendorff ARMA

VICTORIA

In June, a letter was sent to all members to clarify why the Branch has not been as active this year compared to previous years, and to seek support from the membership to get Victoria back on track. The letter also advised members of our new contact details under the recent outsourcing arrangements for the positions of Secretary and Communications. The Branch now has one central contact point for members and potential members:

Phone: (03) 9846 7324 Fax: (03) 9846 7583

Email: rmaavic@one.net.au

Postal address is unchanged:

GPO Box 2270U, Melbourne VIC 3001

The current arrangement will be reviewed by the incoming Branch for 2000/01. The election of the new Branch Council will take place at the Annual General Meeting on 3 August 2000. All members are invited to attend the AGM, including a presentation on change management followed by refreshments and nibbles.

The official Victoria Archives and Records Management Week newsletter for 1999 was circulated to the membership in June. The Victoria Branch wishes to thank Mike Steemson for writing such a colourful and informative report, and Lucy Burrows (PROV) for the production of the newsletter. This year's event is confirmed for 9-13 October

and, similar to last year, will comprise the Sir Rupert Hamer Awards, a one-day seminar, and a Local Government Chapter meeting. Nominations for the Hamer Awards are now invited and close at 5.00 pm on 25 August. Members interested in a nomination form or further information can contact Lucy Burrows, Secretary to the Public Records Advisory Council on (03) 9285 7935 or lucy.burrows@dpc.vic.gov.au. Full details of ARM Week 2000 will be published on the RMAA web site shortly.

The Local Government Chapter continues to grow strong and meetings have been well attended. The last meeting was held on 9 May at Moreland City Council and included a presentation on 'Best Value in Local Government'. Ballarat City Council will be hosting the next meeting on 9 August.

On a sad note, the Branch lost two valued Branch Councillors, Julie Apps and Diane Moore. Julie moved interstate with her family and has joined the Queensland Branch, and Diane departed due to heavy work commitments. On behalf of your colleagues on Branch Council and the Victoria membership, we thank both Julie and Diane for giving up their valuable time and Julie, for your passion and commitment over the past 10 years.

Sandra Pickett ARMA

NEW SOUTH WALES

Our April meeting (11 April) was on Tender Preparation and Evaluation with Conni Christensen the speaker, utilising various industry people present to speak on a practical level. The meeting gave us the opportunity to wish Conni and Eddy Wilkinson all the best with their wedding and for Chris Fripp to make presentations to them from both the Federal Directors and the NSW Branch.

On 23 May, we held our annual Technology Seminar. This provided us with the opportunity to raise with people, developments in the industry that will impact on their work as professionals. It also provided people with ideas and possibilities that they could take back to their work. Being May, we had two speakers drop out at short notice due to 'flu. Our thanks to Sue Frost for all her work in organising the event and to Mary Hooker for her work on the day. Papers will appear on the NSW pages of the RMAA web page www.rmaa.com.au.

Our next meeting was on 4 July on privacy.

Work on the Convention continues. The registration brochures are out and a copy was included with the last issue of *IQ*. The registration brochure is available also via the web. On behalf of the NSW Branch, I encourage all members and friends of the Association to come, space isn't a problem. It will be a time of learning, with a lot of fun as well, in a

wonderful venue on Darling Harbour. It will be summer and daylight saving. It will be after the Olympics and before the Centenary of Federation. Watch the web for updates on what is happening as we confirm speakers and provide further information.

I will take this opportunity to encourage people to be involved as much as possible with the review of the Competency Standards. They are very important to our profession, and those carrying out the review need to know the views of those of us working in the profession.

Our Annual General Meeting is on 8 August and it would be remiss of me to pass up this opportunity to thank members and Councillors for their help and support during the last year. Also, I wish to thank Kay Williams who helps me with the Newsletter, and Janet Knight who helps me with my technology report. My thanks to the sponsors who support our meetings and to those of you who come to these meetings. It has been a tiring time for us and the remainder of this year will no doubt continue to be so, but it will all be worth it when we see you all in Sydney in December.

We trust the next year will be an even better year for RMAA people.

Geoff Smith ARMA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

On 26 May, the SA Branch held a full day seminar titled 'Diversity in Records and Information Management' which covered a range of issues including Portals, E-Business and Knowledge Management. The seminar was well received by those who attended, although numbers were a little below average.

It is with regret that I must announce the closure of the SA RMAA State Government Chapter. Due to work commitments a number of members resigned from Chapter Council leaving it unable to meet its obligations under the Association's bylaws. Instead we have agreed to start a State Government Committee as part of Branch Council.

Kristen Green ARMA

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