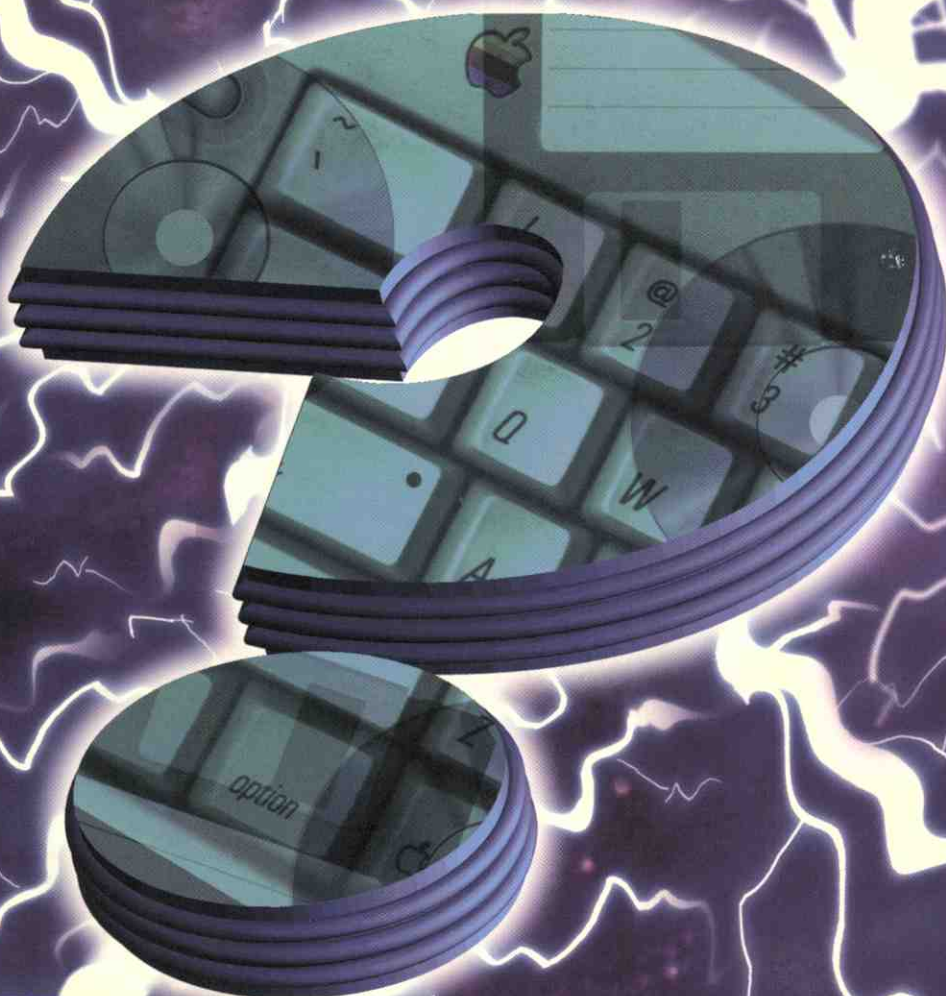


# INFORMAA

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VOLUME THIRTEEN NUMBER 2 MAY 1997  
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
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## President's Message



**F**ederal Council met in Perth during February and some of the main points coming out of the meeting were:

- The centralised membership system, and the progress made to date.
- Review of the Archives Act 1983. I am pleased to say the Association has been given the opportunity to respond to a letter from the Australian Law Reform Commission accordingly. I am also given to understand some Branches are also responding.
- The further development of the Associations World Wide Web page.
- Exposure of the Association, and by way of explanation, RMAA have been invited to be present at a number of expos / seminars / conferences etc., and the like over a period of years, the latest being the Office and Technology Expo in Sydney.
- Education and the future recognition of courses nationally.
- Matters relating to Association financial management, taking into consideration advice received from our Auditor and the Commonwealth Bank.
- In line with the National Marketing Strategy, Federal Council has approved a Marketing Logo to be used in conjunction with the existing Association logo. The Association will also be conducting a National Poster competition (watch the INFORMAA for further details).

### Competency Standards

By now, all States and Territories have been subjected to the second round of focus group meetings with Susan Henry (Project Officer), and from all reports augers well for the third draft. The contributions made to date by those members and non members will greatly enhance the quality of the final draft of the Competency Standards before their submission to the Australian National Training Authority.

### National Convention

The WA Branch continue to work hard towards yet another Convention in September 1997. Federal Council took the opportunity to view the Convention facilities, namely Raddissons at Scarborough and naturally we encourage you to attend and make it a great National Convention.

Council also took the opportunity to meet with the members of the WA Branch Council during a convivial BBQ on the banks of the Swan River and I thank them for their hospitality.

On a more parochial note and coming from the Top End, congratulations to the NT Branch for conducting their 100th Branch Council meeting recently.

Cheers for now

**Ray Holswich ARMA**  
**Federal President**

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Readers are invited to submit articles for publication. They may be in the form of case studies, conference papers, book reviews, surveys or any report which may be of national interest.

Contributions should be typed & double spaced. Please include a short biography together with a black and white photograph.

Submissions may also be made in electronic format on a 3 1/2 inch diskette with Wordperfect 5.1 preferred or alternatively as a standard ASCII text file from other word processing software.

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PERTH WA 6849

**Deadline for the**  
**August 1997 issue:**

**25th June 1997**

# Editorial



A colleague recently referred me to a copy of the complaint lodged by the Public Citizen Litigation Group in Washington DC against the US National Archives and Records Administration alleging that the Archivist of the United States of America has "improperly ignored the unique value of electronic records" and "abdicated his statutory responsibility to appraise the historic value of such electronic records".

A noteworthy aspect of this claim is that records in electronic format have advantages over records recorded on paper or microfilm. In particular, electronic records can be searched, manipulated and stored in ways that paper or microfilm cannot and electronic records have unique data or information that is not preserved when converted to paper or microfilm format. It has been generally accepted worldwide that simply dumping Email and word processing documents to paper or film will offer sufficient integrity to records to allow for the destruction of the original electronic versions.

In this case it will be further argued by the plaintiffs that the unique qualities of electronic records may make them MORE valuable than those stored in traditional formats and if electronic records are destroyed, these qualities will be permanently lost. I am sure that we will all monitor the outcome of this case as it could well have far reaching impact on our work environment.

In this edition, Philip Taylor urges us to rethink our fundamental approach to underlying records management issues and run with new and exciting challenges. I welcome your contributions on "the continuum" the "lifecycle" and "record keeping" versus "records management". Are we records keepers or records managers?

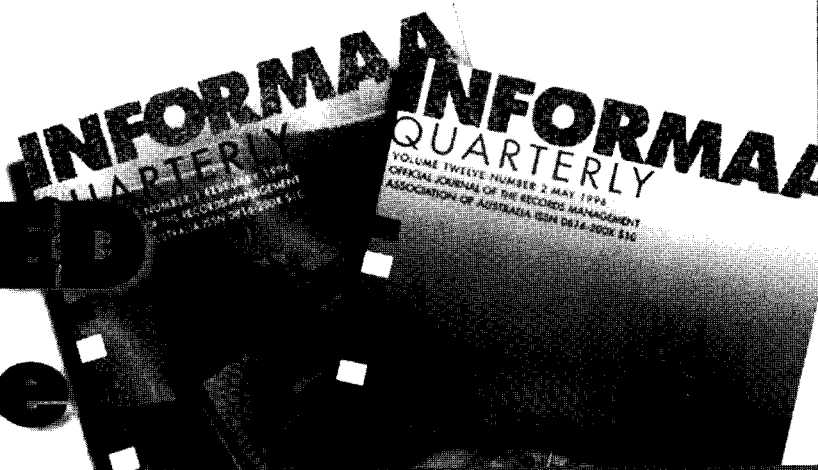
Stephen Yorke reminds us about the reality of disasters, the fact that they do happen and unless prepared for, many will have a serious negative impact. We are fortunate to be able to publish the results of a survey of Government agencies conducted by the Archives Authority of New South Wales which indicates, amongst other things, that limited approaches are being taken to managing electronic records.

I draw your attention to the report by our Federal Education coordinator Dennis Wheeler, in particular his reference to the Record Educators Forum and the establishment of a Research Sub-Committee. Such an initiative is worthy of broad based support from records management practitioners Australia wide and if proceeded with, will I am sure, enhance our professional standing in the wider community.

Finally, the RMAA now has its own homepage, <http://www.rmaa.com.au>.

**Ken Ridley ARMA**  
National Coordinator Informaa Quarterly

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# Letters to the Editor

## Dear Editor

I refer to Tony Poynton's article in the February 1997 edition relating to a General Thesaurus for Faceted Classification Systems. Tony is to be congratulated for publishing his article to raise discussion on this interesting topic.

As a consultant of many years I have implemented both Linton's and the NSW RMO's Keyword File Title Classification Systems in many organisations and developed numerous functional thesauri to support those systems.

From discussions with Linton over the years I believe that although he was significantly influenced by Crestadoro as he developed his system he was also influenced by Ranganathan. The influence of the latter can be seen, I consider, in Linton's approach to constructing keyword file titles where he provided, at set descriptor levels, for the capture

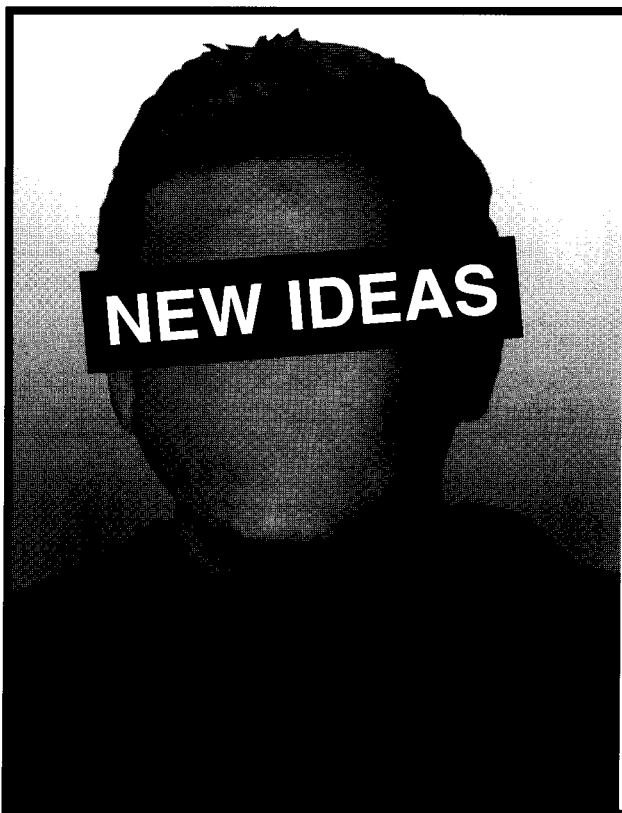
of elements of information such as for the name of a leased item, its physical location, date of renewal etc. after the Keyword term LEASES. He advised such an approach after a number of keywords in their scope notes and in effect that was providing for the capture of facets of information about something.

I have always considered this approach to be one of the strengths of his system and in (Hoo and Cowcher, 1989) lamented that the principle of the application of "dedicated descriptors" (as we chose to call them) to the capture of facets of information about a subject had not been adopted and developed by the NSW RMO in the GADM Thesaurus. It is an approach we at Information Enterprises have frequently introduced to clients and they have readily accepted and appreciated its benefits. We have defined the dedicated descriptors within the scope notes of keywords in thesauri we have developed.

In training people to index records I have always emphasised that, in a records environment, the purpose a document was created, to whom it was written, when it was written, its format etc can be of equal importance to the actual subject of the document and that these facets must be given equal sway in the indexing process. It is this very aspect, in my opinion, which distinguishes records indexing from library material indexing.

I am therefore very much in agreement with Tony's approach, support his endeavours to formalise the process and encourage him to do so. However, I do not view his approach, or thinking, as ground breaking as I believe it has been evolving steadily with a number of records managers for some time.

**Marita Keenan, B.App. Sci. (ILS),  
MRMA, AALIA  
Consultant, Western Australia**



Informaa needs your help to report on the new faces that are emerging in the Records Management Industry.

In the every edition of Informaa there will be a section that reports on new people in new positions or people with new ideas. If you or anyone you know has recently changed positions or developed a new idea for records management, Informaa would like to know about it.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Dear Editor

One thing remains constant in records management, that is, the fact that nothing remains the same. Almost imperceptibly new technologies have been and are being introduced and old ones are being updated or discarded.

As a records manager, one has two responsibilities. The first is to run the system under which one works as effectively and conscientiously as one can, ensuring that users receive the information they want, when they want it, in the form they need it, as fast as possible, to quote a familiar definition of RM. The second, and to my mind, the more important one, is to ensure that one improves the tools one inherits on appointment as a records manager to the best of one's ability. It follows that one must keep up to date with current thinking and technologies. It is appreciated that many who work in government and local government registries have no say about the systems they use. Hence we see the difference in attitude between records managers in such bodies and those working under different constraints, as expressed in recent correspondence. I personally favour always striving towards improving records keeping technology as opposed to everybody wanting the status quo to be the way forward, a path to stagnation. If our profession does not take the lead in innovation, then assuredly someone in the computer field certainly will.

Tony Poynton's significant article in the February issue is a case in point. The Keyword System I first devised back in 1969-70 was then designed to meet a specific personal problem that had arisen in a specific organisation. At that point of time, main frame computers were only just appearing in offices to perform simple accounting tasks. Our basic

indexes were maintained on strip indexes in steel holding plates. With the introduction of a main frame computer into my company, my research led me to the work of Andrea Crestadoro. (When Librarian of Manchester Library in 1856, he had laid down that all terms in a title of a book or document should be indexed. This novel idea was taken up and developed by Hans Peter Luhn when with IBM in the 1940's, who called his developments Keyword in Context and Keyword Out of Context indexes). Here was a new tool (which I added to Keyword in 1975) which enables one to search on any term deliberately inserted into (or added supplementary to) a file title as a disciplined indexing term. Use of an inhibitor symbol prevented meaningless terms from being included in the index. More importantly, it brings together in the index terms common to many files, many about different subjects. Next came the addition of Boolean Algebra, which enabled one to coordinate any multiple terms common to a number of files or documents). In effect, in my latest version of the Keyword System called FASTFILE the number of indexing terms have been increased to eight, with added Boolean searching strategy.

The problem I faced before I retired was that everyone was still working in a paper based environment, which still applies for most organisations, so to go further was inhibited by the unavailability then of such recent technologies as CD ROM.

I admit that Raganathan's work was an early influence in my thinking. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that Record Management is a discipline, which will ever only be effective in any organisation as management's acceptance of the imposed discipline.

I remain concerned that there are people who still maintain that classification is no longer necessary. This I dispute in the strongest possible way. Unless discipline is imposed on the way documents (or files) are described when they are indexed into a data base, be they kept in a paper or electronic medium, there will always remain the possibility of a document being irretrievable because it has been described by a synonym of a search term. We must always keep in mind that the searcher will rarely be the person who indexed the document.

It is therefore refreshing to see Tony picking up and building on my thinking.

Faceted terms must be entered into an 'authorities list' (a simple form of thesaurus) so that use of a synonym would raise a query. For example, use of say 'survey' would throw up a flash approved term :

- land survey, or
- marketing survey, or
- personnel survey.

I achieved this discipline by the use of a banned terms list which inhibits their use. Each particular environment must control its own language.

The more electronic storage is embraced, the more urgent will become the imposition of discipline. I also strongly dispute that relevant documents can always be found by means of guessing at words in context, or the date of creation, or the name of the author. It may work in limited collections. I visited a Registry in Canberra where the records manager told me that he had to use this means of finding records and was getting up to 5,000 'drops' on his screen, every one of which had to be searched for relevance to the requester.



As a profession we must keep in mind the problems of long term storage, not of transient data but significant archives. How will we ensure that what we store now will be available to future people? Machines change, storage media change as packing densities improve. Will there be machines in 30 years time capable of reading CD ROMS made today? What is their real life expectancy?

I often wish I were just starting out in RM as the years to come will be fascinating. We would all like to see the seeds we planted grow into trees.

**J. Eddis Linton, B.Eco, FMRA, CRM**

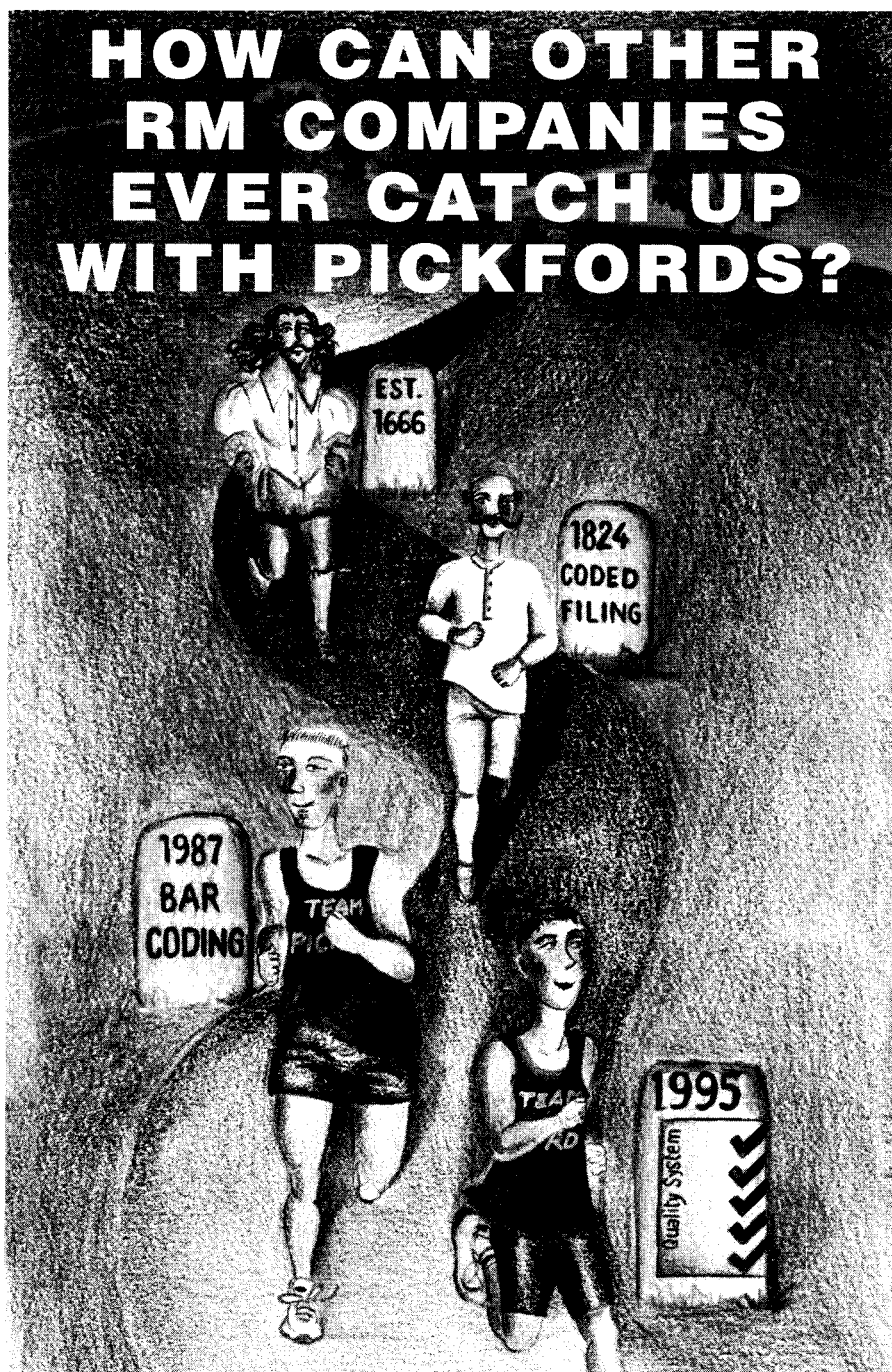
#### Author

*Eddis Linton was a founder of the RMAA and became its first Fellow in 1979.*

*He served on the NSW Council and on the Federal Council for many years, with terms as President of both bodies.*

*He is best known for his book Organising the Office Memory and for the development of the Keyword Classification method of organising office records in 1969-70.*

*He is one of only four Australians to have been admitted to the professional Association of the USA, the Institute of Certified Records Managers (CRM). He was made a Life Member of the RMAA in 1985 for his services to the Association.*



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# Records Management in the NSW Government: A Survey

## Authors

Janet Knight and Angela Chaperon

*Janet and Angela are Project Officers with the Recordkeeping Standards team within the Archives Authority of New South Wales. Janet has previously worked as an Archivist in Disposal and as a Senior Archivist in Reference and Collection Services at the Archives Authority. Angela is on secondment from the NSW office of the Australian Archives where she has worked in the areas of Agency Services, Custody and Records Accessibility.*

## Abstract

*In December 1996 the Archives Authority of New South Wales distributed a Records Management Survey to all NSW public sector agencies who had recordkeeping functions. This survey was the first in a series of annual records management surveys to be conducted by the Authority. The primary purpose of the survey was to gather selected information to enable the Authority to measure its performance in achieving its policy objective for records management: to improve the quality and keeping of official records so that they facilitate the transaction, monitoring and auditing of official business. As a result it covered a wide range of topics such as creation and capture, storage, disposal, control, training and electronic recordkeeping.*

*Overall it appears from the survey results that NSW government agencies are becoming aware of the problems and challenges in recordkeeping and are beginning to introduce measures to make their organisations more accountable. However, the survey has reinforced Kylie Barrett's conclusions (Informaa Quarterly, November 1996) that recordkeepers in NSW are currently taking limited approaches to managing electronic records.*

## Acknowledgments

*The Archives Authority of New South Wales would like to thank all those who took part in the pilot surveys for this project. Our thanks also to the agency representatives who completed and returned the surveys. Their assistance was greatly appreciated, particularly as surveys were distributed shortly before Christmas 1996.*

## Introduction

**T**he Archives Authority of New South Wales is a statutory corporation which was created under the Archives Act, 1960. It exists to serve the Government and people of New South Wales by improving the management and accessibility of the State's records.

The Authority is expecting to introduce new State records legislation in 1997 or early 1998 which will vest in the responsibility for establishing and monitoring recordkeeping standards, codes of best practice, and guidelines across the New South Wales public sector. Two teams have been established: the Recordkeeping Standards Team, to draft and support standards, codes of best practice and guidelines, and the Electronic Recordkeeping Team, to develop and implement sound electronic recordkeeping practices. The work of these two teams will assist the Authority to meet one of its objectives, to improve the quality and keeping of official records so that they facilitate the transaction, monitoring and auditing of official business.

When planning strategies to meet this objective, the Authority became aware of the lack of empirical data about the state of records management in the New South Wales Government. Therefore, the purpose of this survey was to obtain a snapshot of New South Wales Government records management programs and practices as at December 1996 and to collect figures which will serve as a baseline for assessing trends over time.

Under the coming State records legislation agencies will be monitored to ensure that their records management programs and recordkeeping practices comply with the standards specified by the Archives Authority. However, the survey was NOT an attempt to measure compliance nor to collect detail about specific systems and processes. Rather, it was designed to gain a general quantitative overview.

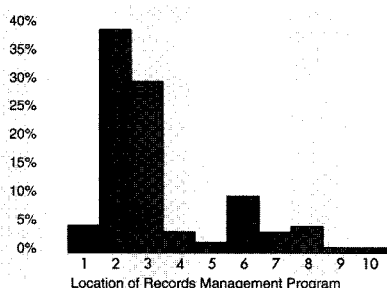
## The Survey

As the Archives Authority sought quantitative data across Government which could be analysed statistically, a survey was chosen as the data collection method. A Masters of Archives Administration student, Dorit Beck, designed the survey. The questionnaire was thoroughly tested by Dorit in June 1996 with a pilot group of agencies. The pilot group included a cross section of public sector agencies, including large and small, and centralised and decentralised, agencies.

The survey was distributed to the major agencies of the New South Wales Government, a total of 160. The letters were addressed to the Chief Executive Officers of each agency from the Principal Archivist, which may explain the high rate of return (65%). The surveys were distributed in Dec 1996 with a return date of 13 Jan 1997 (subsequently extended for many due to holidays taken at Christmas).

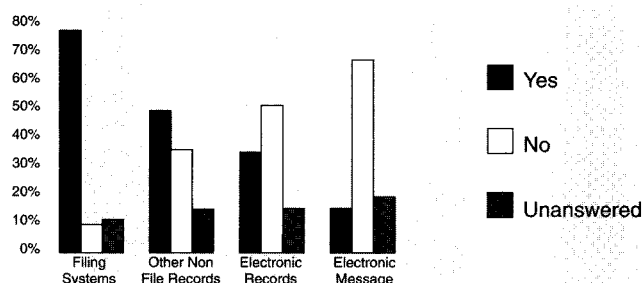
Despite extensive testing, some agencies still experienced problems in completing the survey. The main problems were that:

Graph 1



- 1 Corporate Governance
- 2 Corporate Services (CS)
- 3 Administration
- 4 Information Technology (IT)
- 5 Information Management Unit
- 6 No Answer
- 7 CS + IT
- 8 CS + Administration
- 9 Administration + IT
- 10 CS + Administration + IT

Graph 2



- the terminology used was occasionally regarded as confusing
- the multiple choice boxes did not always allow for the full range of answers.

In addition, many respondents found their surveys difficult to complete because their agencies had decentralised and divergent practices or because the IT divisions were often responsible for issues relating to electronic records. Where possible, problems will be remedied prior to future surveys.

The survey questionnaire covered an extensive range of issues organised into the following themes: records management functions and responsibilities, records management programs, creation and capture, storage, disposal, control, training, recordkeeping, electronic recordkeeping, recordkeeping systems, electronic document management and issues. It consisted of 53 questions, a mixture of multiple choice and open ended questions.

### Survey Findings

As the survey was so wide ranging and extensive, there is not adequate space within this article to analyse results extensively. Instead, the major themes have been briefly discussed below. Results concerning electronic recordkeeping issues have been highlighted to allow direct comparison with Kylie Barrett's article, *Electronic Recordkeeping in NSW: A Survey of RMAA and ASA Members*, which appeared in the November 1996 issue of Informaa Quarterly.

### Records Management Functions and Responsibilities

This component of the survey sought to find out if agencies had allocated formal responsibility for their records management functions in order to meet their obligations. The Australian Standard AS4390, Records Management indicates that records management responsibility must be formally assigned and articulated, and the Archives Authority's standards support this practice.

Agencies were also asked whether they have an identifiable records management program. Under the new State records legislation which, at the time of writing, is being drafted, 'each public office must establish and maintain a records management program.... in conformity with standards and codes of best practice approved by the Authority.'

80% of respondents indicated that an identifiable program existed in their agency and 20% said that no program existed. Thus 20% would not currently be able to meet a fundamental obligation of the State records legislation.

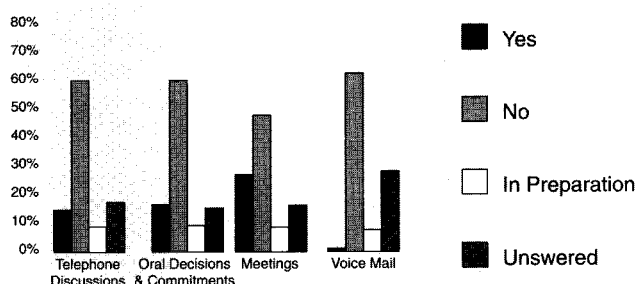
One of the issues facing an organisation establishing or reviewing its records management program is where it should be located in the organisational structure. In records management literature, the two areas commonly discussed are the Information Management or Information Technology areas, reflecting the role of records as an information resource, and 'corporate governance' (audit, legal areas), reflecting the role of records as evidence and an essential support for accountability.

Most existing programs are located within the divisions of Corporate Services or Administration (see Graph 1), probably due to the fact that records management is often seen as synonymous with registry activities.

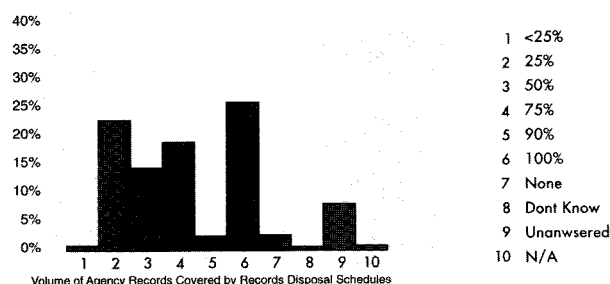
Only 6% of respondents actually have their programs in the Corporate Governance area. This figure may be low because the terminology is too new, and it confused those filling out the survey, or because in some agencies the functions of Corporate Governance are actually carried out within the Corporate Services or Administration areas. Alternatively, records management programs may not have achieved this sort of profile in agencies.

Policies, plans and procedures support the process of records management and its activities. Their existence or otherwise is a concrete indication of a functioning records management program. Documentation should ideally cover all formats of records and be updated regularly to keep abreast of current trends. Only 32% of respondents indicated that their agencies have documented procedures and guidelines, 32% have documented policy statements and 62% have user procedures and guidelines. As expected, most agencies have developed documentation for their filing systems but policies, procedures and plans for electronic records and messages have not been developed by many (see Graph 2).

Graph 3



Graph 4



Without advice and documentation, it is unlikely that staff will manage their electronic messages and records with consistency and accuracy. Therefore, it is a priority of the Archives Authority to provide guidance to assist agencies. The Electronic Recordkeeping Team is establishing a policy framework. Our draft *Policy on Electronic Records as Messages* is being used federally as a model and it, together with our draft *Policy on Electronic Recordkeeping*, provides a basis for agencies to develop their policies in this area.

Regular performance audits should be instituted to measure whether the program is performing suitably against the identified mission and performance criteria and objectives. Without an audit, Chief Executive Officers have no concrete basis for confidence in the performance of the program. 37% of respondents reported that their agencies conduct regular performance audits, 23% having had an audit within the last year.

### Creation and Capture

Agencies are often not aware of the need to instruct their staff when to create records so that they can meet their obligations to produce full and accurate evidence of their business activities. The survey sought to ascertain whether procedures or policies had been produced for documenting telephone discussions, oral decisions and commitments, meetings and voice mail and acted as a reminder to agencies that these procedures are necessary.

It seems that most agencies do not have policies or guidelines in place (see Graph 3). For example, 48% reported that there was no policies or guidelines for meetings and the figure rose to 62% for telephone discussions, 60% for oral decisions and commitments and 60% for voice mail. Only a small percentage reported that they were in preparation.

The lack of guidance is a cause for serious concern. The Independent Commission Against Corruption's *Report on Investigation into the Use of Informers*, January 1993, Vol. 1, Chap 12: 'Files and Lies', discusses the need to create and adequately maintain records for accountability. The Ombudsman's Good Conduct and *Administrative Practice Guidelines for Public Authorities and Officials* also contains provisions for the creation and management of public records. The Premier's Department Guidelines (Code of Conduct) in the *Personnel Handbook: Part 1 Public Services of New South Wales* instructs public servants to '...maintain adequate documentation to support any decisions made'... 'In addition, the Australian Standard AS4390, *Records Management*, Part: 3 'Strategies', Clause 8.2.1-3, reinforces the need to provide documentation of oral decisions and commitments, recommendations and meetings. The Archives Authority needs to provide more guidance in this regard to ensure that agencies make positive efforts to generate records.

### Storage

Storage issues examined in the survey included whether agencies have listed their vital records, whether they have developed disaster plans, whether long term records are stored in controlled environments and whether security and access have been considered. 66% indicated they have listed their vital records, which is encouraging. However, only 34% have a disaster recovery plan for records throughout the organisation and only 39% of agencies have made provisions within their plans for electronic records, which is a significant concern. With the latter figure, we suspect that some agencies may have mistakenly considered their back-up procedures to be full disaster recovery plans.

It appears that most agencies have an awareness of the need for appropriate security and access restrictions as 88% indicated that they had taken these measures to protect the integrity of paper records. 68% reported that they have also ensured that records of known or likely long retention are maintained in controlled environments.

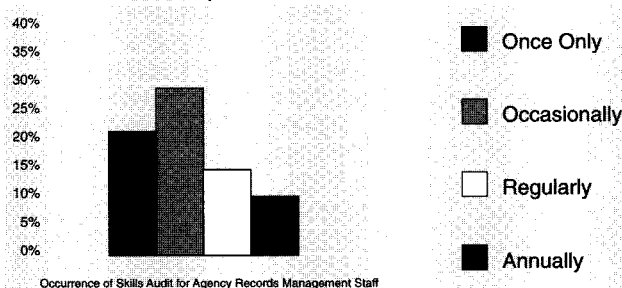
### Disposal

The responses to disposal questions in the survey indicated that only 54% regularly cull and dispose of their own records using authorised disposal schedules. We would like to see this figure improve in future surveys.

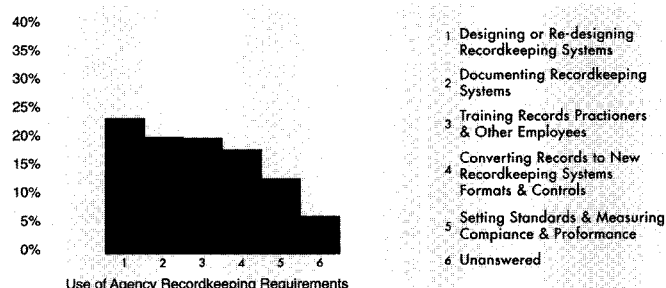
Graph 4 demonstrates what volume of agencies' records are covered by disposal schedules. A large proportion



Graph 5



Graph 6



of agencies (42%) have half or less than half of their records covered by schedules. This result is not surprising given the outmoded disposal provisions of the Authority's current legislation, which does not encourage systematic disposal scheduling. With the new legislation and closer working relationships with the Archives Authority the amount of coverage should improve in future years.

Surprisingly, 39% of respondents reported that the disposal status of their paper based files was decided at creation and 15% reported the same trend for their electronic records. This indicates that the concept of the records continuum is starting to be applied in agencies.

70% of respondents have documented procedures in place for the disposal of records and 81% have documented disposal actions such as transfers to the Archives Authority. The lack of documented procedures in the remaining agencies, with the greater risk of unmanaged or unauthorised disposal, is a cause for concern.

### Control

The control questions were largely devised to discover what mechanisms agencies have adopted to enable them to locate their records, and to know who has access to them. 58% reported that they have a classification scheme derived from an analysis of their business activity. For paper based records 78% have a controlled vocabulary and 65% use a thesaurus. For electronic records

29% use a controlled vocabulary and 13% use a thesaurus to classify. These figures may be another facet of Kylie Barrett's finding that naming conventions for electronic records are embraced in a minority of organisations.

The most popular means of monitoring the movement of files is by records management software systems (32%), transfer slips (17%) and movement cards (14%) but only 35% of agencies who responded could claim that these procedures allowed them to know who had access to all records. Obviously, more effective means of tracking need to be implemented to ensure, for accountability reasons, that agencies know where the records are, who has access to records and when. This result sits uneasily with the finding noted earlier about security and access restrictions.

### Training

Training all staff within an organisation about recordkeeping responsibilities and procedures is vital to the success of a records management program. Yet it seems that it is also an area that requires attention in agencies as only 51% recorded that staff are trained in recordkeeping practices. The majority of training is by teaching usage of records management tools (35%) and by presenting briefing seminars and sessions on specific recordkeeping issues (30%). Training is also provided via the agency's induction program (24%), software training in office systems (25%), and by informal or on the job training.

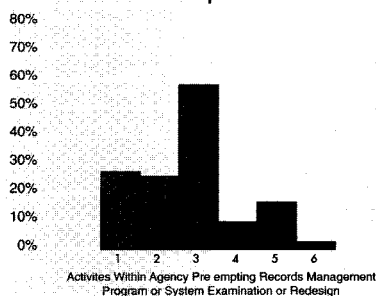
Skills audits and needs analyses of records management staff are not regularly undertaken in most agencies (see Graph 5). This result makes it more difficult to be confident that training for records management staff, where it is provided, is being effectively targeted.

### Recordkeeping

Agencies were asked if they have identified legislation, business rules and procedures, as well as industry standards, that affect their recordkeeping. 80% indicated that this was the case. See Graph 6 for how these requirements have been used to design and document systems, train staff, convert records to new systems, set standards and measure compliance. Again, while this is a positive figure, the remaining agencies represent a significant area of risk for the Government as a whole.

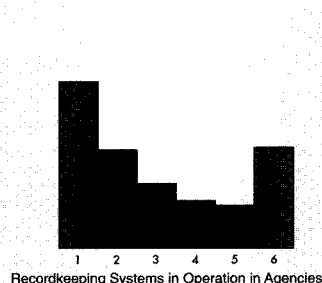
30% of responding agencies are incorporating the Australian Standard AS4390 into their record-keeping practices. We will expect to see this figure grow in coming years. A number of agencies are embarking on business process re-engineering within the next financial year (41%). This kind of exercise is an ideal opportunity for building systematic recordkeeping into business processes and systems. Graph 7 indicates how records management programs or systems have been redesigned as a result of activities such as business process re-engineering, total quality management, functional reviews and certification for quality systems.

Graph 7



- 1 Business Re-engineering
- 2 Total Quality Management
- 3 Functional Reviews
- 4 Certification for Quality Systems
- 5 Other
- 6 Unanswered

Graph 8



- 1 One Central System
- 2 A Central System with Decentralised Service
- 3 A Decentralised System with Central Control
- 4 Decentralised
- 5 Informal System
- 6 Work Area System

## Electronic recordkeeping

Electronic records seem to still present a wide range of challenges for agencies, reflecting the problems existing in the wider recordkeeping community highlighted by Kylie Barrett's survey. There, 56% of responding organisations from the RMAA and ASA reported that they did not have guidelines for the control of electronic records. The Authority's survey broke documentation down into policies, guidance and formal methodologies and procedures. Only 17% have developed policies, 29% guidelines and 18% formal methodologies and procedures for dealing with electronic records although many are preparing them (31%, 33% and 29% respectively). There may be an anomaly here, if respondents confused electronic data policies with electronic records policies. Even if this was the case, users, including agency staff, do not seem to be receiving the guidance they require to achieve organisational accountability in the electronic environment.

Our draft *Policy on Electronic Recordkeeping* states that electronic records should be maintained in electronic form where appropriate to do so, as electronic versions are more accessible and have greater value than paper formats. However, some agencies continue to maintain their electronic records and messages by printing and filing them in paper based systems (26% and 27% respectively), a trend also noted in Barrett's survey. 68% use electronic means to retain records and 54% to retain messages (Barrett noted

that 42% retained Email messages electronically in her survey). However, some methods of maintaining records and messages electronically are questionable, as they may not protect their integrity as functioning records. 31% of responding agencies believe they have developed strategies for maintaining electronic records of continuing value, a figure which should increase with time.

The Authority's 1995 discussion paper, *Documenting the Future: Policy and Strategies for Electronic Recordkeeping in the NSW Public Sector*, emphasises the need for a multi-disciplinary approach for designing and implementing recordkeeping systems. Recordkeeping teams will need to include record-keeping professionals, IT professionals, accountability stakeholders, information managers and program managers. Thus, the survey also sought to ascertain how many agencies have started to forge vital partnerships with their IT areas to devise methods of managing electronic records. 41% of respondents have established these links. We would expect this figure to rise in coming years.

## Recordkeeping Systems

The questions in the recordkeeping systems section were concerned primarily with ascertaining whether agencies have actually identified their recordkeeping systems for paper records (95%) and electronic records (46%) and to gather information about the types of recordkeeping systems in operation in agencies (see Graph 8).

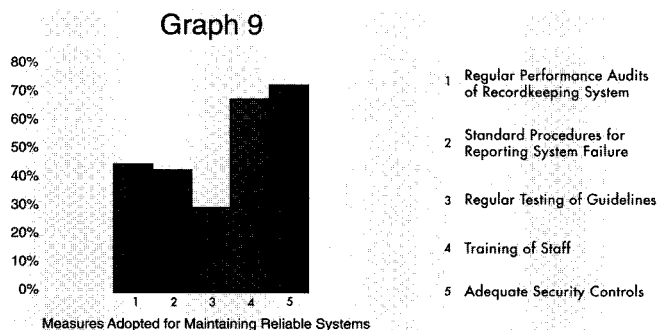
There were no good or bad results for this question. What is important to note is that the recordkeeping systems should be organised to meet the business needs of the agency. We hope to be able to observe trends in this area in coming years.

Principle 2 ('Reliable') of the Authority's draft *Standard on Full and Accurate Recordkeeping*, states that recordkeeping systems, procedures and practices should work reliably to ensure that records are credible and authoritative. In the survey we wanted to know if measures have been adopted, such as audits, testing procedures and guidelines, training and security, to measure and maintain reliable systems (see Graph 9).

## Electronic Document Management

Barrett reported that electronic document management (EDM) was not widely implemented by those representatives she surveyed (27%) and that many respondents confused EDM software with records management software. This confusion was also prevalent in the Authority's survey with many listing products like CARMS as their EDM software. 50% chose not to answer which may indicate that confusion or that document management products are not widespread. 66% had not developed guidelines for EDM.

EDM is expected to be a big growth area within information management. The Authority is concerning itself with EDM as many electronic documents have to function as records and,



consequently, sound EDM provides a measure of control and protection. The Authority's publication *Desktop Management: Guidelines for Managing Electronic Documents and Directories* has been designed to assist organisations to understand this complex area.

#### Issues

The final questions on the survey focused on what agencies regard as their greatest challenges associated with recordkeeping, what they wish to achieve in the next five years, and what they consider their major strengths. For each of these questions we received a huge variety of responses. We have listed the most common responses below.

#### *What agencies see as their greatest challenges:*

- promotion of a recordkeeping culture within the organisation
- electronic recordkeeping
- keeping records staff interested and skilled
- storage and space management

#### *What agencies wish to achieve in the next 5 years:*

- establish formal policies and procedures
- consistent and maintained filing systems
- introduce quality standards
- manage electronic documents and records
- train all staff

#### *What agencies see as their greatest strengths:*

- achieve results
- gain support of peers and management
- an efficient records management program software program
- skills of staff

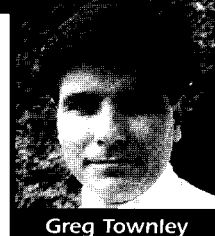
#### Conclusions

The survey has revealed a number of very positive trends in records management in the NSW public sector. For example 80% now have a formal recordkeeping program. There is a widespread awareness of the need for security restrictions and the identification of vital records. Many agencies have provisions for storage of records of long term retention and the disposal status of records is often identified at creation, at least for paperbased records. Classification, either by using controlled vocabularies or thesauri is also commonly practiced, although it is not as widely applied to electronic records.

There are particular areas requiring attention, however. One of the most important of these is the area of fundamental documentation supporting the records management program. Policies, plans and procedures for the records management programs are often neglected and guidelines on electronic messages and records are not commonly produced by agencies. When it comes to recording business transactions made in meetings, by voice mail, orally and

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in telephone discussions, few agencies produce guidance for their staff. Such neglect will undoubtedly disadvantage the organisation. Staff must be made aware of when they need to create records and the correct procedures, in order for the organisation to meet its accountability requirements. The Archives Authority has already produced a number of draft standards, policies and guidelines to assist agencies and will continue to do so.

Recordkeeping practices such as the implementation of performance audits, the training of staff, the development of disaster recovery plans and sentencing by disposal schedules are also not widespread within agencies. One of the unintended benefits of the survey has been to highlight the need for these processes. The Archives Authority will have an important role in helping agencies to meet these needs.

As expected, most electronic recordkeeping issues are causing great concern in agencies. Even within the records units of agencies, there are widespread misunderstandings about electronic records. Few have developed policies, training and guidance for the staff in their organisations and few understand electronic document management. People working in the electronic environment require more extensive training and advice, some of which the Authority is in the process of developing.

The Archives Authority's survey has achieved what it was intended to do: to provide a valuable baseline for measuring the impact of the Authority's policies, standards and guidance over the next few years. It has also allowed Authority staff to identify a variety of recordkeeping issues which are of concern so that strategies can be developed to assist agencies in meeting the challenges,

and grasping the opportunities, that lie ahead.

Anyone wishing to obtain a full copy of the Archives Authority's survey results can contact Janet Knight on (02) 9237 0107 or Email: porks1@records.nsw.gov.au .

The draft policies and standards and Desktop Management Guidelines referred to above are available on the Authority's Web site:

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au>

or can be purchased by contacting the Administrative Officer on (02) 9237 0120 or email: rmonsw.record.gov.au .

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# Records Management Listserv

**D**o you have access to the Internet? If you do, the following will be of great interest to you. Did you know that there is a discussion group on the Internet dedicated solely to records management?

The Records Management Listserv was initiated in 1989 by Anne Smith of Syracuse University, New York. Maralyn Harmston, (Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah) was the chair of the Educational Institutions Industry Action Committee (now known as the Industry Specific Groups ISG) of ARMA International, and fully supported the initiative.

The membership has expanded from just educational institutions to any one, any where in the world who has access to the Internet and is interested

in records management. The current membership boasts about 1800 members with at least twenty countries represented. Last count saw about 100 Australians contributing to the list. It is a fairly active group with about 20-30 messages being posted each day. Topics include anything from the basics of records management, Email issues, imaging, legal issues to philosophical issues such as digitised signatures, life of media, and professional ethics. I have found it a very valuable source of information.

You can choose to regulate your participation, eg, to scan through the messages (alurker!), or to actively participate in any issue. The service is free. To sign up for membership, send your request to: [LISTSERV@LISTSERV.SYR.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.SYR.EDU) with the message: SUBSCRIBE

RECMGMT (your first and last name, omit parenthesis). With your successful subscription, you will receive a confirmation from the system and a "Welcome" message from the host that tells you how to use the list. (The uppercase above is only used as an emphasis and is not necessary to address or subscribe to the list). For further information contact myself.

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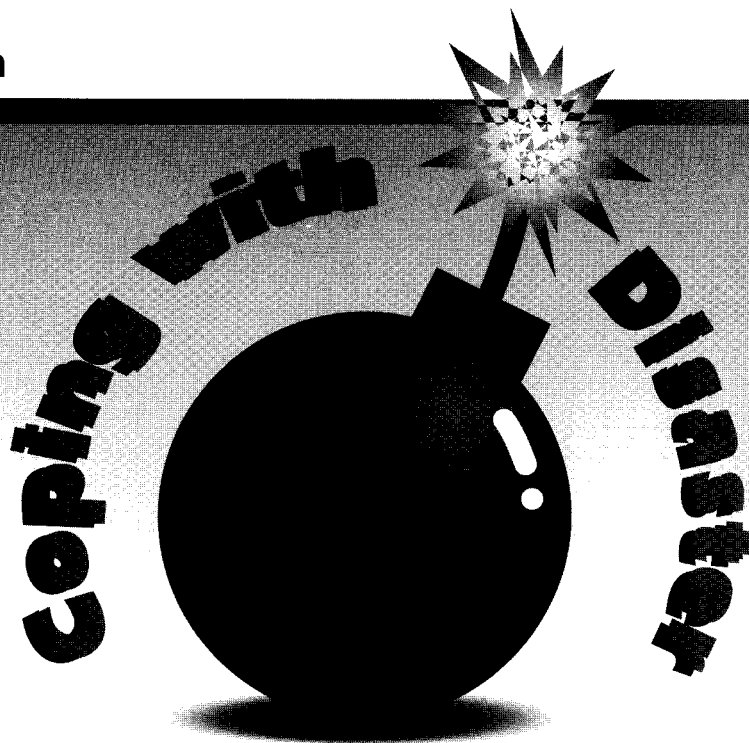
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## Strategies for the Records Manager

### Author

by Stephen Yorke

*The writer is a project officer in the Custody and Preservation Section of the Australian Archives in Canberra. His areas of interest include disaster management, electronic records, outsourcing of records related functions, and the future directions of the records and information professions.*

### Introduction

**T**here is a high probability records managers will at some time in their working life face a situation where records are at risk or destroyed as a result of events which are beyond their control. In ascending order, such situations may range from a leaking sprinkler system in an office area, a fire that threatens the entire building, and a locality disaster such as widespread flooding that affects many organisations. An assumption in much literature on disaster management<sup>1</sup> for records is that the necessary resources and expertise are available to the records manager for undertaking all necessary prevention and response measures.

This paper discusses some of the options for approaches to disaster management in organisations. Its intention is:

- to assist records managers in situations where it is not possible to undertake comprehensive disaster management; and
- suggest strategies for the best use of restricted resources.

### Background

There is a general agreement from a records perspective on the types of action required to prevent a disaster and to recover from a disaster situation. Similarly, there is no shortage of instructional material on how to establish and manage a counter-disaster program. Such materials range from those found in standard records management literature such as the *Records Management Handbook*<sup>2</sup> and such basic sources as the Australian Standard for Records Management<sup>3</sup>. The management requirements from an institutional or large scale holdings perspective are covered best in specialist library and archival literature. The specialist material goes on to provide detailed instructions on recovery processes for damaged records in the various formats and media<sup>4</sup>.

It is unknown how many organisations and business sites do in fact have comprehensive disaster plans in place for their records. In addition, of those in existence, just how many are tested regularly and updated? Testing and

updating are equally as important as development: an outdated plan is of no use to anybody and can further complicate problems by (for example) listing out of date contact persons and phone numbers. At a simpler level, how many organisations even identify their Vital Records and actively protect them?

I would suggest from experience and anecdotal evidence there would be few plans in organisations for records related activities which meet the agreed criteria concerning development, implementation, regular testing, and periodic updating. By way of comparison, a survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that some 69% of Government IT sites had no disaster plans<sup>5</sup>.

The current business environment can be characterised by general trends such as down-sizing, cost-cutting, outsourcing, and a general concentration on core activities. As such, it is not surprising that staff and other resources are not being devoted to disaster and contingency planning by organisations. But unfortunately, quite often after the event there is a belief that necessary plans should have been in place and that somebody should have been responsible for preventing the situation or minimising its effects.



At the same time, it must be said that disaster planning failure is not just a resource issue but also a result of complacency by staff and attitudes such as:

**It can't happen here**

*But if it does*

**It will not leave me responsible**

*But if it does*

**Then there will be help and other resources available.**

All these statements are untrue.

### **Approaches to Disaster Planning**

Good disaster planning in an organisation is not an exact science but rather an attempt to plan adequately for the business needs of the organisation. Such plans will need to change over time in the light of practical experience, changing views on the business needs, and change to disaster planning approaches generally.

There are as well different ways of dealing with planning requirements. For example, there is the 'Big Plan' approach. The Big Plan attempts to comprehensively document all responsibilities of the various staff and to identify appropriate responses to all possible situations. These possibilities range from building evacuation in case of a bomb threat to detailed instructions for handling the different records media which might be involved in a disaster. This approach is favoured particularly in cultural institutions where the holdings are the centre-piece of their function (such as in art galleries).

The Big Plan approach poses significant problems not the least being that it is out of date before its formal issue. At a minimum, this type of approach requires a co-ordinator who is sufficiently senior and committed so as to gain the necessary resources as well as the active co-operation of all areas of the organisation. Other major problems are caused by staff turnover and

inexperience, costs for training staff in terms of its implementation, and the cost of regularly updating the Plan. A significant problem in practical terms is that due to their sheer size (possibly 100 pages or more) they can be impossible to use in a real emergency. For example, to identify what should be done in the particular situation and just who is responsible for doing it.

A more recent approach to disaster management has been that of minimalist planning. For example, issuing a double-sided card that provides instructions about responses to bomb threats and fire alarms and concentrates on building evacuation procedures. But the existence of emergency control processes<sup>6</sup> should not be confused with the necessity for a proper plan for disaster management that covers both prevention and recovery processes.

A new factor in recent years has been the introduction by various commercial suppliers of a comprehensive disaster recovery service. Such a service can include recovering data from damaged computers, cleaning of water and smoke affected offices, and conservation of water or fire damaged records. The existence of such services can be very useful in practical terms. But again they are no substitute for proper planning. In fact, they can be dangerous by causing complacency on the part of organisations by having them believe that all problems are solvable.

A recent trend has been the move to see disaster management as part of a wider approach best known as Business Continuity Planning (BCP). BCP as a concept is most often linked or considered in connection with IT specific activities. However, the IT field itself equates 'disaster' with system failure or outage, or the loss of electronic records. It is critical that organisations consider the requirements of all its records no matter what format they are held in.

### **Risk Management**

At the organisation or business level, probably the most effective starting point for a consideration of disaster management issues is to identify the risks likely to be faced by your business areas and functional activities. The next step is to determine the most efficient counter-measures for each source of risk. The Australian/New Zealand Standard on managing risk<sup>7</sup> proposes a six step process for carrying out risk management. These steps cover:

- identification of the organisational context
- risk identification
- risk analysis
- assessment and prioritisation of risks
- treatment of risks
- and the monitoring and review of the system.

The Standard contains a more detailed practical assessment methodology that is applicable to business organisations.

Such a comprehensive approach to risk management on an organisational basis can be a very complex task and have significant resource implications. These problems are not only in undertaking the assessment in the first place. But also in developing and implementing strategies, then in reviewing strategies, and then in keeping them current. The temptation is therefore not to worry about the possibility of disaster because the situation can take care of itself or to tend to rely on others to do the planning and necessary management. For example, if there was a major building fire the requirements of the records manager could be insignificant in terms of the needs of the whole organisation. Thus there would be less need for the records manager to take direct responsibility for the needs of the records in such a situation. This attitude is wrong.

In simple terms, the relative probability and likely cost of various types of disaster situations are as depicted in Diagram 1.

As you move up the scale, not only will costs increase but so will the involvement of other parts of the business and of the emergency services such as the fire brigade in stabilising the situation. The same situation occurs with the restoration processes: the bigger the disaster the more that specialist services are necessary for rebuilding and refitting the establishment, and preserving damaged records, and so forth.

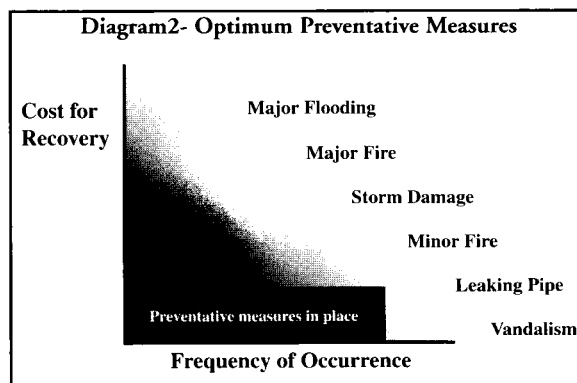
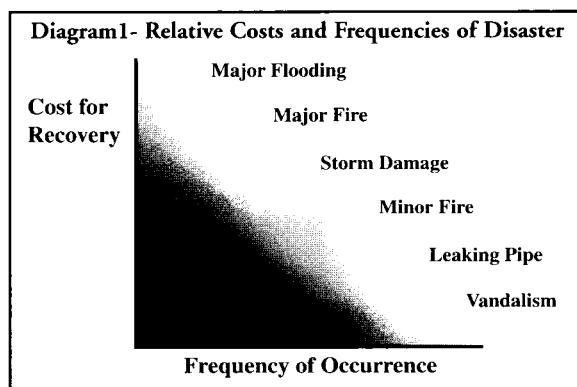
The result can be that ultimately no-one is responsible for the needs of the records. Alternatively, their needs are overlooked until it is too late because the records were not realised as being significant. In simple terms, it is one thing to explain to management that you were overwhelmed by the situation but quite another to explain that you never thought it could happen so you didn't bother to take any pro-active measures.

But if senior management does not support the comprehensive approach to disaster planning, then where does this leave records managers and what can they do in a practical sense? At best, it is likely they will have very few resources to devote to disaster issues. In particular, attending to those preventative or planning type issues which require staff time which is just not available or active participation by staff from other areas of the organisation.

In this situation I would suggest that the records manager concentrate on undertaking obvious practical preventative measures rather than worrying about the ideal response to the most obvious source of risks.

For example, in an office environment a low level disaster affecting records will most probably involve water from a broken pipe or burst sprinkler. At a minimum, the records manager should undertake preventative action such as ensuring records are put away safely when not in use, that records are not left directly on the floor, and other similar simple actions. This is a practicable approach as opposed to (for example) complaining about the short-comings of the records storage

If this type of strategy is adopted by the records manager, then if a disaster does occur then there is a reliance on the resources for the disaster response being provided from within the organisation or for it to buy outside expertise. The records manager should also have an idea of what resources would be required and where the necessary expertise is available. *This resource reliance should be spelled out to management in no uncertain terms.*



area - and is unlikely to be improved. Such an approach is depicted in Diagram 2.

In this approach, the preventative measures would only adequately cover needs at the low level, i.e. they ignore the possibility and response requirements necessary for a major disaster.

In these situations an 'ounce of prevention' is certainly far cheaper than the cure and is within the resources available to the records manager.

However, there is a limit to the effectiveness of this type of strategy. The limit is either a disaster confined to the business site or a limited local area at best. For example, an event that is restricted to an individual office building or perhaps a few city blocks affected by (say) flooding. In these situations, the necessary expertise and other resources can be acquired for site rehabilitation. Also, to carry out any expert preservation treatment on the records in the necessary time-frame for the particular affected media (paper, film, magnetic tape, etc.)<sup>8</sup>.

The strategy outlined above will not work with the wide-area disaster. Such disasters can take many forms including cyclones in tropical areas such as in Darwin and Townsville (1974 and 1971), major flooding in Brisbane (1974), major earthquakes in Newcastle and Adelaide (1989 and 1954). No area in Australia is immune from such disasters<sup>9</sup> but the possibility and effects are overlooked in most Australian literature.

By way of example, the following scenario could occur in any city situated on a river:

*What was originally a forecast of heavy rain only on the Friday completely and unexpectedly continued unstopped over*





the weekend. By Monday morning the river flowing through the city rose to the point where it broke its banks. Thousands of hectares and several suburbs are covered by up to metres of water for what is estimated to be several days. The flood level is higher than any previously recorded. General flood damage is very significant: road and rail traffic is blocked and utilities such as power supply and sewerage systems are affected across the entire area <sup>10</sup>.

A business organisation keeps its not inconsiderable paper records in a records centre on the first floor of an office building (three metres up). The centre has four staff. The records manager lives some ten kilometres away and was not personally affected by the flood. However, access to the records centre site was first prevented by the flood level and then by debris blocking roads, etc. Access was not obtainable

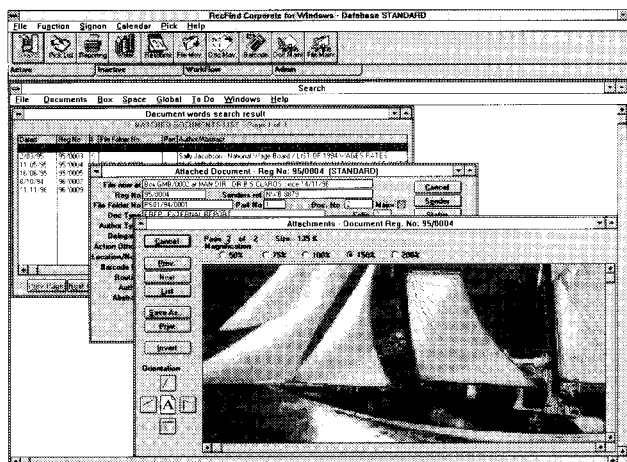
until the Thursday after the flood when it was found that half the shelved records had been under water for some days.

The records manager after some hours realises there will be little or no outside assistance available for quite some time (what assistance is available is being directed to the needs of people directly affected such as the homeless). Thus there will be no builders; no plumbers; no IT recovery experts; no professional conservators. But the records manager is expected to do their bit towards recovery. The disaster plan in place did not anticipate a flood of the type and size experienced. So, what can the records manager do under the circumstances?

The answer in short is that the records manager can do very little. The submerged records are likely to become mould affected - if this has not already occurred. Mould prevention requires

their immediate freezing or accelerated drying to stabilise their condition. Unfortunately, there is likely to be a long queue of organisations with similar needs at any working freezing plant. Any attempt at air-drying would require their movement from the current damp environment to a secure facility that has the significant floor space required by air-drying processes. Moving wet records requires resources such as appropriate rigid and water resistant containers and transport vehicles. But again - even if these resources were available - such a secure facility is going to be hard to find if only because of competition from other organisations with storage needs. And not to be forgotten are the undamaged records. These will require removal from such a damp environment to prevent them also being affected by mould and to allow for proper rehabilitation of the centre.

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I would suggest (given scenario conditions outlined above) that a decision be reached that further attention to recovery of the damaged records in their entirety is likely a waste of time. The records manager and available staff could concentrate on the following activities:

1. Identifying and preserving any vital records (however defined).
2. Ensuring that all directly damaged records are identified properly and their details listed. (This will provide evidence if necessary at any stage of whether particular records were in custody, what happened to them, and why)
3. Finding a secure home for the undamaged records (to prevent mould growth in the damp environment)
4. If it is decided that the damaged records cannot be properly treated, then the records manager should actively seek to write them off and remove them from the centre. (This is before they pose a health hazard to staff and cause damage to those unaffected records remaining).

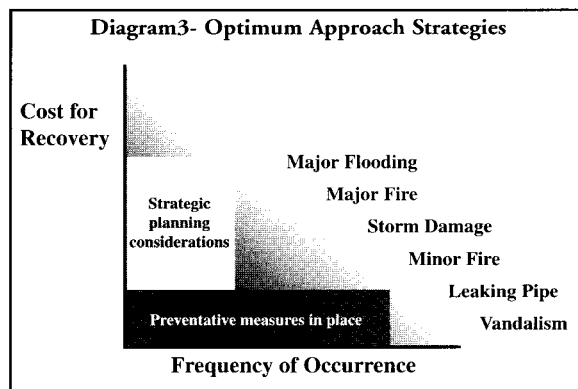
## Conclusions

Considering the scenario, what are the simplest management measures or strategies records managers could generally adopt? Some are:

1. Approach issues more with the worst case possibility in mind and not the most likely possibility. A plan and response to (say) an earthquake should be able to scale down to deal with the problems of a burst water pipe. A reverse approach or mind-set is unlikely to deal with a 'big picture' problem: you cannot scale up very quickly or easily to the very large problems if all you have considered are the least damaging possibilities.

Make it a habit to think about possible problems and their optimum solutions. This should make it easier (and more effectively) to cope with any real life problems. But - at the same time - do implement preventative measures for the low level events. This dual approach is depicted in Diagram 3.

2. Know which are your vital records and identify them in some unique way. This is because if records must be moved in a hurry or require preservation treatment then - (for example) - the quantity and transport needs are easily



determined. In a worst case situation you can deal with some records but not all. Post-disaster, the more time spent determining which records are the priorities then the fewer the priority records that will be able to be treated.

3. Have the equivalent to a Duty Officer in place 24 hours a day. In this situation, a duty officer living nearby would know and undertake the agreed response if (for example) flooding was likely to occur. And they could take positive action without general discussion or having to be first contacted through a formal chain of command. The Duty Officer may not be able to do a great deal but a delayed response may prove fatal to the records.

4. Have a short disaster plan which covers the critical points of your requirements starting with simple matters such as emergency contact names and telephone numbers.

But - best of all - is to have a disaster plan for your organisation or functional area that is:

- properly developed,
- understood by staff,
- tested, and
- regularly updated.

## References / Definitions

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, a 'disaster' is defined as an event which damages or destroys in some way records of value to an organisation. The records may be in paper, electronic, or other formats. A disaster situation may not involve any injury to persons.

<sup>2</sup> *Records Management Handbook*. 2nd edition. Penn I.A; Pennix, G.; Coulson, J, Gower Publishing, Aldershot. 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Standard for Records Management AS 4390.6-1996 *Storage*.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Judith Fortson *Disaster Planning and Recovery. A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians and Archivists*. Neal-Schuman Publishers Inc. New York, 1992. A very practical approach to all contingencies can be found in *Disaster Management in British Libraries - Project Report with Guidelines for Library Managers*. Library and Information Research Report 109. The British Library Board, 1996.

A useful book for the non-expert is Ross Harvey. *Preservation in Australian and New Zealand Libraries*. 2nd edition Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, 1993.



<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics  
*Government Information Technology  
Australia 1993-94*. Catalogue No.  
8119.0, November 1996.

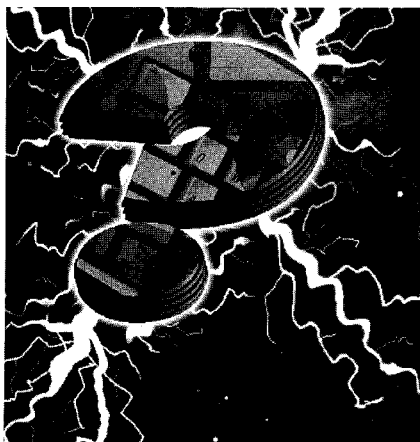
<sup>6</sup> For such evacuation and similar  
requirements generally, see: Australian  
Standard AS 3745-1995 *Emergency  
Control Organisation and Procedures  
for Buildings*.

<sup>7</sup> Australian/New Zealand Standard  
AS/NZS 4360:1995 *Risk Management*.  
For a discussion of various risk  
management strategies see: Pember,  
M.E. *Information Disaster Planning:  
An Integral Component of Corporate  
Risk Management*. Records Manage-  
ment Quarterly, April 1996.

<sup>8</sup> As an example, mould growth on  
wet paper can become significant  
within as little as 48 hours. If the  
records are not soon stabilised after  
that time then they can be effectively  
written-off.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the possibilities  
of the various types of natural  
disasters in Australia see: Johnson,  
R.W. Blong R.J. *Natural Hazards :  
their Potential in the Pacific Southwest*.  
Australian Geological Survey  
Organisation, Canberra 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Such a flooding scenario is quite  
possible in cities in Australia as  
diverse as Brisbane, Newcastle, and  
Canberra.



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# Federal Education Committee

## Report

### Record Educators Forum

**L**ate last year I represented the RMAA at the Record Educators Forum. This meeting was held in Melbourne and representatives of tertiary institutions across Australia, ASA and ACA attended. The meeting was most informative and was yet another move towards closer cooperation between records managers and archivists. One of the major outcomes for the day was the establishment of a Research Sub-Committee.

The terms of reference for this sub-committee are:

- to develop as top priority an application for ARC (Australian Research Council) collaborative grant with industry involving a number of universities and appropriate partners
- to facilitate the above, seeking seed funding from ACA for a consultant to assist with the development and writing of the application. Work has now commenced in these two areas
- develop research agenda for endorsement by Forum and ACA the aim being to identify up to 10 high priority areas (above topics) with the rationale being that individual applications might have a better chance of success if they relate to an 'endorsed' research area
- investigate and report on funding sources to encourage individual applications
- refine the research classification scheme for Records and Archives endorsed in principle by the Forum (also included below), and lobby for its acceptance by the ARC
- develop and maintain on Educators Forum Home Page a research report listing completed theses, theses in progress, other research and development projects.

### Draft Research Agenda

#### 1 Standards & Best Practice Models

- development of national electronic record keeping standard
- scope for application of document standards to archives management
- scope for application of diplomatics in Australian context
- development of user surveys to test expectations, information seeking behaviour, satisfaction
- feasibility of expert systems for record keeping functions.

#### 2 Records Keeping Competencies

- identification of education and training needs and development of programs for:
  - everyone as record keeper
  - record keeping specialists
- development of performance indicators to test competencies.

#### 3 Risk Management Record Keeping Nexus

- measuring the impact of record keeping success and failures for:
  - government
  - the private sector
  - the individual tax payer
- establishing compliance requirements in different contexts and measuring associated risks/perceptions of risk
- relevance to record keeping of risk assessment and management methods developed in other fields
- implications of outsourcing for records keeping
- the impact of end user and highly distributed systems on record keeping and the historical record
- investigation of record keeping behaviours/cultures- organisational/ personal
- audit methodology for record keeping systems
- performance indicators for record keeping systems.

#### 4 Metadata

- functional specification for archival information system
- defining records keeping boundaries;
  - specification of when/where to capture records
  - when/where to add value by capturing additional metadata
- development of implementation strategies
- development of software tools
- data mining and data warehousing specification of contextual metadata requirements
- document stores on Internet metadata requirements

#### 5 Encryption Record Keeping Nexus

#### 6 Archival Program Development Cycles

As mentioned under refining the research classification for Records and Archives as previously endorsed by the Forum, it presently stands as:

### Records and Archives Research Classification

- **Records and Archives**
- Functional Requirements for Record Keeping in the Personal, Business and Social Domains
- Capture, Storage, Retrieval and Delivery of Evidence of Administrative, Corporate, Cultural, and Intellectual Activity
- Analysis, Design, Implementation, and Maintenance of Record Keeping and Archival Systems
- Inter organisational Record Keeping/ Archival Systems
- Managing Knowledge Bases to Support Personal, Corporate and Social Memory
- User Services, Education and Training

- Quality Management, Control, and Audit of Record Keeping and Archival Systems
- Multimedia Record Keeping and Archival Systems
- Personal, Organisation, Legal and Social Contexts of Record keeping
- Record Keeping/Archival Theory
- Preservation of Digital Materials
- Archiving Data, Documents and Records

An ARC Grant will provide the professions with the means to do something worthwhile for all members, will enable us to add to our body of knowledge and further cement our ties to each other. The selection of an appropriate project would also be of benefit to the wider public and the private sector.

#### Course Recognition

Feedback on our Course Recognition project indicates that:

Curtin - the paperwork has been

completed and is presently with the Head of Department with anticipated delivery by the end of the February;

Edith Cowen - the position is much the same as for Curtin but the delay has been caused through the ill health of the Head of Department;

there is no news from TAFE in Western Australia.

I have not been able to contact the Education Chair in the ACT but suspect that the situation will be much the same there as mid January through until the end of March, as this is a very busy time for the tertiary sector.

**D G Wheeler ARMA**  
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## 1997 Convention Not Another Acronym!!!

**P**erhaps this thought went through your head as you read the 1997 Convention flier and saw reference to the SIG breakfasts to be held on the Tuesday and Wednesday mornings of the Convention. Well, whether they be referred to as SIGs, Special Interest Groups, or ISGs, Industry Specific Groups there is a lot to be gained from meeting and interacting with other records managers who work in your industry or area of speciality.

The professional needs of records managers are as diverse as the industries they represent and meeting in industry

groups provides a vehicle for problems to be explored and information exchanged. Innovations, procedures and compliance requirements can change quickly and it is difficult for an individual to keep pace with it all. Improved communication with industry counterparts can enable you to 'piggy back' in certain instances thereby saving your valuable resources and enabling you to deploy them elsewhere. Do not under estimate how it can assist in identifying career advancement opportunities also.

I hope as many of you as possible will take the opportunity of attending the

breakfast most appropriate to your interests. If you have submitted your registration form but not indicated attendance at a breakfast it is not too late to do so just contact

**Congress West**  
**Phone: 09 322 6906**  
**Fax: 09 322 1734.**

The breakfasts themselves will be quite informal affairs with plenty of opportunity to mingle and interact.

**Marita Keenan MRMA**  
**Chair, 1997 RMAA Convention**  
**SIG Breakfasts**



# Perceptions and Change in Records Management:

## Rethinking the Fundamentals



### Author:

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B.Bus.Cert. Records Management, MRMA  
Records Manager The University of Queensland.

*Philip's experience in records management now spans 26 years. He worked in the public sector in a variety of agencies before becoming Records Manager at the University of Queensland. With a strong interest in education he is currently Vice President (Education and Professional Development) Qld Branch of the RMAA, he is also Convenor of the Federal Committee on Standards and Technology. He is currently completing studies in the Master of Arts (Archives & Records) at Monash University.*

### Abstract:

*Today more than ever records management is facing a number of challenges. As the pace of organisational change quickens many of the fundamentals that had been thought could not be changed are facing a challenge. The time is ripe to consider our position, identify the issues which can help plan the future with some assurance and commence the journey. This paper identifies some of the fundamental issues and assesses their relevance for the future.*

*Records management is the planning, control, directing, organising, promoting, and other managerial activities, involved with respect to records creation, maintenance, use and disposition' or is it?*



### Traditional Records Management

**T**he traditional view of records management has been to perceive it as a set of basic clerical processes by which records were managed. Where each step such as classification, indexing, sentencing and disposal were linked together to form a coordinated set of practices for the control of current records. Little attention was paid to understanding how records came into existence, the forces within organisations which resulted in records being generated, how best to capture records and establish systems which retained records with real meaning as evidence of business transactions and how to institute into organisational culture the importance of records as part of the accountability processes. Nor was the issue of how records are to be used both internally and increasingly by individuals and organisations external to the originating agency.

Today the world is a very different place to that which existed when some of the basic tenants of records management were developed. The time is ripe to reassess our past, learn from the errors and consider the strategic direction for records management into the 21st century.

Our past is not blemish free. There have been blunders, who can forget the paperless office so openly promoted in the 1970's and blindly accepted as truth and the promotion of microfilm as the universal solution to storage and retrieval problems. A period of reflection is called for to take stock of where we are and to consider the future.

It has been said that to understand the future, examine the past. Records management, as it is understood today, first emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. Prior to this keeping records as an activity had existed but its influence had considerably waned from the days when it was one of most important tasks of a community and the recordkeeping function performed by the most trusted and well educated<sup>2</sup>.

The modern conceptual framework for records management was developed by American archivists who were trying to develop a system to control the growth of records to assist in reducing the quantity of records which had occurred due to the rapid growth in the size and complexity of American Government immediately following WWII. The basic concept of what was then known as the "life history" of records was set out by the American archivist Philip Brooks.<sup>3</sup> A historian by training, Brooks set out his hypothesis that records which required appraisal could be best controlled through the development of systems which ensured records were captured, recorded in a system, cared for and maintained and when the unwanted material had been destroyed the archivist collected the remainder.

The "life history" of the record was soon adapted into the "life Cycle" approach with which most records managers would be familiar. The theory was that recorded information had a life similar to a biological organism in that it is born (creation), it lives (maintenance and use) and eventually

dies (disposal phase), the remains became fossils (archives).<sup>4</sup> The life cycle concept has dominated records management and has provided its foundations for around 50 years. However, its age is starting to now show and there is the need to look to at new understandings of archives and records management by developing a model which focuses upon the purposes of records as distinct from the past which essentially focussed upon the format and then attempted to build processes which best matched the physical attributes to the detriment of the overall value of the records.

Today, there is a greater understanding and appreciation in organisations of the need to develop systems to protect the records generated as part of the outcome of organisational functioning. Records are more being seen as one of the outcomes of both public and private business activity. This aspect is important to understand because it takes us to the heart of one of the most important issues confronting those involved in keeping records what documentary evidence exists of the activities of the employees.

### Records As Evidence

The concept of records as evidence is not new. It has existed for a considerable period of time but the 1980's heralded a new era in providing the public with stark examples of how records as evidence could be used to determine accountability. The 1980's provided a raft of public sector reforms. Freedom of Information legislation is perhaps the best known for it has had a significant impact on government agencies who have had to address the issue through establishing new procedures and revamping records management systems to cope with request for access to documents. Other administrative law reforms saw Judicial review, Administrative Reviews and in some jurisdictions privacy legislation.

The notoriety that many government and private business earned in the 1980's culminated in a series of high profile investigations and in some cases Royal Commissions which investigated in detail the modus operandi of various activities.

The absence or in some cases the wilful destruction of documents was a serious impediment to a full investigation. The WA Inc Royal Commission noted "the absence of effective public record keeping has dogged this Commission and its inquiries. Records provide the indisputable chronicle of a governments stewardship. They are the first defence against concealment and deception."<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that there is a developing trend in the community which judges the behaviour of public officials by examining the evidence contained in records pertaining to their activities. The "sports rorts" affair<sup>6</sup> and aboriginal women's secret business are two recent examples. It is now quite easy to spot others as the general community becomes more aware of the accountability concept.

It can be clearly established that the evidential characteristics of records can and will play an increasingly important role in records management. The records and accountability nexus is one that is likely to reap rewards for records managers keen to improve the general recordkeeping standards in organisations.<sup>7</sup>

To support accountability in organisations record systems need developing which ensure that records of sufficient evidentially quality are generated, captured and controlled throughout the life of the organisation and beyond it if the organisation ceases to exist.

During the time records management has existed in its modern setting, few have questioned the way it has

functioned and operated. There appears to be a time warp into which records management disappeared and eventually awoke when the computer based records management systems started to appear in the market in the early 1980's. Instead of addressing some of the fundamental issues such as properly defining records management and determining where the emphasis should be on the record or the system, the easy option was taken and the old theories recycled. Computer systems were seized upon and implemented without much thought as to whether there existed an opportunity to rethink the fundamentals. With the continual changes in organisations, both at organisational and technological levels it is little wonder that records management continues to be seen as a marginal activity, not widely understood and peddling theories from generations ago.

### New Definitions

Now is the time to rethink the fundamentals of records management, to refocus on the prime purposes and objectives and to set goals which will result in records management being awarded recognition as an integral part of administrative procedures and involved with all parts of the organisation.

In thinking about an agenda for the future some sacred cows need to be sacrificed, where better to begin with than looking at the definition of records management. Any records management text book can be consulted the problem is that they all have different definitions. With no generally accepted definition how can the problems be overcome. As a first step it is clear that a standard definition needed to be developed. A definition that is meaningful to the profession, one that is clearly understood and able to be communicated to the external community. The definition

quoted at the commencement of this article has been adopted by the RMAA and used for many years. Its limitations are evident as it focuses upon the record but avoids mention of the records in a contextual basis, that is to manage records through systems which themselves have built into them procedures for capturing the context of the record, accuracy, authenticity and timeliness and evidence of actions taken. Records cannot be isolated from the influences which resulted in their creation. Upward and McKemmish have developed the notion of the archival document in an attempt to better define what constitutes a record. Their definition "the record of a transaction is only properly useful for current and historical purposes when it has the qualities of completeness, accuracy and reliability". Archival documents first and foremost provide evidence of the transactions of which they are a part. From this they derive their meanings and informational value<sup>8</sup>.

The recent definition of records management in Records Management Standard AS4390 1/6<sup>9</sup> provides an important opportunity to change many of the prevailing attitudes regarding records management. The new definition moves from a view that records management is concerned with doing something with records after the organisation has determined the format, content and procedures for creating and maintaining the records. The definition in the standard places records management issues in the forefront of business activity and challenges managers to respond and what it represents. These changes herald another significant shift in thinking amongst the archival and records management community. That is the drawing together from archives and records management who are able to discern the subtle arguments and articulate the concepts

that the key to successfully managing records lie, either wholly in records management concepts such as the life cycle and classification systems likewise archivists who persuade themselves that the key to managing archives is to focus upon collecting records. The stereo types of the archivist playing with old records should disappear the same as the stereo type of the bumbling file clerk should be discarded. The overlap between the appraisal archivist and the records manager concerned with developing systems which manage records regardless of classification is a phenomena of the 1990's. The reshaping of the profession into a recordkeeping profession as currently underway at Monash university is trailblazing and perhaps the clearest indication that a new breed of individual educated on a different basis to the proceeding generation is gradually penetrating the field. Those who wish to retain faith in the life cycle mindset, risk being marginalised and only perceived as capable of maintaining the filing system.

### The Recordkeeping System

The centre piece of the new thinking is not the record but the record-keeping system. This is not to be confused with traditional controls of classification, indexing and file movements. Recordkeeping systems impact directly upon the organisation by ensuring records are properly created according to what the organisation believes are its requirements to function and be accountable for its actions. The activity which is central to the issue is that of ensuring that the record is properly created according to the policies and conventions of the agency and the recordkeeping professions, that the systems planned and used maintain the integrity of the record and that the business transactions conducted and recorded in the daily course of business establish the evidentiality of the record. The focus becomes the recordkeeping system not

the records. This is an important distinction and one that needs to be properly understood. The proper planning of a system which delivers records as evidence of business transactions based upon sound business practices and supported by an independent standard to which the record system has been developed moves records management from a low skilled occupation to one which requires people with flair and innovative minds.

The observant reader will notice that a conscious effort has been made to avoid the use of information and records as interchangeable terms. In rethinking the fundamentals of records management the question needs to be asked are we concerned with information or recorded information contained within records. For they are not the same. Information can be anything, read, seen or heard. It may be right or wrong. Information can be displayed on a computer screen to disappear at a touch of the keyboard. Information is thus intangible it is odourless, colourless and untouchable. Much has been made of the information management revolution. RMAA conventions and conferences have over many years heard from many people expounding the virtues of information. The rhetoric has not been matched by reality. There is little evidence to suggest that records management has moved beyond the filing and into the wider issues of managing records within organisations through the development of systems and policies which identify and tackled the problem head on rather than being a passive bystander disregarded by management. While it is difficult to plot these changes, if they are occurring, the main avenues for discussion and debate such as through the pages of Informaa Quarterly and papers presented at conventions and conferences indicate little change. The focus remains upon solving problems through technology, little

time is spent on questioning the founding practices of records management.

However, there has been significant change to records management methods over the years. Control records which used to principally consist of large volumes or draws of cards have been replaced with computers but the records of business transactions remain mostly paper. The control exercised through classification systems which bring order and arrangement largely remain as do the main access and movements through physical access to a file by action officers. The advent of computerised records management systems allowed new methods to evolve, but the essential tools of classifying, indexing, searching and movements did not alter. Computers did not force fundamental issues to be addressed, issues such as what was being created, the format, workflow, and standards. Records management computer systems married basic records management methods to systems for organising work. Computers removed much of the tedious work and improved times for recording and retrieval. But they also fostered a blinkered approach which has resulted in the same problems occurring which existed prior to computers. Records managers still complain about limited resources, lack of recognition within organisations and the never ending demands to do more with less.

There was a failure to properly address the issues which confronted records management when it became clear that technology was an important new influence. Instead of being active contributors towards seeing records management considered an integral part of administrative processes the technology wagged the dogs tail. Technology was grasped by the technologists who became the information experts. If in doubt check out the jobs in the newspapers.

## Imaging Systems

One of the emerging issues for records managers will be to critically examine new technology as it emerges. It is probably not too late to start with Imaging Systems. Although they have been around for a decade they have not penetrated into records management to become everyday technology. For any organisation considering the change there still remains the requirement to carefully examine the use and to develop a clear plan. The technology remains expensive and its potential uses and its limitations need to be understood. Records managers involved with assessing technology must become conversant with functional analysis, modelling, systems architecture and data management principles which contribute to the design of systems which deliver complete, accurate, reliable and useable records. This

type of technology radically alters the traditional view of records management as seen through the life cycle approach. Disposal is substituted for permanency. It is difficult to dispose of documents imaged onto a disc in the same way as it is with paper records. The storage problems are resolved but the problem is replaced with technological obsolescence and the identification and retention of records of enduring value. Migration has been suggested as a solution to this problem but committing to new systems every few years is expensive and still does not overcome the problem of data matching. Anyone who has experience in transferring data from one system to another will know the problems. The bottom line is optical systems may be excellent for the storage of short term records however, think very carefully about the consequences for the future for records of continuing value.

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What trends and developments are likely over the next decade which will influence the direction of records management? If the time is taken to scan the environment a number of important issues can be identified which are worthwhile examining.

## The Myth of the Information Manager

In the 1970's and 80's it was trendy to talk about the new and emerging role that some had identified as the Information Manager. For role read "job opportunities". The role envisaged of the Information Manager was variously described as "the principal technical adviser to top and middle management levels in the organisation by providing technical expertise and counsel on such matters as information planning, information budgets, information security measures, reliability of information sources, cost effective information services, products, new information technology..."<sup>10</sup>

Today the reality is that these positions have not eventuated. The information manager did not replace the records manager as the prime source of administration regarding records. Why? It was never very likely that a new occupation would grow out of something if the fundamentals underpinning the work did not change or there was no perceived change to the role. Changing from records management to information management means little if no supporting concepts are presented. Traditionally, records management was connected to the management of the paper-based business records. The stuff of files, letters, reports, memorandum and minutes, control was exercised through classification systems, indexes and disposal systems. Today much remains the same the only change is the use of computers as tools of control. The work remains essentially paper based and uses files

to capture the essential business activity, for paper remains the essential means of communication which does not require a machine to read a document.

A browse of newspaper advertisements for records management positions advertised in the past 12 months reveals that employers are seeking staff capable of delivering a records management service based upon exercising controls over paper based documentation. No mention of providing services such as information planning, budgets, security, cost effectiveness or new technology.

Lets be proud to be records managers. We should not feel embarrassed to be seen to maintain paper records they are after all the foundation for the corporate memory and will continue to be so for an awfully long time.

## Records Management Standard AS 4390

If one is seeking indications of the maturity of the records management profession then the advent of AS 4390 would have to be seen as the great leap forward. While it maybe easy to criticise the document in regard to a particular sentence or word, it is much harder to fault the vision it presents. Records managers have access to a document which presents the concepts and methods of modern records management in the business environment. The document breaks new ground in articulating the concepts of the records continuum which draws together the principles of archival management and blends them with records management practices to provide an outcome which best demonstrates the value of good recordkeeping to an organisation.

The records management standard provides a powerful tool for records managers to develop plans, overhaul systems and advance the use of technology based upon an agreed

framework within which the benchmark positions have been determined.

So how could the document be used? First, managements attention should be drawn to its existence. If a position of records manager or records officer exists then that is some indication that the organisation recognises the need to undertake the proper control of its records. Highlighting deficiencies and inconsistencies between current practices and the standard may convince management that there is a solution to the problem. The value in the standard is its endorsement by an independent and regarded body Standards Australia, further endorsement by the RMAA adds weight to the validity of the document. It will no longer be a case of a lone voice in the wilderness there now exists an independent source of advice.

When approaching management identify the costs and opportunities which will arise from implementation, don't shy away from unpleasant outcomes such as downsizing or outsourcing some tasks. The bottom line for management will be convincing them of the productivity gains to be made.

The standard provides an outstanding opportunity to develop systems which can independently be assessed against objective criteria and accepted by the records management community as the requirement to achieve effectiveness with recordkeeping systems. The thoroughness of the approach developed by the standard provides ample support for the development and implementation of quality systems.

## From Life Cycle to Records Continuum

In trying to develop a future for ourselves as professionals managing programs concerned with managing records there is a need to ensure we



remain relevant to the organisation. This relevance is connected to how well we perform our duties as well as ensuring that we lead the organisation into considering new ideas and being innovative in how we go about our work. Sticking to the old ways will only marginalise us and entrench perceptions about our work. Perhaps no better example can be found in that of the Records Continuum replacing the Life Cycle. The life cycle assumed that records passed through various stages creation-use-maintenance-disposal and that it was by some magical means that records as archives appeared at the end of the process. The life cycle model ignored the critical role of the recordkeeping system, avoided confronting the issue of records of continuing value and reduced the ways records could be managed to a few simple steps. It also erected an artificial barrier between the records manager and the archivist and when it came to applying the concept to electronic records gave it up and suggested turning the records into paper format and filing them. Such thinking belonged to the 1970's and will have little place in the new millennium.

The concept of the records continuum is based upon the concept of managing a record from the point of design of a recordkeeping system, that is, before records are even created through to disposal and the continuing use of records as archives.. The continuum offers an integrated approach to managing records, particularly electronic records. The records continuum model provides for disposal at several stages: systems may be appraised at the time of design of the recordkeeping system and the value of records identified when or before they are created.<sup>11</sup> The model also removes the barriers between the records manager and the archivist and allowing both to work in harmony at all times regardless of the status of the records.

The records continuum offers strategic opportunities to deliver viable record-keeping programs to organisation through broadening the way work can be undertaken, increased flexibility in delivering services which are based on quality and effectiveness.

### The Archival and Records Management Community

The archival and records management community have remained separate for many years in terms of formal relationships, representation through separate professional associations, formal education and continuing professionals education. Many people are members of both the ASA and RMAA, taking advantage of the relative strengths and interests of each group.<sup>12</sup>

Over the next decade it is likely that the two groups will split and a third group emerge. The new group is likely

to attract those who can see the additional strengths to be obtained through the development of a more holistic approach as espoused by the continuum model. The RMAA will be attractive to those with an interest in technology, filing systems and office products ignoring the role of the archivist as keeper of the corporate memory. Likewise, membership of the ASA will attract those interested in collecting records and being concerned with the historical dimension rather than seeing the broader picture. The trend is emerging, in a recent membership survey conducted by the ASA a number of people indicated that they belonged to both organisations<sup>12</sup>. This is not to suggest that there will be a formal split and a new association formed rather the existing institutions will expand to feature a broader range of views.

### Keyword AAA: A thesaurus of general terms

Keyword AAA is Australia's leading general records management thesaurus. Designed to provide control over the vocabulary used to classify, title and index your organisation's records, whatever their format, Keyword AAA:

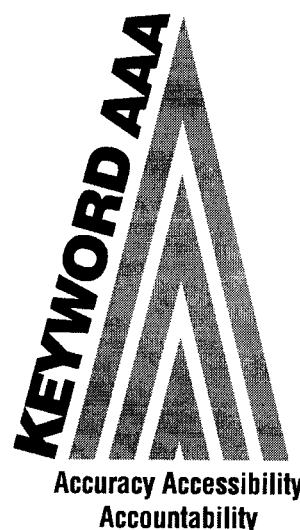
- ♦ takes a functionally-oriented approach to reflect the business activities documented by records
- ♦ uses current public management terminology
- ♦ conforms to the International Standard ISO 2788-1986
- ♦ dovetails with the NSW General Records Disposal Schedule: Administrative Records.

For more information, contact the Archives Authority of NSW on:

Tel: (02) 9237 0120  
Fax: (02) 9237 0119  
E-mail: [rmonsw@records.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rmonsw@records.nsw.gov.au)  
<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au>

For the WA public sector, contact the Public Records Office of WA on:

Tel: (09) 427 3376  
Fax: (09) 427 3368  
E-mail: [ismith@mail.lisw.wa.gov.au](mailto:ismith@mail.lisw.wa.gov.au)



### Competency Based Standards

Over the last couple of years a project has been developed to identify the competency based standards for both archivists and records management group of jobs. To understand what this involves and why the task has arisen requires a short trip to the past. Initially competency based standards were developed in a climate of microeconomic reform occurring in Australia comprising industry restructuring, award restructuring and restructuring of education and training. Competency based standards flow into maintenance of professional standards through development of explicit statements of what people need to be able to do to successfully practice as a professional. Having clear sets of standards helps to remove misunderstandings both inside and outside the profession (and) offer(s) a sound basis for judgements about entry and progression within the profession<sup>13</sup>. Competency can be judged through assessing three key elements: attributes, performance and standards.

Attributes includes knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes relating to undertaking a task. Performance relates to the ability to perform a range of tasks ranging from simple to complex and standards is how the performance of specific tasks can be judged against an appropriate standard and assessment made as to whether the task is being completed according to the standard<sup>14</sup>.

To round off the picture competency based standards involve:

- the analysis of workplace tasks or roles;
- the development of a list of tasks and; the construction of education/training/assessment programs.

The development of competency based standards provides an opportunity to learn more about records management and archival work. There is little

research in the records management field so any hard evidence regarding responsibilities, skills, knowledge and tasks performed should be warmly welcomed. It also should provide facts about gaps in current education which are impacting upon employers to recruit well trained managers able to perform to the standards required.

However, the value of the outcomes will be only as good as the effort put into gathering and analysing the data. Conclusions need to be realistic and expectations realised in terms of delivering real change. Educational institutions need to be convinced of the value of altering curriculum. It will also be critical for the professional groups to support the outcomes through incorporation of relevant areas such as entry provisions for membership and improving continuing education. There must also be a mechanism for continually updating and improving the data collected.

This is a tall order and one that will not be easily obtained. The archival and records management community are widely dispersed and fragmented. To gain an overall picture of what exists, identify gaps and then implementing outcomes acceptable to all will take some time. It will be interesting to monitor developments in the competency based standards particularly in light of political changes and the continued threat of more changes to the employment market opportunities and the methods by which jobs are valued. It would be a great disappointment to see records management work as being categorised as essentially clerical in nature with little regard given to the higher level skills required to be an effective records manager.

### The Future

Visions of the future can be developed from examining a range of current activities.

Firstly, it is probably safe to assume that many of the existing norms will not survive into the early 21st Century. Resources will continue to be tight and many positions will disappear as downsizing and outsourcing of work continues. However, it is likely that new opportunities will develop in providing services to support records management activities. These services will be imported into organisations under contracts and be for a specific period of time. New or continued contracts will be based upon performance. This means that those remaining will be working smarter to achieve higher productivity. New areas of opportunity will develop for people with versatile and flexible skills and a high level of education. For those with the vision and skills and ability to adapt to change, the future looks rosy.

We live in a turbulent environment. The norms we considered to be set in concrete are crumbling. Today we need to be smarter, flexible and more adaptive to the work environment. At the same time change can free us from the shackles of the past, it provides opportunities to change things and to create new and exciting challenges. No where is safe from change, you can either grasp the opportunities presented or be ignored. Now is the ideal time to reconsider the fundamentals of records management and to start to plot how it can be made more relevant to modern organisations.

### Bibliography

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<sup>2</sup> For a full account of the history of records management refer to the article by Luciana Duranti "The Odyssey of Records Managers", Part 1 and 2 ARMA Quarterly July and October 1989

<sup>3</sup> Brooks, P.C. "The Selection of Records for Preservation", *American Archivist*, Vol 3 No 4 October 1940

<sup>4</sup> Pennix, G., Penn, I., Coulson, J *Records Management Handbook* Second Edition, Gower, 1994 p 12

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities Of Government Section 27.2.7

<sup>6</sup> Roberts, D "Sports Rorts-Recordkeeping and Accountability", *Informaa Quarterly* Vol 10 No 3 August 1994

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent analysis of the importance of the accountability issue see Sue McKemmish "Recordkeeping, Accountability and Continuity: The Australian Reality", McKemmish, S. & Upward, F (Ed). *Archival Documents Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping*, Ancora Press, Melbourne 1993

<sup>8</sup> McKemmish, S and Upward, F. "The Archival Document: A Submission To The Inquiry Into Australia As An Information Society", *Archives and Manuscripts*, Australian Society of Archivists, Vol 19 No 1 May 1991

<sup>9</sup> AS 4390 /1-6 Australian Standard Records Management

<sup>10</sup> Brown L. "The Importance of Efficient Records Management in the Victorian Public Service", in Varghese, J (Ed), *Freedom of Information: The Legislative and Administrative Dilemma*, RMAA Victoria 1981

<sup>11</sup> Records and Recordkeeping Introducing New Concepts, Records Management Office, The Archives Authority of New South Wales, November 1994

<sup>12</sup> See survey of Memberships Australian Society of Archivists "Archive and Manuscripts" Vol 23 No 2 November 1995

<sup>13</sup> Competencies, The Professions and Higher Education. Higher Education series Department of Employment, Education and Training, Information Paper No. 2 October 1994.

<sup>14</sup> For a good overview of the Key elements of the competency based system see "Putting General Education to Work," The Australian Education Council and Ministers for Vocational Education, Employment and Training 1992 and "National Competency Standards, Policy and Guidelines" The National Training Board, 1991



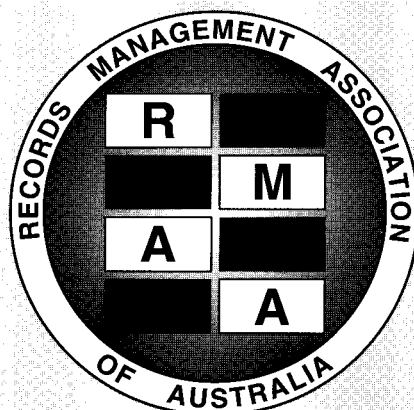
## Notice of RMAA Annual General Meeting

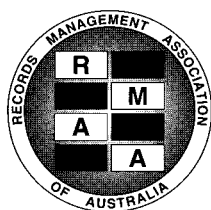
Notice is hereby given that the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Records Management Association of Australia will be held on Monday, 15 September 1997. It is to commence at 12 noon and will be held at the Radisson Observation City Hotel, Perth, Western Australia.

### 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 5.00 pm on Friday 8th August 1997.

**Michael Hangan**  
ARMA  
Executive Secretary  
Po Box 97  
BOONDALL HEIGHTS QLD 4034





# Preserving Yesterday Managing Today Challenging Tomorrow

**RMAA 14th National  
Convention  
Perth, Western Australia  
15-17 September 1997**

**P**lanning over the past two years has set the RMAA WA Branch Convention Committee up for a smooth run towards the National Convention to be held at Radisson Observation City Resort Hotel from 15-17 September this year. Hard work from the Convention Committee and Congress West, the convention organisers, has ensured that everything is on track.

We would like to formally thank **Recall**, who are the Platinum sponsors of the Convention and also sponsors for the Convention Dinner (more about the dinner later). We have had an excellent response to the sponsorship and exhibition opportunities at the Convention. In fact, over 50% of the trade exhibition space has been filled.

If there are any companies out there who are thinking about coming to Perth - do it! It is going to be a fabulous Convention and the exhibition will certainly be worth your while.

The social committee have been hard at work to ensure there are plenty of networking opportunities provided for delegates at the Convention. The Welcome Party on Sunday night will be fun and relaxed, just the thing to catch up with colleagues you haven't seen for 12 months. There are some optional tours on Sunday for those of you who arrive early, as well as tours for your partners. If you are looking for something to do on the Tuesday evening, consider the Progressive Dinner. Some committee members have already conducted quality control testing of this product and think it is so good that they will be going back for a second round during the Convention.

Back to dinner. It will be an evening to remember. It is being held in the Ballroom at the Burswood Convention Centre, and promises to be a spectacular event. As mentioned in the last registration brochure, it is a "Diggers and Dealers" night. There will be no bar brawls over wenches (maybe a few), just a rollicking good time to be had by all.

We won't let you leave Perth without a final drink. The Sundowner at the close of sessions on the Wednesday will give you one last opportunity to mingle with fellow delegates and start the countdown to Brisbane for 1998.

We've already told you what a great educational programme has been organised (Feb IQ) and now you can see that the social programme is equally as exciting - so get those registration forms in to Congress West ASAP. The Convention Organising Committee and their sub-committees have really put in a lot of effort to programme an informative and fun Convention - Congratulations!

## Trade and Sponsorship

In the last 10 years the Trade displays have grown enormously in both size and content at our National Conventions. Technology and vision have been employed by organisations to make our trade exhibitions a leader in areas of administration/management and technology.

This year we are expecting a vast range of exhibitors with some very special and interesting products to display. It goes without saying that you have to be in it to win it! - competition is very active. What a forum - The Profession in one place at one time!

Delegates will need to allocate time carefully to allow time to peruse the forty different booths. The trade Exhibition will be opened on the first day by a Government Official who is very supportive of our industry and our profession.

Sponsorship is also a very important component that enables our Convention committee to extend our financial limits, the range of speakers and social highlights provided to delegates.

Recall has filled this major role with many other organisations assisting in various other areas. We thank these

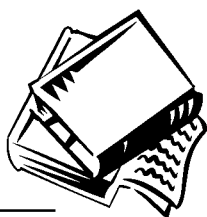
organisations and especially Recall for their commitment.

The fourteenth National Convention will provide you with an opportunity to upgrade your skills and knowledge and experience the professional change we are going through - won't the advantage be beneficial to you?

See you in Perth.

**Bonnie Allen**  
**Congress West**  
**Phone: (09) 322 6909**  
**Fax: (09) 322 1734**  
**Email: conwes@icenet.com.au**

**Register Now!!!!!!**



# Book Review

## **How to set up and implement a records management system.**

by Gloria Gold.

Amacon New York 1995.

ISBN 0 8144 0292 5

Prentice Hall Australia

Recommended Retail Price \$59.95

As the dust cover states "it is so refreshing to have records management publication that is not a textbook or a tedious manual". This book is true to its title as it really does tell the reader "how to...". Written by a highly experienced records manager and long standing consultant, Ms. Gold relates a wealth of good practical expertise in a friendly and easy to read manner. On a personal level, as a consultant, I found it reassuring to find that many of the approaches and methods used in the business with which I am associated have also been practiced and held to by Ms. Gold. In a number of respects it reminds me of William Benedon's early book "Records Management" which was published in 1969 and from which I drew on widely for good practical guidance in my early days in records management.

The book comprises three parts:

- Part 1 is entitled "The way to get management's attention" and comprises five chapters which address how to develop an understanding of your organisation, doing a records management evaluation and analysing the resultant data, developing recommendations for change and preparing the report and presentation for management.

- Part 2 is entitled "What to do when management says yes" and comprises three chapters relating to conducting a records inventory and developing a retention and disposal schedule, disposing of records and protecting records and how to set up and operate an off site records repository.
- Part 3 is entitled "Other issues in records management" and comprises 4 chapters dealing with establishing effective filing systems, forms control, benefits of types of image reduction for records and how to become a "world class" records manager!

In addition to an index a particular attribute of the book is its appendices which include a sample records management evaluation report, procedures for developing a records retention schedule and an optical disk feasibility study.

Ms. Gold is generous in the form examples she provides, her costing formulas and the graphics which can be used to support findings and recommendations. Attention should be paid to her tips from making friends with the CEO's secretary to getting an appointment with a hard to catch director.

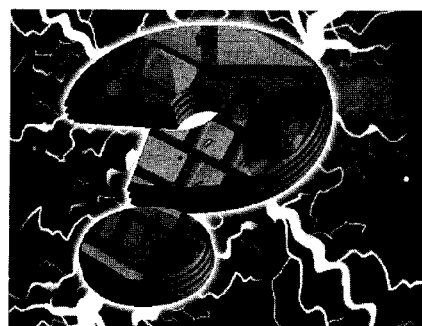
The book's North American origins can be clearly seen through the emphasis she places on savings in costly space requirements justifying records management programs, advocating of in-house records repositories and the lack of any mention of thesaurus control in relation to subject filing systems. Mention of computer systems is limited

to forms management, off site storage control, tracking and records inventories.

Australian records managers seeking guidance for the implementation of a total records management system will regret the lack of courage in areas such as developing a subject thesaurus and implementing a filing system based on it, selecting and implementing a computerised records management package and developing and implementing electronic document management policies and systems.

The book, however, is particularly strong in relation to getting management support and starting a records management program and consultants, pro-active records managers and records management students grappling with their first practical assignments will find much of value in it. Priced at \$59.95 it is a worthwhile acquisition for any tertiary library supporting records management students and is worthy of consideration for purchase by both records consultants and records managers keen to develop their professional library and practical expertise.

**Marita D. Keenam. MRMA**



**Send Your Book Reviews to: Informaa Quarterly**

**PO Box 8213 Perth Business Centre  
Perth 6849**



# Electronic Document Management

## • The New Frontier •

**T**oday's organisations literally have an abundance of information generated by multiple sources at their fingertips. The introduction of Internet technology to the workplace is broadening the reach of information. Add to this the increasing use of Intranet and Email, to name just a few, contributing even more to the amount of information flowing across our desks. Organisation's are now faced with the problem of how to control this information explosion.

Information is a valuable resource. For most Organisations 85-90% of critical information is produced or stored in a variety of electronic formats, eg word processing files, spreadsheet files, CAD systems, images, graphs, presentation formats etc, and in various directories using individually designed classifications. So how do organisation's get the most out of their information resources?

Electronic Document Management, (EDM) is viewed as the core technology needed to give organisation's control over critical business information. Some of the expected benefits gained from managing information electronically include:-

- Reduction in copying and duplication
- Multiple access to singular documents
- Savings in storage costs associated with hard copy storage
- Maintenance of document integrity and readily accessible audit facilities
- Increased speed of information dissemination
- Reduction in search time
- Better use of personnel resources.

There have been a number of conferences of late on Electronic Document Management, although informative, for the most part these have been quite expensive. Electronic Document Management - The New Frontier has been designed as a quality conference at an affordable price of \$650.00, that will allow delegates the opportunity to explore practical options for implementing efficiencies to potentially reduce organisational overheads. It will present options for working effectively, smarter not harder by using the technologies already available in most Organisations.

Quality Speakers from a variety of industries will impart their knowledge and experiences on issues such as:-

- Establishing Intranets
- Legal issues regarding electronic records
- Government policies on both the State and Federal levels
- Taxation implications
- Getting the most out of electronic information
- Internets - and providing expeditious access to appropriate information
- Management issues concerning implementation and much, much more
- Integrating images with EDM.

For further information contact;

**Tesskaz Business Services**

**Phone: (03) 9252 7319**

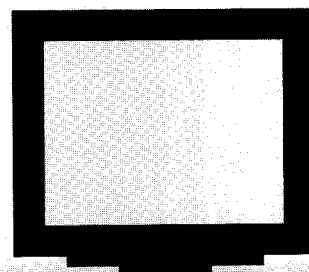
**Mobile: 0411 740 106**

**Fax: (03) 9318 6886**

**Web site:**

**<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~dmckacz/>**

*The Web site is updated regularly to show speaker profiles, and program updates.*



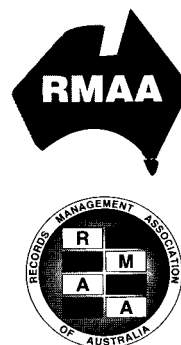


## RMAA National Poster Competition

Design a publicity poster for the RMAA to be displayed at the National Convention 1997 held in Perth.

### Specification:

- There are no rules or regulations only that your poster must contain the RMAA marketing Logo and the Official Logo
- Poster must be at least A3 size (420mm by 295mm).
- Use your imagination!!  
Your poster can be a cartoon etc, there are no limitations.



### Prize

\$250.00 Cash

**The winner will be announced on the 31st of July.**

The poster will be printed and displayed at the Perth National Convention 1997, and also at any State function held by the RMAA for the next 12 months.

**Closing Date:** 15th July 1997

**Return to:** PO Box 260  
MELTON VIC 3337

**Panel will decide winner.**



# Replacing Paper With CD

**T**hat CD-ROM is the flavour of the moment is a truism. As a result, Records managers are increasingly being pressured to condone, lobby and generally assist their clients to employ the new technology. But as Records managers well know, the solution should always be determined by the needs of the application, not merely applied blithely for the sake of fashion. And with the considerable capital investment necessary to fully implement such systems, it is not a decision to be taken lightly. So how can the client 'test' the suitability of the CD solution on his application before committing the organisation to an expensive solution?

With this dilemma in mind, The Imaging Centre, a conversion bureau of some twenty years experience in data and image capture, has come up with the perfect solution. They are offering CD resident retrieval software free of charge.

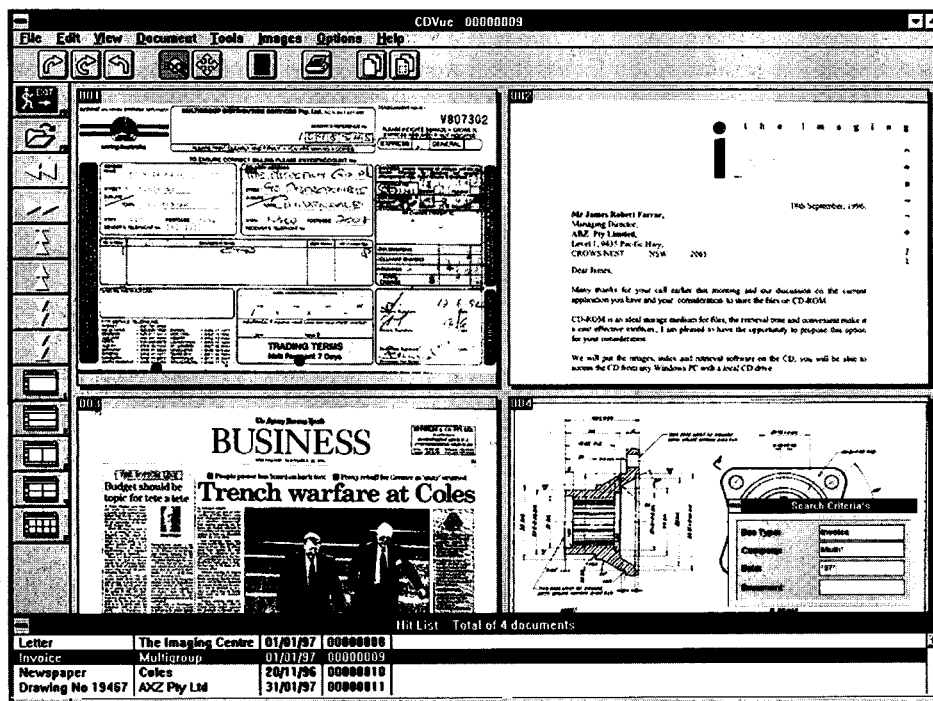
What they can do is to scan documents selected by the client or the Records Manager, and write the converted images to CD-ROM. The retrieval software is also written to each CD making each CD completely self sufficient - that is, the images can be viewed on any Windows PC with a CD drive (it is ISO 9660 compliant). With this software the user enjoys similar functionality to a full imaging systems - search and view, scroll, next, zoom, print, etc. and is therefore perfect for users to gain a thorough insight into the strengths and limitations of digitally-stored data and the medium.

Each CD will hold around 15,000 A4 pages, but is not confined to A4 images. For instance, Council Building Applications which include large-sized drawings are amongst the applications to which CD has been successfully applied. Conversely, files such as medical records and accounts payable with their range of standard

and small documents are easily catered for. The range of applications is endless and the principal criteria for selection is a need to refer regularly to the information.

The Imaging Centre will look after the entire conversion process, from the collection of the documents through scanning, indexing, etc. to the cutting of the personalised CD-ROM discs. It is one of the most instructive, and inexpensive ways to access and gain benefit from this technology.

**The Imaging Centre**  
**90 Abercrombie Street,**  
**Chippendale Sydney**  
**Phone: (02) 9319 1622**  
**Fax: (02) 9318 1885**  
**Email: [rhodc@ymagna.com.au](mailto:rhodc@ymagna.com.au)**



# Keyword AAA

## the Standard Thesaurus in the West

**K**eyword AAA, the leading general records management thesaurus for the public sector, has become adopted as the standard in Western Australia. The Public Records Office of Western Australia (PROWA) has made an agreement with the Archives Authority of NSW to distribute Keyword AAA to State and Local Government agencies in Western Australia. The agreement replaces a bulk licensing arrangement for use of the Authority's previous General Administrative (GADM) Thesaurus in the Western Australian Government.

'This arrangement continues our long relationship with the Archives Authority and its excellent thesaurus products,' says Isabel Smith, Team Leader of Record-keeping Services in the Public Records Office. The arrangement means that agencies in Western Australia will be able to purchase Keyword AAA at a significantly reduced rate and receive support from the Public Records Office. Support provided by the Public Records Office takes the form of advice in applying Keyword AAA, training in using Keyword AAA and the establishment of a user group for licence holders in the Western Australian public sector.

Since its release in November 1995, Keyword AAA has been well received by the records management community around Australia and has been adopted by nearly 100 public sector organisations around Australia. 'Keyword AAA embodies current best practice in vocabulary control and has been rapidly accepted as the de facto standard general records management thesaurus,' says David Roberts, Manager of the Archives Authority's

Records Management Office. It was adopted by the South Australian Government as part of their whole government records management systems project in 1996.

Keyword AAA complies with Australian Standard AS 4390, Records Management, and its hierarchical structure of common functions and activities can be used as a basis for developing a business classification scheme, one of the fundamental records management tools described in the Standard. Thus with a thesaurus like Keyword AAA, not only can you use its controlled vocabulary for titling and indexing records, but also you can classify them to help determine how long they should be kept, how they should be handled and stored, who should have access to them and how they should be protected. In the New South Wales Government, this approach has been followed in the development of the General Records Disposal Schedule: Administrative Records, which is structured using Keyword AAA keywords.

Some of the features of Keyword AAA include:

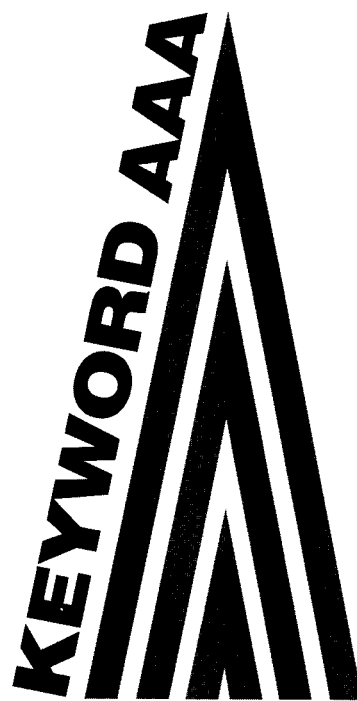
- general terms common to the business functions and activities of most organisations
- a functionally oriented approach so that business activities documented by records are linked to each other
- a hierarchical structure, with three levels of terms
- flexibility in the titling 'rules' and in the way the thesaurus can be used, and
- compliance with the conventions of the International Standard: ISO 2788 - 1986, Establishment and Development of Monolingual Thesauri.

Keyword AAA is supplied in hard copy and electronic forms, including formats for popular word processing software, thesaurus products such as Hierarch, now records management software products including RecFind and Trim.

For more information about Keyword AAA, contact:

**The Archives Authority of NSW**  
**Phone:** (02) 9237 0120  
**Fax:** (02) 9237 0119  
**Email:** [rmnsw@records.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rmnsw@records.nsw.gov.au)  
or for the WA public sector:

**The Public Records Office of WA**  
**Phone:** (09) 427 3376  
**Fax:** (09) 427 3368  
**Email:** [ismith@mail.liswa.wa.gov.au](mailto:ismith@mail.liswa.wa.gov.au)



**Accuracy Accessibility  
Accountability**

# U.S. dealers sign up for RecFind

**G**MB Records and Information Solutions of St Leonards has broken into the North American records management market through a dealer network contract that should see export earnings grow to \$20 million within three years.

GMB's flagship product RecFind has been hailed by U.S. record management dealers as the technology to take them into the next millennium.

The U.S. market for records, document and information management is worth \$2 billion and growing at 35 per cent a year, providing a golden opportunity for RecFind, according to GMB managing director Frank McKenna.

"The contract gives GMB its biggest-earning export destination ahead of the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Asia," Mr McKenna said.

The contract is with the International Dealer Systems Association (ISDA), an independent co-operative network of 130 dealers throughout North America selling a diverse range of automated filing systems.

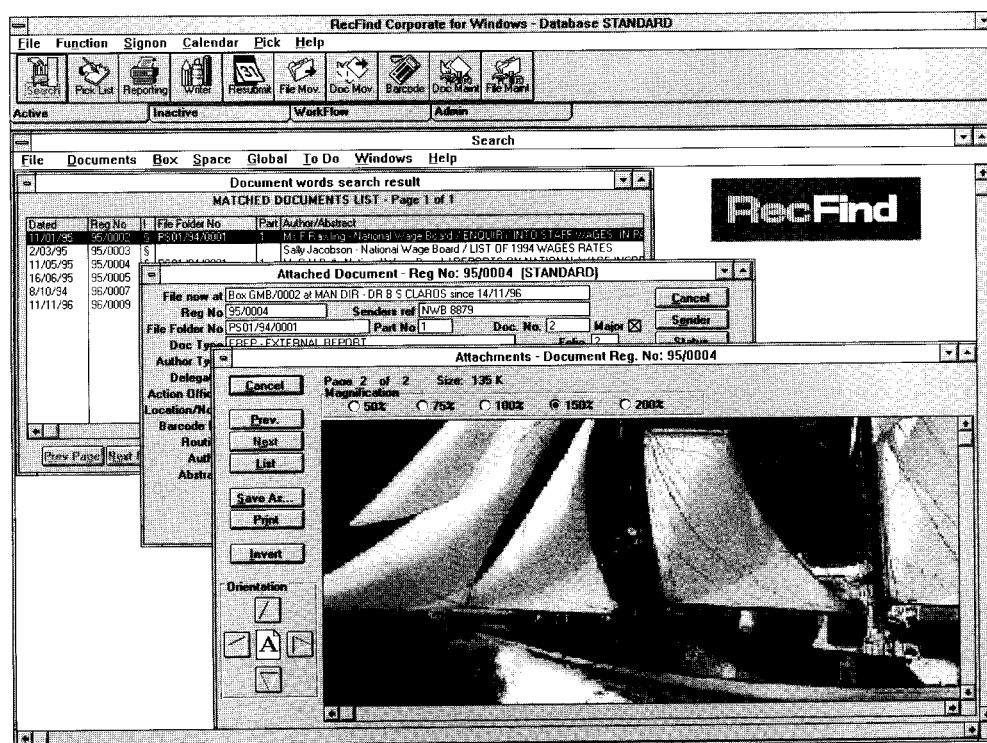
At the recent ISDA annual convention, the president, Dean Sandstoe said of RecFind: "I am confident there is no other product that can compete. It is one of the most exciting products I have seen in my 30 plus years in the business."

Supply, training and maintenance of RecFind is already under way, as GMB anticipates sales of \$1 million in its high-investment first year entry, growing to an agreed minimum target of \$3 million by the end of the third. However, this figure greatly underestimates likely turnover, which will be more like \$20 million by then, according to Mr McKenna.

The ISDA sales force of 750 people in North America is 75 times the size of GMB's Australian sales force of 10. GMB has already trained 50 of them under the agreement and sales training for the remainder will continue throughout this year. GMB will also be responsible for training customer records management staff.

Mr McKenna said signing of the contract marked an end to five tough years spent marketing RecFind in the U.S., where prohibitive set-up costs prevented his launching a GMB sales or dealer network, even though the product was everywhere accepted as the most advanced on the market.

"The fit with ISDA is perfect," he said. "The executive team knew it was facing a shrinking market for traditional products, and were searching for a single advanced product to take the network into the twenty-first century. That is when we started talking with them."





RecFind is designed to manage physical records, electronic documents, images, e-mail, voice, video, faxes and workflow across common operating platforms. It can run under local and wide area networks, UNIX, Novell, OS/2 and NT services and support ODBC compliant SQL databases (such as SQL Server) as well as Disam and Btrieve via RecFind's client server architecture.

There are around 20,000 users world-wide. Despite stiff competition from the U.S., the NSW Government last year selected GMB as one of only two suppliers to the NSW Government of records management software under the GSAS program.

GMB was also awarded, as sole supplier, a five-year whole-of-government contract by the South Australian Government to supply computerised records management systems.

"RecFind is now the dominant records management product in Australia and it is time to make it the dominant product in North America," Mr McKenna said.



**GMB Records & Information Management Solutions**  
(Unit 18, 39 Herbert St,  
St Leonards NSW 2065.  
Frank McKenna  
Phone: 02 9439 2811

at

# RECORDKEEPING STUDIES

## EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

**Looking for a leading edge course in records and document management? Need the flexibility of self paced independent learning? Edith Cowan University offers courses which:**

- are available in distance education mode (requiring no on-campus attendance);
- employ the latest technologies (CD-ROM and Internet); and
- have been developed in cooperation with national and international content experts to meet the requirements of new and emerging standards in records and document management.

### Post Graduate and Graduate

- Graduate Diploma of Science (Archives and Records)
- Master of Science (Information Science) (Archives and Records stream to commence 1998)

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# Branch Reports

## NT Branch

The Northern Territory Branch has commenced its planned marketing campaign for 1997 with a large scale mail-out to potential members in both private and public sectors across the Territory.

Remoteness and smallness of numbers are often hindrances to progress in the Territory and this runs true for the RMAA at times. The Branch has recently rallied to remedy this by encouraging events to occur in the Top-end which were previously scheduled for our interstate neighbours.

Susan Henry came to Darwin in March to conduct a workshop on the records and archives competency standards. It was great to have local participation in the competency standards project. The representatives from both the RMAA and the ASA gained a lot from this exercise, and they now feel more a part of the process.

The Branch also has negotiated with the PICS seminar company from Melbourne to bring the workshop *How to Apply AS4390 Records Management Standard* to Darwin in May. It is this type of training that local practitioners often miss out on in the Territory and we have been pleased at the local response.

In the meantime, the Branch is keeping an interested eye on developments within the NT Government (the employer of the majority of local members) which is currently reviewing its records management practices with a view to setting a high level records management strategy in place.

**Greg Coleman ARMA**  
Branch President

## WA Branch

There has been no rest for the wicked in the West! Despite the number of members on holiday over the summer period, plans have continued apace for the forthcoming conference in September. Perth seems to be the place to visit in 97! Quite a few other professional bodies are also 'going West' this year, ALIA Local Studies and ALIA Specials to name but two (If you would like information on these conferences please contact me on 09 351 2732).

Federal Council met in Perth in February at the Radisson Observation City Hotel, the venue for the 1997 conference. We took this opportunity to ask our Federal President, Ray Holswich, to address WA Branch members on current issues in the profession in the changing and challenging climate of the late 90s. Ray was joined in a panel session by the two Federal Directors for WA (Ken Ridley and Neil Granland) and the Chair of the Education Committee (yours truly). Outsourcing, competency standards, recognition of courses and even the amalgamation of the ASA and the RMAA into a single recordkeeping professional body were discussed. Refreshments were enjoyed in the Twilight Room as the sun set over the ocean. About 50 WA members took this opportunity to network and view the conference venue.

The inaugural RMAA Scholarship has been awarded to Susan March. The presentation was made by Ray Holswich at the Radisson function. Sue has been a member of the RMAA for over 10 years. She is currently the Records and

Administration Manager at Arthur Andersen (Perth) and has held this position for approximately eight years. As well as demonstrating a commitment to the principles of the RMAA and the profession in general, Sue has actively supported records management students through the practicum program. For a number of years Sue has also been instrumental in providing part time paid employment to students enrolled in records management. Sue has completed the first four units of the Bachelor of Applied Science (Records Management) at Curtin University with distinction and is a worthy recipient of the support of the RMAA through the Scholarship Program. We tender her our congratulations and wish her continued success. The RMAA Scholarship was developed in 1996. It is specifically designed to enable practitioners in the field to take advantage of the educational opportunities now available to records and information professionals by providing a degree of financial assistance.

In March the RMAA President, Ken Ridley, and the Archives Convenor, Gerard Foley met with students at Curtin University. Ken and Gerard gave brief outlines on the role of their respective professional bodies and the benefits of membership of each. About 40 students attended the session, so we are hopeful of some new and enthusiastic members in the very near future.

**Margaret Pember ARMA**  
Chair, Education

## QLD Branch

The year has commenced with a range of activities which will provide members with a range of opportunities to enhance their skills in records management.

### Seminar Series

In February the Branch hosted the first afternoon seminar for the year on the topic of Writing a Job Description. The seminar canvassed a variety of methods by which jobs can be analysed and a detailed job description prepared. The video and detailed notes, including draft duty statements, is available from the Queensland Branch Secretary for \$20. The March seminar will tackle the issue of electronic records.

### Local Government Chapter

Representatives from a number of Queensland Local Government Councils meet to discuss forming a Local Government Chapter. A high level of interest was shown from amongst participants. Further meetings and training sessions are planned for 1997.

## TAS Branch

The Branch's Marketing Committee has been extremely active in recent times with some 500 private organisations being targeted to receive RMAA brochures with a view to attracting their membership. If only a third were to respond positively, it would be a great achievement. Promotional kits have already been prepared for distribution at all Branch functions and with the major Federal drive this year being marketing we are delighted with the progress made so far in Tasmania.

Ongoing and prospective students studying records management subjects at TAFE were treated to an information session on this year's modules, as well as being given information about university courses available through several Mainland institutions. Unfortunately the University of Tasmania does not cater well in this area. Congratulations must go to Jennifer Dobson, our inaugural scholarship holder in 1996, for the excellent results she achieved during the year and for also being the successful scholarship applicant for 1997.

The Branch conducted a State Seminar on 10 April, with interstate speakers Elaine Ecclestone and Laurie Sletton complementing a raft of excellent Tasmanian speakers. The theme of the seminar was Taking Care of Business Research in the Electronic Age, and with registration costs

### Records Management Standard Seminar

On the 15 April the Branch is conducting a one day seminar focussing on AS 4390, Records Management Standard. A wide variety of speakers will be addressing the seminar on various aspects of the standard.

### Advanced Certificate in Records Management

Teaching commenced in February in the records management course conducted through Southbank TAFE. 23 students have enrolled for the subjects Thesaurus Design and Multi Media 1.

### Inaugural Meeting of Queensland Branch Council

February 1997 marked the 21st anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the Queensland Branch Council. Much has been achieved over the intervening 21 yrs, congratulations to all those involved in having the vision to establish the Queensland Branch.

### Phillip Taylor MRMA

Vice President

Education and Professional Development

kept to the bare minimum, many members who would probable never have the opportunity to attend a national Convention were able to take advantage of this opportunity to participate.

It is extremely pleasing to me to be witnessing a trend in RMAA towards a "one organisation" mentality, rather than eight smaller ones all pushing their own barrows. We have little chance of achieving our vision of being recognised as the professional body for, and the national authority on, records management, if we continue to be seen as an organisation having eight Branches with little cohesion between them. Centralisation of membership is one major step towards unification and I foresee many others before the process is complete. However, it is refreshing to come away from a Federal Director's meeting with the feeling that we are, at last, prepared to compromise on some of the parochial issues for the good of the organisation as a whole. There is still a way to go, but I am very optimistic about the future of the RMAA.

### Trish Wichmann MRMA

BRANCH PRESIDENT

# Branch Reports

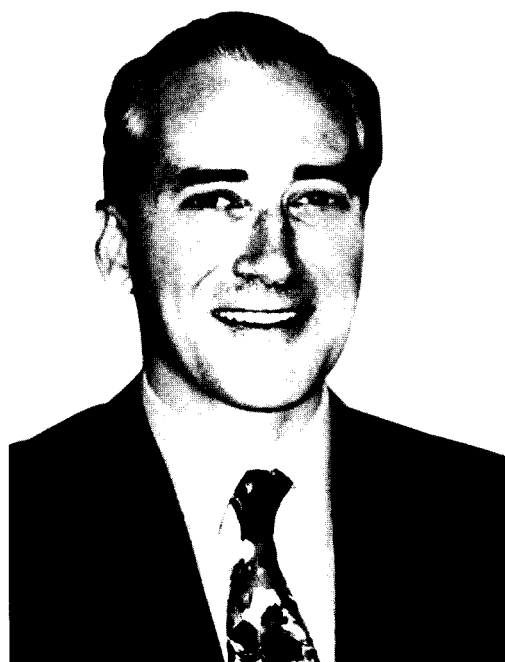
## ACT Branch

The Act Branch is looking forward to a busy year with plenty of activities to keep us occupied. In March we followed up on a seminar we had last year with Chris Fripp, Corporate Records and Archives Co-ordinator for Southerland Shire Council. Chris's seminar on a Document Management System integrating electronic and paper based records was followed up with an on site visit to the Sutherland Shire Council by bus. People on the trip were able to see first hand how the paperless office is working and could discuss relevant points with Chris. Positive feedback was received about the trip and we hope to do it again later in the year.

In April we are holding two seminars the first is on "Professional Associations and Education in Records and Archives Management and What It Can Do For You". We plan to have Ray Holswich, Federal President RMAA, Kathryn Dan, President Australian Society of Archivists, Elizabeth McPherson, Head of Department, Computing and Information Management, Canberra Institute of Technology and Elaine Eccleston, Lecturer, Information and Records Management University of Canberra speaking. The speakers will talk about the benefits of belonging to professional associations and their achievements to date, educational opportunities in the ACT and how people can develop professional skills through these programs.

On conclusion we hope people will network with their peers and speakers over drinks. The second will be held as a joint seminar with the Australian Society of Archivists and the Office Management Program, University of Canberra with sponsorship through Tower Software and Pickfords Records Management. The half day seminar is called "Business Analysis and Recordkeeping" and will focus on work in the Netherlands in the use of functional analysis for current and historical recordkeeping. The seminar will hear from Drs Roelef Hol, Manager and Drs Bert de Vries, Deputy Manager of the Pivot Project at the Netherlands National Archives. A panel including Drs Hol and Drs de Vries, and Michael Piggott, Australian Archives and Babara Reed, Monash University will provide input to the discussion focused on an examination of the Pivot approach as an alternative to standard to appraisal approaches. Members of the Branch have also been busy commenting on the Draft Competency Standards and Changes to the Archives Act.

**Julie Lenson ARMA**  
ACT Branch President.



## NEW FACES

### Chris Cloran

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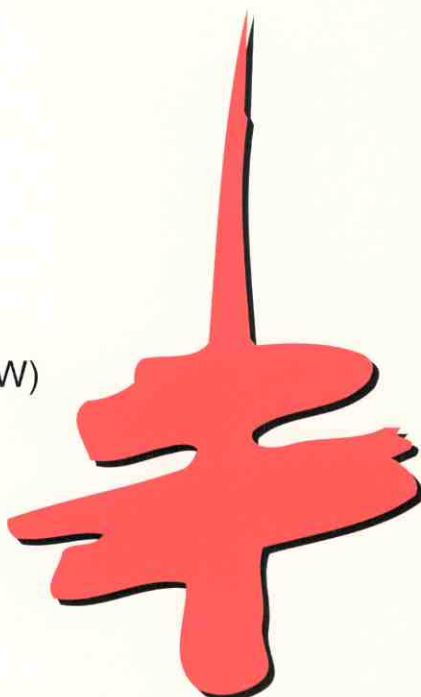
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