



# 'THE **informaa**' *Quarterly*



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## EDUCATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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## **INFORMAA QUARTERLY**

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**Cover photograph : DARWIN -**  
The venue for the 8th RMAA National  
Convention, 15-18 September 1991.

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## EDITORIAL

"Education is the key to life", said Thomas Jefferson. The Oxford Dictionary defines education as "the process of training and developing knowledge".

Everyday we do things which display the learning achieved - getting to work, driving a car, using a computer are all functions performed that had the basis in some form of teaching. Learning can be achieved in many ways. We learn from being shown, formally taught, from reading and from watching others. Very little of what we do is intuitive. To be able to read and understand this journal means that you were taught how to read.

The issue of records management and education is a subject which has received much attention around Australia. The founders of the Association recognised that in order to establish a discipline there needed to be a central core of wisdom, philosophy and knowledge that could be passed on to others. In the mid 1970's a range of courses in records management became available. In the mid 1980's courses expanded to include, for the first time, the teaching of records management at a tertiary level. In the last Informaa Quarterly, Dennis Wheeler, Chairman Federal Education Committee outlined the current state of education in records management in Australia. Significant progress has been achieved, but more remains to be done. Some of the themes expressed in that article are followed up in this edition.

The American records management education environment, for so long held to be the "holy grail" is critically examined by Margaret Sneddon. She poses several interesting points worthy of in depth examination. Philip Taylor explores the career opportunities available in records management. The conclusions drawn show that the future records managers will be those with good education in the field or in allied fields. Elaine Eccleston discusses the role that multiskilling plays in increasing the effectiveness of individuals within organisations and for achieving productivity growth. There is little doubt that education will be the issue of

the 1990's in the way that technology was in the 1980's.

Also in this edition are articles looking at different issues, such as "The Archival Document" by one of our educators Frank Upward, Archival Challenges in the Nineties by Chris Coggin, and informative overviews of recent developments in the State Archives of Western Australia by Janine Douglas, and about the introduction of FOI to Queensland by Jackie Elliot.

There are also the usual letters to the Editor, a Book Review, all the news from the State Branches, the Federal Executive, plus more.

While education in records management is our theme for this issue, our front cover should remind you to register for the National Convention in Darwin in September this year.

Many thanks to all contributors.

## THE EDITORS

\* \* \*

### ARMA RECORDS MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY

The Editors of the RMAA Informaa Quarterly have recently obtained reciprocal agreement with the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (USA) to reproduce articles from each Associations' journals. We look forward to selecting and reproducing items of interest for our readers in the future issues of Informaa Quarterly.

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\* \* \*

### CORRECTION

#### EDUCATIONAL COURSES IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT, ARCHIVES AND "INFORMATION" FIELDS OF STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA-1991

The organisation listed as "Victoria University" was meant to read "Victoria University of Technology". This institution is now "RMIT".

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The following course was inadvertently omitted from the listing:

Bachelor of Applied Science (Information).  
University of Technology, Sydney.  
One elective unit in records management in final year.

EDITOR

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## STATE NEWS

### ACT BRANCH

The ACT Branch held a very successful seminar in March on "Productivity and Information Management" with over 120 delegates in attendance. In part, the seminar was an update to issues addressed in last year's "Storage Media and the Law" seminar, with new issues centred on improving productivity in the workplace. Professor Bill Mandle of the University of Canberra chaired the seminar and speakers included

Tom Howe - Australian Government Solicitors Office

Steve Stuckey - Australian Archives

Kevin O'Connor - Privacy Commissioner

Jeff Watson - Brisbane City Council

Elaine Eccleston - University of Canberra

Geoff Sach - Department of Land Administration, Perth

Chris Adams - Consultant

Bob Poole - Consultant

Seminar proceedings for the "Storage Media and the Law" and "Productivity and Information Management" seminars are available from the ACT Branch at \$25.00 each.

Further events planned include

May "Managing Information Needs"  
Bill Parr, QLD Department of Transport

July Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner

August "Office Automation"  
Denise Druitt, Australian Customs

The ACT Branch is currently assessing responses from companies interested in conducting the marketing survey for the Association. The survey will be conducted during May with a final report expected by the end of June.

It is anticipated that the results of the survey will guide the Association's direction for the next

few years and help us increase public awareness and involvement in our activities.

Ross Thompson  
President, ACT Branch

\* \* \*

### NEW SOUTH WALES

The New South Wales Branch has spent the first part of 1991 experimenting with meeting times. We were finding that the traditional evening meetings were restricting the participation of some of the Association's members. Two very successful lunch time meetings have been held covering optical disk technology. The Branch is currently evaluating alternating meeting times in a bid to become more accessible to more members.

Next month, the Branch will hold a meeting in Newcastle and will review Records Conservation and Preservation policy issues.

A growing concern within the Branch is the number of available people to run and administer the Branch. Increasingly, the Branch is run by the same people. Whilst this has problems on a Branch level, when translated onto the Federal scene, there is a risk that the Association becomes restricted and inward looking rather than dynamic and outward bound.

In an attempt to address this issue, the Branch is conducting a campaign of status upgrade. This will increase the number of Associates who are potentially available for election to Council.

Planning for the 1992 convention in Sydney is well on the way. A formal marketing release will be available in Darwin and incentives for early registration will be made available. Conference Action have been nominated as the convention organisers. The Branch will be running a small convention committee and will leave all organisation work to the organisers.

Fiona Meyer  
President, NSW Branch

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## NORTHERN TERRITORY

Branch Council finally managed to attend the workshop on "Planning and Achieving Your Objectives" organised through the Centre for Continuing Professional Education at the Northern Territory University. It proved to be a very useful exercise in assisting us to identify precisely what we are trying to achieve in the Northern Territory; to identify our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and those things that threaten our success in achieving our objectives; in determining how to turn the threats into opportunities; and in learning how to establish action plans. Also it presented an opportunity for Council members to work closely together in the planning process.

We are planning to put our first plan of action into effect commencing in May for completion at the end of June. The plan is aimed at redressing existing problems in communication with and between members and the apparent lack of interest/commitment from members. Council will be devising other action plans further down the track, but the extent to which we can do so is restricted at the moment because most Council members are also busy organising the 8th National Convention to be held in Darwin in September.

The NT Government is currently engaged on a down-sizing and streamlining exercise, which unfortunately is having an effect on the extent to which some of our formerly more active members feel they can commit time to the RMAA. The recommendations of the NT Government's Estimate and Review Committee, which will recommend on where the cuts should be made is awaited, and it is hoped that staffing cuts will not be as severe as are anticipated.

Judy Watts  
President, NT Branch

\* \* \*

## QUEENSLAND

FOI continues to be of high interest in the Sunshine State where our recent seminar attracted just under 200 people. At the seminar,

the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, Mr Matt Foley, MLA confirmed that FOI was needed and that his committee was currently preparing their report for presentation to Parliament.

We are fortunate to be able to call on the experiences of other FOI users, and we heard these from Lina Marrocco of the Victorian Attorney General's Department, David Roelen of NSW Premier's Department. Jack Waterford of the Canberra Times gave the journalists' viewpoint.

The "big picture" of the privacy issue was presented by Kevin O'Connor, the Privacy Commissioner. On the local front we heard an analysis of the EARC Report, and papers from the Director General of the Attorney General's Department and from the State Archivist.

This seminar will now be run in Townsville on 24 May 1991 for our regional members. We have decided to offer it free to members and levy a charge for non-members.

Papers from the seminar are available for \$15 (includes postage) from the Branch

RMAA Qld Branch  
PO Box 361  
NORTH QUAY 4002

\* \* \*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Several members of the SA Branch attended a lunch and "Problem Solving" meeting in February. Despite a relatively small attendance, those present enjoyed an interesting discussion in which several members' problems were discussed and solutions suggested. The main topic of discussion concerned professional standards and standards of filing equipment.

Future activities planned by the South Australian Branch include a visit to Hermes Precisa Australia to view a number of HPA products. A visit to the SA Genealogy Society is also planned.

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The main activity is a seminar to be held on Wednesday 5th June 1991 at the Hindley Park Royal Hotel. The topic for the seminar which is sure to be of interest to many records managers is "Managing Electronic Records - a Focus on Emerging Technology". Further information is available from SA Branch Councillors.

Andrew Wood  
Vice President, SA Branch

\* \* \*

## TASMANIA

The Tasmanian Branch has provided its members with the opportunity to visit local business houses over the past few months.

Visits to MAIL-ALL and TASCUM Information systems have been well patronised.

Canon recently launched the "Canon 250 Optical Disc Filing System" via John Abbott Business Machines at the Sheraton Hobart.

A great deal of progress has been made with the local TAFE Course and it is definite the Course will go ahead in 1992.

The Education Committee has held very successful Basic Records Management Courses and due to the response the Course will be repeated in May.

The RMAA Library is now well established. A large collection of materials including overseas journals are now available to all members.

K.A. Holland  
Publicity Committee, Tasmanian Branch

\* \* \*

## VICTORIA

The Victorian Branch began the second half of the year on a somewhat sad note with the resignation from the Victorian Branch Council of one of our longest serving Councillors, Phil Taylor. Phil contributed immensely to the success of the Victorian Branch, particularly as

State Co-ordinator of Education, and as one of Victoria's Federal Directors. Phil has taken up a full time position in Queensland. The Victorian Branch wishes Phil every success in his new position, and thanks him for all his contributions towards the betterment of records management in Victoria.

All courses in records management held by tertiary institutions are proceeding strongly in Victoria. This year has seen an increase in the number of students attending the Graduate Diploma in Information Management (Archives and Records) course, as well as a strong contingent of students attending the Certificate course at Prahran College.

On the topic of education, the Victorian Branch recently held the inaugural State Conference on April 11th and 12th at the World Congress Centre Melbourne. The conference was conducted by Longman Professional. Even during these tough economic times the conference was attended by approximately ninety participants. The theme of the conference was "Managing Strategies for Records Managers in the 1990's". All who attended seemed impressed by the high quality of papers presented. A highlight of the conference was the official dinner where a good time was had by all. Many thanks to both Longman Professional, and the RMAA State Conference committee and Chairperson for all their timeless efforts at producing such an event.

Rosemary Kaczynski  
Secretary, Victorian Branch

\* \* \*

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Regret was expressed by the WA Branch that the seminar, "Storage Media and the Law" did not proceed as planned. The number of registrations received was not sufficient to make the seminar viable. A lot of the groundwork has been done and this will be put to good use when the seminar is re-scheduled for February 1992.

The venue for the Annual General Meeting for 1991/92 will be the Mines Department in Adelaide Terrace, Perth. The date is July 16

commencing at 5.30pm. Peter Hewitt, Records Manager of the Mines Department, who has recently been seconded to look after the Royal Commission's records, has been approached to address the meeting. Interstate members are also welcome to hear this intriguing story.

The position of Chairperson, Membership Standards and Status, has been filled by Jim Bonzas. The Committee which Jim will head and which performs the important task of assessing membership upgrade applications, will include Nigel Chartres and Ron Sharpe.

Council numbers have been boosted recently with the return of two former members and one new member. Alan Howard resumes as Secretary and Kandy-Jane Henderson makes a welcome return. Martin Wray comes into Council from the Marine and Harbours.

Two current Lecturers in records management

studies have been approached to help formulate a strong, active Education Committee for the coming year. The Council considers education vital for future recognition and professional survival. Recommendations on education from the April 15 meeting in Victoria will be discussed and implemented where necessary.

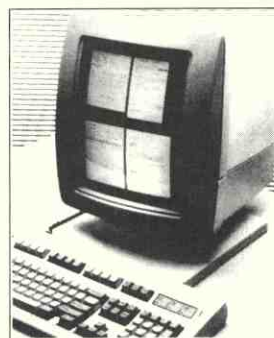
The recent May meeting at Microforms proved very educational and worthwhile. Those members attending the demonstration of Canon's Updatable Optical Disc found out first hand where this type of technology is heading.

The Branch has the AGM and many other functions planned for the 1991/92 year. The Branch newsletter will keep you posted when details are confirmed.

A. Howard  
Secretary, Western Australian Branch

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## FEDERAL COUNCIL ACTIVITIES REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING, FEDERAL EXECUTIVE MELBOURNE, VICTORIA. Saturday 13th April 1991

All members of the Federal Executive were in attendance for the Sixth Meeting.

Several members had taken the opportunity to attend the two day seminar conducted by Longman Professional and the Victorian Branch Council.

A stand was provided to the Northern Territory 8th National Convention Committee, to publicise its forthcoming event. This stand was manned by Mr Ray Holswich, Chairman of the Organising Committee.

### Financial Matters

The Federal Treasurer, Mr Jim Shepherd, presented a report outlining the current financial state of the Association.

Following the introduction of the "one bank system", the Association is now reaping the benefits of increased earnings.

Receipt of remuneration by Federal Directors was discussed, which followed a presentation by the Association's Auditors, Deloitte, Ross and Tohmatsu, last September.

Preparation of a statement for signature by Federal Directors is being sought through the Canberra office of the Auditors. This is a requirement under the Companies Act and is also covered in the Association's Memorandum and Articles.

Also, another recent event in regard to the business of the Association has been allocation of an Australian Company Number. This number is required to be displayed on all public documents of the Company and steps are being taken to have the number included in the production of administrative forms, a project under the control of Mr Tom Kaufhold, Federal Director, ACT Branch.

### Informaa Quarterly

A meeting was held between Formfile Pty Ltd, Co-Editors of INFORMAA QUARTERLY and

members of the Federal Executive. The topics discussed concerned

- late publication of issues
- despatch to members by Branch Councils
- selling advertising space
- production volumes
- content of the business contract proposed to cover the agreement between Formfile Pty Ltd and the Association

The result of the meeting was a much clearer picture of the efforts involved in editing, marketing and production of the publication. Content and presentation of the last two issues has been a marked improvement.

As an added bonus to members, reciprocal publication rights have been established between RMAA and ARMA. This followed an approach by Mr Bill Williams, Co-Editor, INFORMAA QUARTERLY. This decision will allow members of both Associations the opportunity to read the latest advances in Records Management.

With this added value to the publication in its new format and content, discussions on the cost of the journal resulted in a recommendation to Federal Council to increase the value.

Publication of the results of Federal Council's decision will be made in the next issue of INFORMAA QUARTERLY.

### AITC

Mr Jim Shepherd, one of RMAA's two delegates to the Australian Information Technology Council, reported on activities.

### Federal Education Committee

A meeting of the Federal Education Committee was held on Monday 15th April 1991 in Melbourne. Mr Dennis Wheeler, Chairperson, was invited to attend the Federal Executive meeting to discuss the meeting's agenda.

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A report on the meeting will be forthcoming to all Branch Councils.

The progress made by the Committee since September 1990, shows a commitment to education throughout the Association at all levels.

### **Referendum, Memorandum and Articles**

All items submitted to professional members were successful by a large majority of returned votes.

The final documentation for presentation to the

Companies Office is being completed by the Public Officer and following approval, will be published in the INFORMAA QUARTERLY.

### **Marketing Project**

Four companies have responded to the ACT Branch Survey documentation. A report will be prepared by the Branch by the end of April 1991, recommending one of the offered proposals.

**Murray Stewart ARMA**  
**Federal Secretary**

\* \* \* \* \*

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Editor,

I have recently written to the WA Branch requesting that it nominate a number of issues, which appear below, to be placed on the Federal Council agenda for its September 1991 meeting. My reason in writing to the Quarterly is that I believe that if these issues are placed on the agenda it is essential that adequate debate take place in advance at grass root membership level and through Branch Council. I have long been concerned that there is inadequate time for members and Branch Council to consider and direct their Federal Councillors in advance on matters on the Federal Council agenda. During my period on Federal Council I was often of the belief that Federal Councillors were voting according to their own opinions and consciences, rather than as a result of direction from their state membership. Lack of time between receiving the agenda and attending the meeting was an important reason for this, plus lack of time for Federal Councillors to raise matters with their own Branch Council and especially lack of time for Branch Council, in turn, to take matters to its general membership.

The issues which I have requested for placement on the agenda are

1. Definition of matters which will be deemed "conflict of interest" between the RMAA and its Federal and Branch Councillors when they pursue their own business activities or that of their employers.
2. Definition of the area of responsibility claimed by the RMAA in relation to records management education.
3. Formulation of guidelines for the content, conduct and nature of General Branch meetings of members.
4. Re-examination of the need for the RMAA Register of Consultants and the criteria, if any, for inclusion.
5. Review of the RMAA's Code of Ethics to raise it to the level that is appropriate to an organisation and discipline claiming professional status.

The reason for my making this request is that late last year I received a letter, in my capacity as then WA Branch President, from Mr. Graham Dudley signing himself Branch Councillor. In it he stated that he did not believe that

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Memorandum 3 Section 1 of the Memorandum of the Records Management Association of Australia was "written to mean that Branch Councillors were to commercially benefit from providing education courses....". He goes on further to say that "as President you should be doing all that is possible to provide courses by the Association for the Association and that any profit made should be directed to the Association."

For the past three years my business Information Enterprises has offered training courses in records management in Perth. During much of that time I have also actively participated in WA Branch Education Sub-committee activities in relation to the development and improvement of the TAFE Certificate of Records Management course.

As Mr Dudley is Federal President I am not sure whether his interpretation of Memorandum 3 Section 1 is the official Federal Council interpretation of the section or whether it is Mr Dudley's own personal interpretation. If his interpretation is the official one then I believe that all present Branch and Federal Councillors, and those members who are considering nominating for such positions, should be aware of this interpretation. Equally it is their right to be aware of any other interpretations of other Memoranda and Sections which relate to "conflict of interest".

In the same letter he also questioned Information Enterprises' selection of a particular person as Course Leader for one of its courses which addresses quality management in records management. He objected to the fact that the person was not a member of the RMAA. The person concerned however is a professional and experienced librarian and records manager, holder of a MBA and lecturer at the University of Western Australia in quality management. She was selected by the joint principals of Information Enterprises, both of whom hold professional status in the Association, as being the most suitable person. An RMAA Register of Consultants who must meet particular criteria to achieve registration should place an *impra mater* on the activities and decisions of consultants therein listed.

In concluding his letter our Federal President questioned the motivation behind a General Branch meeting that I had arranged in my capacity of Programme organiser. He claimed that it was a "blatant attempt at commercialism". He wrote the letter prior to the meeting which was held at a government Authority to which my business had been a consultant. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce members to document workflow monitoring through the application of barcode technology using a commercially available turnkey records management package. If meetings are not to feature vendor products, or be held on vendor premises then it is essential that Federal Council notify the Branches so that Programme organisers may conform accordingly.

Inadequate interpretations and guidelines etc. only cause confusion, embarrassment and upset amongst hardworking volunteers. I note that MaryAnn Rosenthal (Informaa Quarterly Vol 6 (4) 1990) calls for a code of ethics to reflect the changing values of our society. The RMAA has for too long been introverted both in relation to its own administrations as well as the profession generally. A widely distributed well publicized code of ethics which encompasses matters which will raise the Association to a professional level is imperative. I wonder in fact how many members are aware that the Association does in fact already have a code?

In closing I urge members to debate the issues raised here amongst themselves and in their meetings. It is time that members knew where they stood in relation to them. It is particularly necessary as the component of our membership is changing to include self-employed people, employees of nationwide vendors and people from government departments pursuing cost recovery projects. All could find themselves subject to "invested interest" and "conflict of interest" accusations from time to time unless these issues are addressed now.

Marita D Hoo MRMA

\* \* \*

Dear Editor

I would like to voice my support for MaryAnn Rosenthal's comments in her article "Taking the Plunge: making records management a profession" which appeared in Informaa Quarterly Vol 6 No 4. I was particularly pleased at the comments made relating to adopting a code of ethics that reflect the changing values of society. As I read her suggestions regarding.....

- " protecting the privacy of information provided by the public to organisations
- " protecting records of permanent and historical value against physical and intellectual damage
- " efficient management of records to assist in paper conservation"

I glanced up towards the notice board in front of my desk and read, for the first time in many months, the RMAA Code of Ethics. They state

"That I have an obligation to other members of this Association, my country, my employers and my employees or my fellow employees, to contribute wherever possible, to the promotion and improvement of the profession of records management, especially through training, study, education and research

"That I have an obligation to share and disseminate accurate knowledge of the various areas of records management

"That I have an obligation to maintain and enhance the reputation of this Association by exemplary conduct and performance of duties to the best of my ability

"That I acknowledge that I must make an earnest effort, as a matter of integrity, to fulfil these obligations."

It occurred to me that the existing RMAA Code of Ethics are for me a matter of unspoken professional ethics which require acknowledgement, particularly for those members who loose sight of the aims and objectives of the Association. However, I do not see them as being the ethical issues which concern the membership of the RMAA. Our

Association could lead the way in establishing acceptable codes of behaviour in terms of privacy issues etc.

Medical ethics committees do not debate whether research and education should be encouraged within the medical profession but HOW that research and education should be conducted to protect the physical and moral well being of the patients and the community. It is with this simile in mind that I applaud MaryAnn Rosenthal's article and suggest that our ethics and education should be held as high priorities for our Association if we hope to attain professional status in the community.

Shirley R Cowcher  
B App Sci (Lib & Inf Stud), Grad Dip Comp,  
AALIA, ARMA

\* \* \* \* \*

### "It's in the Rolodex."

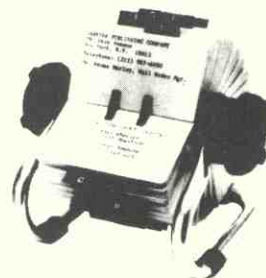
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## MEMBER PROFILE

### **JIM SHEPHERD** **MRMA, Director** **of Administration,** **Brisbane City** **Council**

Talk about Records Management in Queensland and you inevitably come across the name of Jim Shepherd.



Jim, the Director of Administration of the Corporate Services Division of the Brisbane City Council, Australia's largest local authority is the father of Records Management in Queensland.

His involvement with the Association is impressive

20/1/75	Chairman of pilot committee for formation of Queensland Branch
9/3/75	Foundation President of Queensland Branch
1976-1978	President of Queensland Branch
1976-1978	Federal Vice President RMAA
1978-1981	Federal President RMAA
1978-1981	RMAA Delegate to International Records Management Federation
1986-1991	Federal Treasurer
1989-1991	RMAA Delegate to Australian Information Technology Council
1989	Elected Life Member of RMAA

In January, 1975, in conjunction with Ms Burm Ford - Records Manager of Mt Isa Mines Brisbane office (now retired), Jim convened a meeting for the formation of a Queensland Branch of RMAA.

Many adherents of the fledgling profession of Records Management responded to the call and

laid the foundations for the formation of a very successful branch of the Association.

During Jim's Presidency of the Queensland Branch, he and Branch Secretary, Bob Harris, successfully negotiated with the Queensland Education Department in 1976 for the establishment of the Records Management Course at Kangaroo Point TAFE.

Jim undertook the course as a lead to his staff and was one of the first course graduates in 1978. For some years after this he was a part-time lecturer for the course.

In September, 1979, as Federal President of RMAA, he joined the Queensland Branch members in presenting a major one day seminar "Productivity in Records Management" in conjunction with the Annual Federal Directors Meeting. This was the forerunner to the National Conventions.

Jim was a member of the Queensland Branch Council Committees which organised RMAA's First National Convention at the Gold Coast in 1984 and the most recent successful Seventh National Convention held in Brisbane in September, 1990.

As Federal Treasurer of the Association, Jim has successfully negotiated an arrangement with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia for sound financial management of the Association's funds.

All Jim's working life has been with the Brisbane City Council with a stint in 1975 on secondment to the Darwin City Council as an assistant to their Town Clerk following Cyclone Tracy.

During his long career with Brisbane City Council, Jim was in charge of the Central Records Branch from 1966 to 1975.

He was a co-designer in 1972 of the Council's well renowned Records Management System which was computerised in 1980 under his

direction. The Council is currently jointly marketing this system with QCOM Pty Ltd as RMS2 which has been sold to several major sites within Australia.

Jim's interests have not stopped with records management as he has been involved with many organisations over the years.

As well as being a Life Member of RMAA he is also a Life Member of the following organisations.

- Brisbane City Council Rugby League Club
- Queensland Public Service Rugby League
- The Council Club Incorporated

He is also the Chairman of a trust fund which raised in excess of half a million dollars and established a childrens' library/youth centre as a memorial to the Council Officers who have served in the various World Wars.

As part of his current administrative responsibilities as Director of Administration

with the Brisbane City Council, he is also the Honorary Business Manager of the City of Brisbane Music Advisory Committee and organises approximately 100 civic concerts per year.

"I could not have achieved any of this without the support of my wife Barbara, and my daughters, Ann and Alison", said Jim at a recent interview.

"I suppose I have always supported many causes but my deep down love has always been records management. From my earliest days I could see that we needed to establish a profession of records management the same as the other professional associations".

"It may be said I had a vision but I am proud today to be one of the many other missionary visionaries who worked so hard to establish our creditable profession. It is now up to our members to maintain a profession which is something to be sought after and maintained".

\* \* \* \* \*

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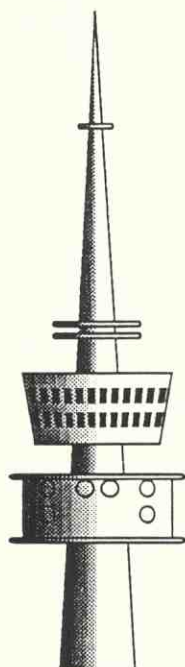
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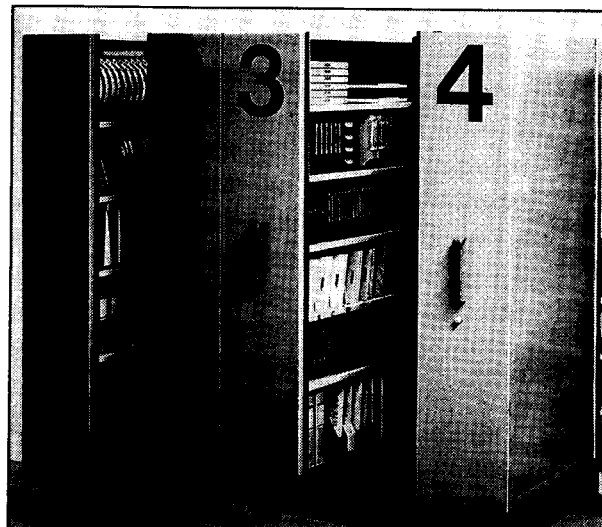
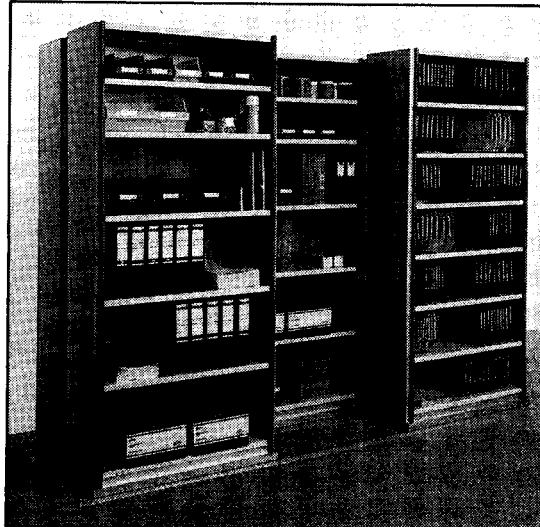
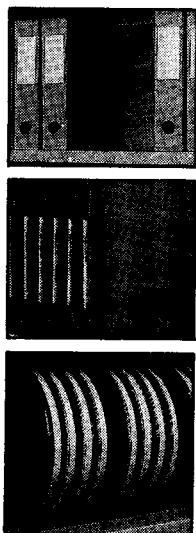
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## BOOK REVIEW

### **ORGANISING THE OFFICE MEMORY: The Theory and Practice of Records Management. J. Eddis Linton**

**Published by the Centre for Information  
Studies Publications, University of  
Technology, Sydney - Kuring-gai  
Campus. (1991)**

**Reviewed by: Janine Morrow, B.Soc.  
Sci (Lib), ARMA Supervisor, Document  
Control, City of Melbourne.**

*Organising the Office Memory* is about theory and practice and according to the author is designed for "both the consultant called in to make an ordered system for storing an organisation's records and for the student in the disciplines of Information and Records Management." I agree that it is a good book for a student wishing to obtain an introduction to the discipline of records management. A consultant, I assume, would already have a good understanding and knowledge of records management and therefore this book would be of lesser value to such a person; but this should not discount the value of this book as a reference tool to the consultant.

The author, J. Eddis Linton has had many years experience in the field of records management and was one of the founding members of the Records Management Association of Australia. He has lectured and also presented a number of papers, conferences and seminars on records management. He has developed some tools for records management practices such as the AWA 'Linton' shelf divider and the KEYWORD SYSTEM and these are explained in great detail in this book.

I would recommend this book as a good introductory text to the discipline of records management. The major criticism I have is that it fails to cover any of the more recent developments, primarily technological, which are having a large impact on the profession. Three developments Eddis fails to cover in *Organising the Office Memory* are the applications of optical disc technology in various

office systems and records management in recent times, the practical use of bar codes in the records management field (ie. the fact that bar codes can be formatted and produced on demand, on site to suit the individual organisation), and computerised records management systems which use text retrieval - thus rendering the use of keywords obsolete.

The book itself is divided into three parts:

1. File and Storage and its Equipment
2. The Theory and Discipline of Records Management
3. Techniques, Technologies and Machines

The first part deals with the different file housings available on the market today and evaluates them in terms of accessibility, floor space, flexibility and capacity. Filing components and aids, ie. file covers, shelf dividers, fasteners, and colour coding etc are also discussed and evaluated. This section is very practical in its discussion of housings and equipment and would be valuable to anyone wanting information on what is available on the market today.

"The Theory and Discipline of Records Management" is the title of Part 2 of the book and this section covers a wide range of topics. It begins by explaining how to identify the problems associated within an office system which stem from the lack of, or inadequate records management practices in an organisation and how to identify them. Eddis goes on to explain how to assess these problems by conducting a records survey on what is required. Classification, Referencing and Indexing are all discussed next, and I feel that the theoretical nature of these areas are dealt with very well by the author. An historical preview of each of the above topics is also provided.

Mail handling, language control, borrowing files, appearance and maintenance of files, and resubmit procedures are covered in the chapter titled "Office Functions and Controls". The chapter on computers and records management is brief and perfunctory when you consider the impact that computers have had on the

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profession and its practices in recent years, and will continue to, impacting on the profession to such an extent that they will have a major influence on the future direction of records management.

"Disaster Recovery Planning" and "Disposition of Records" are the titles of the last two chapters in this section; both of which are very necessary for any good records management system. One shortfall in this section is that at no time is reference made to any legislative requirements which dictate record keeping practices to varying degrees in all states of Australia.

Part 3 of *Organising the Office Memory* deals with "Techniques, Technologies and Machines". It is very theoretical in its approach and offers little in the way of practical applications for any of the topics discussed. These topics are flow charting, written procedures (manuals), ergonomics in the office, micrographics, automated retrieval, machine recognition of symbols, laser and optical disk technology, forms design, international paper sizes, coping with accounts vouchers, and office machines. Appendices, a glossary and index form the last section of the book.

On a final note, I take J. Eddis Linton's tailpiece from his book:

"Alice to the Cheshire Cat: 'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a great deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where ---,' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat ---

'so long as I go somewhere,' Alice added as explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if only you walk long enough.'

(from Lewis Carroll 'Alice in Wonderland' quoted page 216 '*Organising the Office Memory*'.)

The aim of *Organising the Office Memory* appears to be to provide direction for the reader to follow in the discipline of information and records management. There is a definite requirement for books such as this in the discipline so that novices can be introduced to and learn about records management, and also to enhance the knowledge of those already active in the field. No one book can provide all the answers nor cover all the angles, and as I have already stated, I believe *Organising the Office Memory* is a good introductory text and deserves a place on all our bookshelves.

\* \* \* \* \*

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# INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA AS AN INFORMATION SOCIETY

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA RESPONSE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE FOR LONG TERM STRATEGIES 20 OCTOBER 1990

*The following is a copy of the submission made to this Inquiry by the Federal Council of the RMAA in October 1990.*

### **Purpose**

It is the purpose of this paper to provide the response of the Records Management Association of Australia to the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies Inquiry into Australia as an Information Society.

The Records Management Association of Australia (known as RMAA) was founded in 1969 and incorporated in 1975 and has Branches throughout Australia. Its membership is wide ranging, covering professionals in the areas of Records Management, Librarianship, Archives, Corporate and Public Administration, Data Processing and other related aspects of the Information Delivery Industry.

The activities of the RMAA are wide ranging and include courses, conferences, seminars, national conventions, specialised studies, projects and workshops, field trips and publications, designed to assist members become stronger and a more enlightened force in the world of information management. The Association has an on-going commitment to education of its members and the institution of professional standards.

The RMAA is affiliated with the Australian Information Technology Council of Australia and has members status to the Australian Standards Association. RMAA was a founding member of the International Records Management Council.

### **The Records Management Industry**

All organisations, independent of the size or nature of business, now operate in an

information based society. Never before has access to information been so fundamental to our decision making process. Increased "WORK FORCE" mobility now forces organisations to implement comprehensive internal information collection procedures to ensure that business stability is independent of personnel. Rapid access to business and policy information greatly improves efficiency and can provide unparalleled improvements in business efficiency.

Society and business has been involved in information management since the Stone Age. The capture and storage of information has formed the basis of man's development. Industry has developed new technologies and techniques for not only storing information but also for its distribution and presentation. The information industry has in the past focused on the development of new information storage, retrieval and distribution systems. The introduction of these new information systems has had considerable influence on our ability to communicate but has had no effect on the information.

Information is independent of storage or communication media. However, for every new information storage and communication media or system developed there is yet another information management system introduced. Information management systems, based on information rather than generation, storage or distribution systems provide unparalleled benefits to all organisations.

A single, media independent index to a corporate memory, based on well developed, proven, records management principles is fundamental to the efficient operation of any government or organisation. Records management is a key element in the successful operation of any business. Evidently this

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fundamental management function within organisations has been totally neglected by governments, bureaucrats, administrative management and educational institutions. Only in the last few years has records management been recognised as a discipline and training courses introduced in some states of Australia. To date no recognition has been given to this fundamental management function in business management courses.

However, recently management has, in general, recognised not only the necessity but also the productivity benefits that can be achieved through the implementation of a corporate memory - records management system within an organisation. This need awareness with the lack of products and services to address this unserved market provides Australia with unparalleled business opportunities, both nationally and internationally.

There are few companies within Australia with a proven dedication to the development of records management products and services based on national information principles with a commitment to Technology Independent Information Management Systems that result in the development of a comprehensive range of products and services, that meet the needs of the national and international developing market.

There are a few Australian produced computer assisted records management software systems available on a commercial basis and the number grows each year as does the sophistication of the technology. In-house designed systems have also been introduced throughout many areas of government and the private sector. However, only a very limited number of these Australian produced records management software systems have been exported as new technology.

## 1. NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY

### 1.1 The Dimension of the Information Explosion

The House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies should be aware that throughout Australia and internationally there are several areas of

professional groups catering to the needs of information management. Not the least of these are Records Managers.

Around 80% of the information available today was created in the past 20-25 years. This volume of information doubles every ten years and hence the importance of its management and the size of management teams are ever increasing.

This ever increasing volume is having dramatic effects on the budgets of all spheres of government and throughout the private sector. It is particularly relevant to government due to the requirements of the various Acts both Commonwealth and State, ie. Archives Act, Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, and their implications particularly for records managers in agencies.

The cost of paperwork and its management is a major hidden expense to government, which impacts on all three levels and through to industry and the private sector and ultimately the taxpayer.

The first area to be addressed should be a national definition of terms used by the information industry. This definition of terms should encompass not only Australian terminology but the terminology used in the information industry by our major trading partners.

### 1.2 Elements Contributing to a National Information Policy

The RMAA supports the introduction of a National Information Policy. The trends both within technology itself, the vehicle for information flow, and from the user community demand this initiative, which should include

- the creation of information, including paper, electronic, image based, voice based sources
- the management and use of the information
- its retrieval, access and publication

Information coverage should be across all possible media sources, that is all printed and un-printed material, including electronic image, voice and sound, and computer produced

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sources. The policy should examine and review the technologies that exist to create, store, manage, carry, including telecommunications, published and archived material. The interaction of Australian standards with regard to management systems and thus retrieval mechanisms is pertinent in this area.

Converging technologies, particularly voice and data, require that standards be established to protect the efficiency of storage and retrieval. In addition, converging technologies have led to a convergence of professional skills with new requirements put on the various training institutions.

Value of information to the nation needs to be understood as an asset, with regard to future employment, production and export capabilities.

### 1.3 Equity in Information Access and Transfer

It is evident that a major share of information management is borne by records managers in those areas associated with the life cycle of a record, the managing of the creation, indexing, storage, retrieval and applying approved archive schedules. The records manager is responsible for the applying of security levels approved by statute or administrative decision that protects recorded information within agencies or organisations. The equity or information access is a fundamental right under the Privacy Act 1988 and applies to all government agencies and should be extended to cover all stored information irrespective of media type and method of storage.

There is a widely held belief that governments at all levels are collecting and storing too much information of a personal and private nature on the citizens of Australia. Whilst the information stored is used for the sole purpose for which it was collected there seems to be no opposition. However, information collected for one purpose and subsequently used either on its own or in conjunction with other collected and stored information would be opposed and possibly lead to breaches of the Privacy Act 1988 as it is now legislated. Despite the introduction of more recent legislation, records managers have always worked with and under the constraints of many and varied Acts, eg. Local Government

Acts, Audit Acts, Acts pertaining to various professional bodies.

The Freedom of Information Act 1985 has led to "fishing expeditions" by members of the media that have caused departments to expend vast amounts of resources and over-utilisation of records management staff time for little or no value. The so called trawling for information should be restricted to ensure only bona fide requests are satisfied. The government has a responsibility to ensure that officers are properly trained, and departments properly resourced to satisfy requests under the Freedom of Information Act 1985. These areas of records management need urgent attention.

### 1.4 Standards

Along with technologies themselves, standards must be developed within the technology industries and the records management profession. EDI and OSI are starting to impact on hardware vendors, but standards need to be developed in many areas within records management and across similar professions.

### 1.5 Education

The RMAA is well aware of the ever growing importance of information management in this country. The number of formal courses in records management at both certificate level (TAFE) and the tertiary level would support the argument that Australia is an information society.

There are now five TAFE courses offered with at least two more programmed for introduction in 1991:

- 5 Under Graduate courses
- 5 Graduate Diploma courses
- 3 Masters Degree courses

These courses are quite distinct from those offered in Librarianship, Archives Management and other information management related courses.

### 1.6 Employment, Production and Export

Prospective employees within the profession of records management at Record Manager level

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are now frequently required to have qualifications. The RMAA has recently made submissions to have people employed in the profession listed in an index, listing titles and brief job descriptions. However, the effects of multiskilling are impacting on the profession, particularly in government agencies. The use of multiskilling at the lower levels of the clerical divisions was always traditionally used to train junior officers in the organisation, and was called for a better name "induction". The use of multiskilling is now being directed at higher level officers. Multiskilling means that organisations will no longer have a dedicated group of records management specialists. All staff at each particular level/grade will be encouraged to achieve a measure of skill in a number of areas - the "jack of all trades but master of none" situation.

This process is affecting similar professions, particularly librarians. The need to educate and maintain specialist records management staff to ensure standards are monitored, maintained and/or improved is essential. There will need to be action taken to encourage staff to undertake this speciality. The educators in universities, colleges of advanced education and the technical and further education colleges need to be aware of the emerging profession. Governments need to provide funds to ensure that a professionally prepared syllabus is implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure the courses offered are current and meet the required standard to ensure the student is adequately trained for the modern information management industry.

The other major impact is devolution - not just the task itself but, increasingly, the responsibility for records management is being devolved to line areas. There appears to be a few problems where the function is devolved, indeed there can be substantial benefits, however there must be a central policy and coordination unit within each organisation to ensure correct procedures are applied. Staffing this unit with people with the appropriate knowledge and experience may be difficult due to multiskilling.

It must be remembered that the life cycle of the record is often for longer than the individual or

group is able to wholly manage them. Systems and structures within organisations therefore need to be maintained to properly manage the life cycle of the record. Multiskilling and devolution is working against this concept and this will result in the wasteful management of the information/records resource.

### 1.7 Economic Climate

Australia has led the world in many information technology advances, of particular importance to our profession being the development of "off the shelf" records management software systems. The current economic climate is making it difficult for smaller specialist companies to continue the research and development with the result that many projects are now being funded by overseas companies. The technology is developed in Australia and then is exported overseas as well as the profits. A few Australian produced computer software packages are available on a commercial basis and the number grows each year as does the sophistication of the technology. Hardware products, such as optical discs, micrographic equipment, video and voice activated equipment is imported. This hardware is designed by engineers overseas and forced upon the profession rather than the Australian records management profession setting the standards for use within Australia. In-house designed software systems have also been introduced throughout many areas of government and the private sector. Filing system hardware, such as compactus, filing cabinets, file covers, colour coding labels, file title labels, microfilm and associated products are produced in Australia and in some instances lead the world in design but few are exported.

## 2. LIBRARIES AS AN AREA OF NATIONAL NEED AND RESPONSIBILITY

The RMAA cannot readily comment on this term of reference. However, the Association should stress that libraries are certainly not the only areas of information storage, maintenance, control and retrieval. To this end, the RMAA is working with other learned societies and

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associations to ensure that all forms of stored information is linked by a common index. The RMAA contends that the national information base should be broadened beyond the scope of libraries. Libraries are fundamentally the repositories of published and processed information for research and evaluation purposes. Certainly, there is scope for this role to change, however, for an information policy to fully impact institutions which need to be considered in the study the following should be included:

- archival institutions
- museums of natural history - for distribution of technology knowledge to the public
- art galleries - for distribution of the nation's image base, both cultural and technical
- research and development laboratories
- universities (as centres of new users)
- public and private company library and research and development material
- research institutions (both public and private)
- government departmental registries and secretariats (for government policy knowledge base)
- government transactional information (for example, CES and Social Security data)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics - gatherers of national data

### 3. INFORMATION ACCESS - MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The role of information dissemination to the Parliament must be understood in a broader context. Problems exist for the legislators, lawyers, bureaucrats and administrators and members of the public alike. The various agencies and departments in all levels of government should be providing their Ministers, other Ministers and Parliamentarians together with Ministerial and Parliamentary staff with relevant information. This information should be readily attainable from the records information management sections as well as from departmental libraries and all other areas of stored information. This area of the enquiry should be linked in with equity in information access. Standardised indexing is needed together with more recognition of records

management as a vital area of the total information scene. The problem exists at many levels

- volume of information
- presentation
- education levels
- technology literacy
- equity

Parliamentarians needs can in part be addressed by assistance of their departments and research staff. The availability of technology at electorate level may well be of assistance.

\* \* \*

The following professional members of the Records Management Association of Australia have contributed to this submission

RMAA Federal President  
Mr Graham V Dudley

RMAA Chairperson, New Technology  
Ms Fiona E Meyer

RMAA Chairperson, Education  
Mr Dennis G Wheeler

RMAA Public Officer  
Mr Ross Thompson

RMAA Federal Secretary  
Mr Murray Stewart

RMAA Federal Councillor  
Mr Thomas Kaufhold

RMAA Federal Vice President  
Mr Ray Holswich

\* \* \* \*

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June 19	INAUGURAL WRECKORDS OLYMPICS	BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL
July 8-12	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	ALL STATES
August 14	REGIONAL MEETING NSW BRANCH	WOLLONGONG
August 21	BARCODE APPLICATION IN A LARGE RECORDS ENVIRONMENT	BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL
September 12	FEDERAL EXECUTIVE MEETING	DARWIN
September 15-18	8TH NATIONAL CONVENTION THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT TOWARDS 2000	DARWIN BEAUFORT INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

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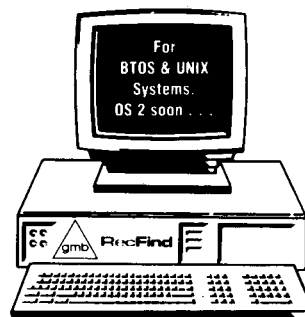
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## RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IN AMERICA

by Margaret Sneddon, B.Ed

*Margaret is a Lecturer in the Bowwater Faculty of Business, Department of Office Management and Communications at Victoria College where she has taught for seven years. Prior to this Margaret worked in the education field at the former Melbourne State College. This paper was prepared following Margaret's tour to the United States in late 1990.*



### What is Happening in Business

Records management is a recognised profession in the USA. A person can become a CRM (Certified Records Manager) through the Institute of Certified Records Managers and move through a career structure in the field of information management.

Management recognises the value of effective records management mainly through the economic benefits which can be achieved, but certainly because of legal requirements and the possibility of litigation.

Large, medium and small systems operate in a range of situations which cover the whole area of private business and government. These include the management of both active and inactive records.

Active records are, generally, managed by secretaries and administrators. A records manager may provide guidelines, in-house training, records management support services such as forms management and reprographics management. The records manager is, generally, considered to be at the upper level of middle-management reporting to senior management on current activities and operating

costs. This person makes recommendations on future records management requirements - systems, staff, buildings, procedures etc. and must be able to meet a company's legal requirements. Records managers usually operate on a "consultancy" basis.

Inactive records storage systems in the USA are very large. Private companies operating as inactive storage centres offer excellent inactive storage services - physical storage of large amounts of records of varying types, management systems to support storage and retrieval of information and security. This industry is relatively new in the USA having developed over the last ten years with fairly rapid growth in the last five years.

Many companies operate their own inactive storage centres and, again, these can be very large and are expertly run.

A range of technology and systems can be found to support the operation of these two areas. Optical disk systems offer storage advantages for some very large inactive records programmes.

Many companies are heading towards networking optical disk systems.

### What is Happening in Education - A Summary

A directory of courses in the USA was listed in the July 1989 ARMA. This directory was used as the basis of a study of records and archives management courses along with a review of six courses currently operating and two model programmes from ARMA International. Discussions with USA educators and business people provided valuable input to the study to bring the areas of education and business together.

The analysis of courses revealed the following

- In total, 205 universities and colleges conduct 384 courses in both records management and

archives management. 346 of these are records management and 38 are archives management. The relationship between the two areas is acknowledged by educators and professional bodies however a clear link was not found in the structure of the courses.

- In records management Business Colleges conduct the majority of courses at levels 1-4 but Library Colleges Conduct the majority of level 5 or graduate courses.
- In archives management, Library Colleges conduct the majority of courses. History Colleges/departments also conduct many of these courses with Business Colleges playing a very minor role.
- Course content involves practical and theoretical study appropriate to the level offered.
- Of the courses reviewed, only one from the ARMA directory offered a course which brought the two areas together. This is Archives and Records Management conducted by the History Department at Appalachian State University, North Carolina, and operates at all levels.
- Courses offered by Business Colleges often do not recognise the link with archives management. The ARMA model course points out the "sister" relationship of this field with records management. Courses offered by Library Colleges do offer courses in records management but on closer examination these are often library related and are generally electives in an archives programme.
- Practical application of theory is seen to be particularly important. This occurs in assignment and class work and credit for work experience is often an option for students.
- Keeping abreast of technology is also seen to be important. Students are expected to have hands-on experience and to develop knowledge of various systems.
- Use of experts in the field to support lecture programmes takes place in many courses. Visits to a range of companies and records or archives management situations occur in most courses, but particularly at senior levels.

## Archives and Records Management Education - American Scene

Developments in the field of records and information management in Australia prompted a recent study involving a review of records and information management in business and education in the USA. Such a study, it was believed, could provide useful information to Australian educators currently conducting or developing courses for Australia's information management workers.

The education element of the review was conducted in three phases

1. An analysis of USA records and information courses listed in the 1989 ARMA International Directory of Collegiate Schools Offering Courses and Majors in Records and Information Management<sup>1</sup>
2. A review of educational programmes in the USA - two ARMA Records/Information Management model programmes, three Records Management courses and three Archives Management courses
3. Discussions with USA educators and business people involved in records management and archives management courses

The analysis of the ARMA directory of courses revealed the following (see endnote<sup>1</sup> )

- In total, 205 universities or colleges conduct 384 courses from Freshman to Graduate level. (See endnote <sup>2</sup>) Levels are graded as

Freshman	level 1
Sophomore	level 2
Junior	level 3
Senior	level 4
Graduate	level 5

- In the field of records management 183 universities or colleges conduct 346 courses at the following levels

level 1	93
level 2	102
level 3	64
level 4	52
level 5	35

• Of these courses 296 are conducted by business departments, 28 by library departments, 15 by vocational and adult education departments, approximately 6 by computer departments (it was not possible to clearly identify all departments), and one conducted by a political science department. Of particular interest is the fact that of the 35 level 5 courses, 20 are conducted by library departments and 15 by business departments.

• Course names vary considerably and do not indicate a level. The name Introduction to Records Management is the most common name recorded at all levels. Examples of other names at level 1 are Alphabetic Filing, Office Systems, Filing and Records Management, Business Procedures 1, Records Management/Filing. At level 2 other course names are Records Management, Data Management and Records Control, Records and Information Management. At level 3 other names such as Records Management, Records Systems Management, Records and Information Management, Micrographics, Forms Management, Advanced Records Management are found. At level 4 other course names are Records and Information Management, Office Information Systems Technology, Records Management, Records Administration, Records Management Analysis and Design. Forms Management is predominantly found at level 4. At level 5 other names shown are Records Management, Information and Records Management, Office Information Systems Technology, Information Resources Management, Managing Information in Large Organisations, Design of Information Systems.

• In the field of Archives Management 22 universities or colleges conduct 38 courses at the following levels

level 1	1
level 2	1
level 3	2
level 4	4
level 5	30

• Of these courses, two are conducted by business departments, 13 by history departments and 23 by library departments.

• Of the 30 level 5 courses, 22 are conducted by library departments and eight by history departments. Business departments conduct courses only at levels 3 and 4.

• The most common course name in the archives field is Archives Administration and Operation with other names shown as Introduction to Archives Management, Archives Administration, Archives Management, Archives Research Seminar, Archives Internship, Archives Fieldwork.

• Only one occurrence of a combined records and archives course was found in the analysis. This was Introduction to Archives and Records Management conducted by the History Department at Appalachian State University, North Carolina, and operating at all levels.

The large variation in course names prompted consideration of whether or not prospective students and people in the business world would find this confusing. For example, the name Introduction to Records Management may be found at all levels and gives no indication at all of the type of course, the entry requirements or the likely course content. The name is used for practical skills development courses at levels 1 and 2 and also for graduate courses at level 5.

Should a professional body attempt to develop standard course names in order to provide prospective students and the business world with an indication of the course level? The conclusion reached is that it should not. Courses are developed to suit perceived needs in a profession and will be named by colleges and universities perhaps according to existing policy or practice in an institution, or by preference of staff, or by emphasis in course content. Prospective students will look at courses in much greater detail than simply a course name and will therefore be able to determine the different levels of similarly named courses. People in the business world may not be able to determine so easily just what levels apply to similarly named courses but consideration of the type of diploma or degree should assist. Would it be helpful for a professional body to recommend that the level number be included at the end of each course name that it accredits?

The conclusion reached is that it should not. A tagging with level number might be useful in the business world but could create inflexibility in course structure and movement between levels.

In summary, the analysis of records management courses shows that 26.9% are conducted at level 1, 29.5% at level 2, 18.5% at level 3, 15% at level 4, and 10% at level 5 (see fig 1). 85.3% of records management courses are conducted by business departments. Of these, library departments conduct 8.1%, vocational education departments conduct 4.3%, computing and other departments conduct 2.3%.

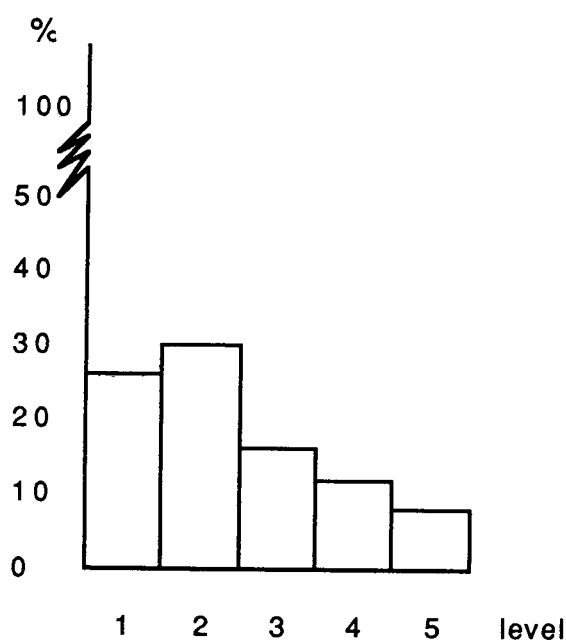


Figure 1: Percentage of records management courses at levels 1 - 5

Of the 10% of records management courses at graduate level, 4.3% are conducted by business departments and 5.7% by library departments.

Quite a different pattern emerges after analysis of archives management courses. 2.6% of these courses are conducted at level 1, 2.6% at level 2, 5.3% at level 3, 10.5% at level 4, and 79% at level 5 (see fig. 2). 60.5% of archives management courses are conducted by library departments and these are only at levels 4 and 5. History departments conduct 34.2% of archives management courses predominantly at level 5 (8

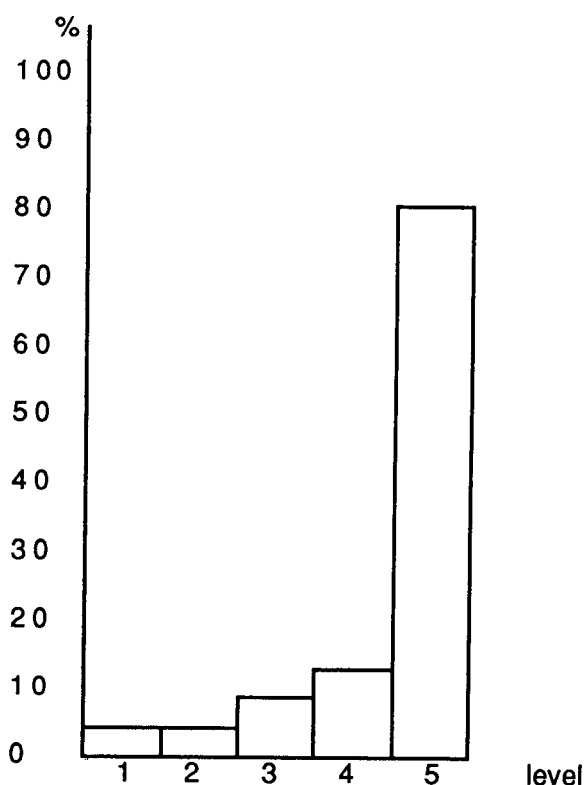


Figure 2: Percentage of archives management courses at levels 1 - 5

out of 13) and 5.3% are conducted by business departments at levels 3 and 4.

Overall, the analysis shows that the majority of records management courses are conducted by business departments at levels 1 to 4. However, level 5 courses in records management are conducted predominantly by library departments as well as by business departments. The majority of courses in archives management are at level 5, with courses conducted predominantly by library departments and to a lesser extent by history departments. Business departments offer no graduate level courses in archives management.

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The second element of the educational study was a review of the ARMA International model programmes for two-year degree/diploma courses and four-year bachelor's degree courses.

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The two-year model recommends four major components to the course with Records/Information Management having one quarter of the total course value, measured in hours. The four components are

1. General Education (15 hours)
2. Business Management (21 hours)
3. Technical (9 hours)
4. Records/Information Management (15 hours)

Topics for study in the first three components include: General Education - English, Math, Social Sciences, Business Management - Basic Accounting, Business Administration, Management Information Systems, Technical - Keyboarding, Computing, Word Processing.

The area of Records/Information Management is set out in detail in the model programme with five specific subjects listed. These are

- Introduction to Records/Information Management - information flow, historical reference, overview of records and record systems in business, technology, careers
- Systems and Functions of Records/Information Management - systems administration, records inventory, analysis, protection, manuals, micrographics, equipment and supplies
- Specialized Functions of Records/Information Management - forms management, reprographics, micrographics, disaster recovery, optical disk technology
- Topics in Records/Information Management - described as a "capstone course", this component operates as individualized research under direction and requires analysis and application of skills and knowledge in the field
- Co-operative Work Experience - supervised work experience units, seminars, group discussion

Each of the five subjects contains information on prerequisites, course description, specific objectives, course content and time allocation. Suggested teaching methodologies, texts and related materials are included in the model.

The purpose of the two-year model programme is to develop knowledge, skill and attitude required by records management professionals. It is designed to "provide students with technical skills for entry-level positions which may lead to supervisory or middle-management positions",<sup>2</sup> for example Records and Information Technician.

The four-year model program for bachelor's degree with a major in Records/Information Management also sets out very specific details on course content, prerequisites, subjects within the Records/Information Management component, evaluation, texts, etc. This is a major study often undertaken in Business Administration degree programmes. It is designed to provide entry into middle level records management positions and when coupled with appropriate experience should allow for progress into higher level positions.<sup>3</sup>

The Records/Information Management major requires 15-18 hours and 9-12 hours for electives, which together would constitute approximately half of the four-year programme. Subjects within the major are

- Principles of Records/Information Management - a broad, integrated introduction to Records/Information Management aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of the field
- Micrographics/Image Management - familiarisation with the principles of micrographics/image technology and systems
- Forms Management - analysis and design of forms, forms management programmes, inventory, controls, paper types, printing
- Archives Management - archival enterprise, institutions and collections, methodologies, issues, relationship to records management
- Internship - referred to as a "capstone" in the course of study, requires application of knowledge and skill working in a business or government area, recommended for upper levels of the four-year course.

Electives include such subjects as Accounting, Management Information Systems, Word Processing, Office Management, Business

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## Report Writing, Business Communication, Business Computing Systems.

It is particularly interesting to note that the ARMA Education Committee, and the American college and university system recognise the value of a range of management subjects which Australian colleges and universities generally consider non-academic or merely skill development. Word processing is a good example of this. Certainly such a subject requires a level of technical skill and this may well be developed as part of course work. However, such a subject also requires an academic, or theoretical approach to understanding the management of such a system in the business environment. This combination of technical and academic content equates with subjects such as accounting or computing which are quite readily accepted as academic.

The two ARMA model programmes offer educational institutions the opportunity to provide courses, at a range of levels, to meet standards set by the professional body and recognised in the business world. No doubt courses, be they in America or Australia, will reflect the institution, faculty and staff responsible for offering the course. It is the professional body, however, which provides the link between the standards and structure of a course and acceptance of that course in the business world. Business people look to a professional body to provide standards, and educators look to a professional body to provide guidelines to meet those standards.

Three courses in records management and three courses in archives management were reviewed in order to provide more detailed information on the content of courses currently operating in the USA.

Information gathered on records management courses is as follows

- Information and Records Management Practices conducted by the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, a level 5 course, covers the components of professionally managed records management programs. While specific objectives are not set out, the course outline

states that each component of the course will be studied in detail. Topics to be studied include records inventory, retention and disposition, vital records control, forms correspondence and reports management, and privacy of and access to information. The form of assessment is not shown. An extensive bibliography under topic headings indicates that students will be expected to undertake a wide range of reading which is predominantly articles but also includes papers, texts, and government publications. The course outline does not include archives management as a topic.

- Records Administration is conducted at levels 3 and 4 at Northern Illinois University. Objectives are clearly stated, and assessment is detailed in both form and value. The reading material referred to is a textbook, *Records Management Systems and Administration* by Thomas, Schubert and Lee. The impression gained is that the course is structured to make good use of the textbook for topic reading. The course outline does not contain a reference to archives management as part of the study programme.

- The University of Syracuse, New York, offers Records Management through the School of Information Studies. This is a level 5 course designed to provide students with a working knowledge of records management. Assignments are set out in detail and require students to research and use initiative as well as to complete practical weekly projects and a final examination. The topic "Archives and their connection to Records Management" is set as an area of study for one week. The Ricks and Gow text *Information Resource Management* is set as required reading and the weekly programme includes required reading of articles and papers.

A review of these records management courses shows that much of the ARMA recommended course structure is included in each of them however the area of archives management is lacking in two. Courses at level 5 require students to undertake extensive reading and to use initiative in research and project work. The course at level 3 and 4 appears to make use of the text as required topic reading. At this level it is appropriate to make good use of textbooks to

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support lecture and tutorial programmes which aim to develop concepts and understanding of principles, however, the value of material in articles and papers should not be overlooked as these provide current information in actual situations.

The development of knowledge is enhanced if students have the opportunity to apply knowledge and skill in actual situations. Two of the courses reviewed indicate that assignment work in the business world is used to offer students a realistic approach to the practical application of theory.

The model ARMA programme Archives Management and three university archives management courses were also reviewed. The ARMA course is recommended as an upper-level undergraduate course for four year colleges and universities. The course is actually part of the Records Management bachelor's degree programme and was discussed briefly above. Broadly, course content covers such areas as the history and functions of archives, administrative factors, programme design, careers, computer automation and office technology. It is clear that ARMA wishes to develop recognition of the relationship between records management and archives management. The second objective of the Archives Management course states that students should "Develop an archival program as a sister function to a records management discipline program".<sup>4</sup> The model programme recommends a second semester course emphasising practical experience in an established archive with the student required to undertake project work for submission to the university. 140 hours of project work is recommended by The Society of American Archivists as an essential part of the practical experience programme.

The University of Hawaii at Manoa offers a level 5 course in archives management - Introduction to Archives Management. (It also offers a records management course not included in this review.) The course is conducted through the School of Library and Information Studies. Introduction to Archives Management is an elective unit of study in the Master of Library and Information Studies programme. The

course provides for a broad study of archival principles and management theories including policy, appraisal, computer and micrographic applications, ethical and legal issues. The School offers several other archive related courses, for example, Practicum in Libraries and Archives. Students may choose to specialise in school librarianship or in archives management. The specialisation Certificate in Archives and Records Management (CARM) is essentially an archivist's course.

Students who wish to take up this particular specialisation are required to have a strong academic background in history. A course entitled Information and Records Management offered by this School is not a required part of the study programme for the archives specialisation but may be taken as an elective and would, no doubt, be taken by those students who wish to find employment in the records management area.

The Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, Boston, offers a Master of Science programme with specialisations in records management and archives management. Three archives management courses are

- Introduction to Archival Methods and Services
- Preservation Management for Libraries and Archives
- Administration of Archives and Manuscript Collections

The course reviewed is designed to teach students the fundamentals of archival activities such as appraisal, acquisitions, arrangement, description reference and access. It also contains an overview of history and terminology of the profession. A bibliography lists four textbooks required for course readings and an extensive list of articles and papers is included under weekly topic headings. Assessment includes a 50 hour project which must be completed in an archives or manuscript repository. This is a compulsory course for students undertaking the archives management programme.

The third archives management course reviewed was Introduction to Archival Administration.

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This course is offered at the University of California, Berkeley, through the School of Library and Information Studies. The course is an introduction to significant problems and procedures related to the management of archives and manuscripts and considers identification, preservation, organisation and use of historical and administrative records as well as the administration of archival institutions. This is a level 5 course. *Keeping Archives* edited by Ann Pederson is the course textbook and an extensive reading programme of additional articles and papers is outlined under topic headings. The course is an elective in the Master of Library and Information Science Programme. Extensive use is made of the on campus Bancroft Library special collections for student research and assignments and library staff participate in the lecture programme as guest lecturers.

In reviewing the three archives management courses, no clear link with records management, in the business sense, could be found. Certainly, the various programmes offer records management courses but these are not required study in an archives course and were found to be very much concerned with librarianship rather than the management of information in the business world.

The review of the archives field indicates that while a School may offer one degree with the possibility of specialisation in either records management or archives management, there is a tendency to construct courses to cater for two separate professional fields, rather than one professional field with areas of specialisation.

Overall, results of the review of courses shows the following

- At levels 1 and 2, records management courses are designed to develop practical skills, to introduce the technology of the field, and may also provide students with a basic understanding of principles. Archives management is rarely offered at this level. (The ARMA directory lists only two archives management courses at this level.) There is no evidence of a link in the educational sense between the two fields.

- At levels 3 and 4, records management courses are designed to develop knowledge and understanding of a wide range of concepts, principles and practices. Practical application of theory occurs in assignment work and some courses offer work experience components with the full semester credit. Knowledge of technology in the field is developed. Experts in the field often provide support to lecture programmes. Archives management courses are not common at level 3 but can sometimes be found at level 4. (The ARMA directory lists two courses at level 3 and four at level 4.) Again no acknowledgement of the relationship between the two fields was found.
- At level 5, both records management and archives management courses are designed as in-depth studies of concepts, principles, practices and issues. Extensive reading is required and assignment work involves student initiative, research, use of technology, and the practical application of knowledge at senior levels. Experts in the field are often used in lecture programmes. The relationship between records management and archives management is acknowledged to a limited extent in some courses at this level but is usually related to the field of librarianship.

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The third part of the education element of the study involved discussions with USA educators and business people.

Educators agree that technological development has dramatically changed the work of records managers and such change must be reflected in course content.

Barbara Raymond, of the Records Management Department at Niagra Mohawk Power Corporation, Syracuse, New York, and Co-ordinator of Records Management at the University of Syracuse, stated that records management courses at all levels should provide, inter alia, for the development of knowledge of technological systems in both a theoretical and a practical sense. This involves the inclusion of

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organisational management and systems management subjects in courses, as well as the inclusion of hands-on assignments and work experience. Raymond is a member of the ARMA International Education Committee and was part of the committee which formulated the two ARMA model programmes. Raymond believes the relationship between records management and archives management needs to be developed in the business world and educational programmes. Dr Carol Tenopir of the University of Hawaii at Manoa agrees that technology has created great change in information management courses. Tenopir stated that archivists need knowledge and skill in technological systems as well as traditional academic knowledge of the field. Tenopir believes, as do other educators, that technological development has created greater awareness of the work of records managers and archivists in the broad business community.

Rick Wilke, Records Manager at Chevron Corporation, San Francisco, agrees that the business community, particularly management, has recognised the work of record managers because of the financial benefits which effective technological systems can achieve. While this has promoted the profession in general, it has also created growth in records management departments for people and systems, particularly when such growth can be economically justified. It is worthy of note that such growth does not necessarily mean an increase in staff numbers. Rather, it may be in the promotion of records management personnel to appropriate management positions, or the purchase of equipment and systems to provide better records management programmes.

Mary Yehl, Records Management Co-ordinator at Kodak, Rochester, New York, stated that management recognition of the value of effective records management has created an awareness of the need for in-house training for people who are in charge of records. Yehl stated that at Kodak 50% of people managing records are secretaries with the remaining 50% being a combination of technicians, engineers, clerks, analysts, and administrative assistants.

Both educators and business people agree that the development of the records management profession has created a requirement for recognised formal educational programmes on the one hand and business training courses on the other.

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What can be drawn from this study to assist Australian educators and business people? Some recommendations are

- 1 The RMAA should consider taking up the ARMA International model programmes as recommended courses for Australian colleges and universities, or it could use these courses as the basis for the development of courses it considers to be appropriate for Australia.
- 2 Educators should look to professional associations to provide standards and guidelines in educational programmes so that courses can be professionally accredited and can also meet the needs of the business world.
- 3 Courses accredited by the RMAA should recognise the relationship between records management and archives management in order to promote awareness and greater understanding in the broad field of information management.
- 4 Educators should work closely with people in the business world so that experts in the field can provide support to educational programmes. Companies can provide a base for practical work or research assignments and students can develop a network of business contacts.
- 5 The RMAA should develop close affiliation with related professional bodies in the computing, office management, and archives areas to ensure that relationships with these areas are maintained and continue to be recognised in both business and education. Through such an affiliation the RMAA should work towards the development of greater recognition of the records management field in the computing, office management and archives areas.

- 6 The RMAA should work with educators to develop and promote short courses suitable for people in the business world who wish to obtain records management education at less than diploma or degree level. In particular, secretaries should be targeted for such courses.
- 7 Educators and the RMAA should work together towards developing the professional image of records management in all areas of business but in particular in the area of private business.

The study of records and information management in the USA has provided valuable information for Australian educators. The field of records management is in its infancy in Australia and Australian educators have a responsibility to ensure that courses are developed which provide students with professionally recognised qualifications.

The records management profession is recognised in government departments because of the necessity of managing public information. In private business in Australia, however, the records management profession has not yet achieved full recognition. One way to promote this recognition is through the provision of a range of educational programmes which are of the highest standard and which are accredited by a recognised professional body. In this way the field of records management will achieve greater and continuing recognition in both the business world and education.

#### Footnotes

1. *ARMA Quarterly*, Vol , No , July 1989
2. *Two year degree/diploma model program for records/information management*, Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. (ARMA International), Prairie Village, Kansas, 1988.
3. *Bachelor's degree model program for records/information management*, Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. (ARMA International), Prairie Village, Kansas, 1988.
4. *Bachelor's degree model program for records/information management*, p.13.

#### Endnotes

1. The directory included courses conducted in Canada, Puerto, Rico and Wales however, the analysis covered only courses conducted in the USA.

2. The analysis included 17 courses from 8 colleges and universities which gave no indication of level. A level was applied to these courses according to the name of the particular course. For example, level 5 was applied to Archives Administration & Operation (University of Michigan) in line with similarly named university courses, level 4 was applied to Records & Information Management Systems & Functions (University of Cincinnati), level 1 was applied to Filing systems (Waukesha County Technical College).

#### References

##### Course Outlines

- *Bachelor's degree model program for records/information management*, the Education Committee of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. (ARMA International), Prairie Village, Kansas, 1988.
- *Information and Records Management Practices*, School of Library and Information Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
- *Introduction to Archival Administration*, School of Library and Information Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
- *Introduction to Archival Methods and Services*, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College, Boston.
- *Introduction to Archives Management*, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu.
- *Records Administration*, College of Business, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois.
- *Records Management*, School of Information Studies, University of Syracuse, New York.
- *Two year degree/diploma model program for records/information management*, the Education Committee of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. (ARMA International), Prairie Village, Kansas, 1988.

##### Interviews

- Dr Carol Tenopir, University of Hawaii at Manoa. 10/8/90.
- Cynthia Fountain, Records Manager, Pacific Mutual Life Insurance, Newport Beach, California. 13/8/90.
- Richard Wilke, Records Manager, Chevron Corporation, San Francisco. 17/8/90.
- Barbara Raymond, Lecturer, University of Syracuse, 29/8/90.
- Mary Yehl, Records Management Co-ordinator, Kodak, Rochester, New York. 30/8/90.
- Carl Elsbree, Records Manager, Xerox Corporation, Rochester, New York. 31/8/90.

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# After you've filed it, how will you find it?

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## TRAINING, MANAGING, AND RETAINING RECORDS MANAGEMENT STAFF

by Philip Taylor, B.Bus. MRMA

*Philip Taylor has worked in the records management field for 17 years, including periods at the Victorian Department of Health, Ministry for Planning and Environment, and Office of Corrections. He is currently Records Manager at the University of Queensland. Phil has been actively involved in the RMAA at Federal and State level, and has held various positions of office including Federal Vice President and Victorian President. His particular interest in recent years has been education in the records management field. He is currently completing an MA (Archives and Records) at Monash University.*



be about technology and very few about people. Indeed this conference is no different. Of the 14 presentations only one is about people.

In the last four issues of Informaa Quarterly, (the journal of the Records Management Association of Australia), 13 articles appeared on technology but only three on people issues. All texts books on records management do the same thing.

The human factor is in some ways the most difficult to understand and interpret because it is so complicated. Everyone is an individual and has a unique personality. We all have our own perceptions, ideals, values and judgements. We are all driven by many and varied motivations; our egos and self-esteem are controlled by numerous factors. Our backgrounds are different - no wonder that such a complex issue is so often overlooked.

So who are the people who work in records management and why do they work in this particular field?

First there is the obvious group of records managers. There are the supervisors, classifiers, previous papers clerks, file location clerks, and mail clerks. Consider the role and functions of the records managers and analyse some of their activities particularly in light of the vast changes that have occurred in technology over the past decade.

The commonly held definition of a records manager is that of a position which has the task of planning, organizing and operating a system for the control of records in an organisation. Increasingly it is heard that records management is a new profession which should be recognised in its own right amongst the other professions in the information worker field. Indeed the question of professionalism is one that has risen in the past in records management circles and will no doubt occur in the future. There is no question that records managers are a particularly

This is the text of a paper presented by Phil at the Longman Professional Conference "Reducing Costs and Improving Productivity in Government Records Management", Melbourne, December 1989. The article is reproduced with the permission of Longman Professional and the author. The paper focuses on the motivation, career path, education and pay scales of records management staff in an era of rapidly developing technology.

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There is one common element that links together every records management system created, past, present and future and that common element is people. It takes people to plan and administer systems, it takes people to resolve problems. In short you cannot run your records management system without them.

Understanding people is perhaps one of the most neglected aspects of records management. A glance at any records management publication will reveal that the vast majority of articles will

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recognisable category of work but are they a true profession?

The Oxford dictionary defines a profession as "qualities, belonging to, connected with, a profession". There are other methods to explore the issue. Sociologists have developed several models to analyse work and clarify whether or not a profession exists. Two of these are by Ernest Greenwood (1975) and Harold Wilensky (1964).

The Greenwood model distinguished five aspects of a profession

- Systematic theory
- Professional authority
- Community sanction
- Ethical code
- Distinct subculture

The first of these, the systematic theory relates to the development of skills which are rooted in a consistent body of theory. There is some difficulty in determining whether records managers can claim such a state exists. Whilst it is probably reasonable to suggest that a body of theory does exist which is translated into particular job tasks ie. classification, file titling, disposal and so on, on the other hand the use of standard terms to describe tasks is not so clear cut, such as bring up, bring forward. Definitions of tasks can and do widely differ. The method of learning the theories is usually along the apprenticeship mode. Most people currently working in records management ended up there by accident. A smaller but growing number, wanted to be records managers. While there are plenty of courses around to teach records management nearly all are part time. Thus entry into the class of records managers can be by training in librarianship, information sciences, archives or general administration. As yet there is no one single entry point for records managers.

Professional authority relates to use of special knowledge and skills to resolve problems. It is in this aspect that records managers are best recognised as having particular skills which can be utilised to resolve issues and problems. However too often it seems that records managers are not consulted often or quickly

enough and are dumped with a problem no one else wants. To complicate the issue, records managers do not have exclusive control over the creation or access to information. The diffuse nature of information makes it very difficult if not impossible to suggest that they alone are the recognised authority on handling records. If you were to ask the average person in the street what was records management the answer would probably be 'sells records at Brash's'.

Community sanction relates to the methods used to control the training of the profession, usually through accreditation procedures. Accreditation of courses importantly establishes standards. To achieve this the RMAA has an education policy on courses and is moving towards the accreditation of courses. Some courses are already accredited, with others in the pipeline. The established guidelines make it very clear what is an appropriate standard and where the standards should be. The other component of community sanctions relates to the issue of professional qualifications for people working in records management. The RMAA has three levels of professional membership: Normal, Member, and Fellow. Entry into a professional membership category is not easy nor is it automatic. Each application is assessed on its merits and in accordance with the criteria laid down. The establishment of standards, enforcement of rules and refusing of some applications is not an easy task but it must be done if standards are to be met.

The criteria and eligibility for entry are strict but as yet have attracted little general recognition. It is not common to see job advertisements asking for professional membership of the RMAA as you do with librarians who must belong to the Australian Library and Information Association.

An ethical code is another of Greenwood's important attributes. His view is that an ethical code is an explicit, systematic and binding document upon the people to whom it refers. The RMAA has such a document but its existence or content are not well known. The other problem is of a more practical nature - policing the code.

Finally, the development of a distinctive subculture in the form of shared values,

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behavioural norms and methods of entry is important if records management is seen to be a profession. A records manager should be able to move from one job to another and be able to use exactly the same skills without the need for extensive retraining.

In summary, records managers do not closely fit Greenwood's model but nevertheless there are signs that some aspects do fit.

In Wilenski's model, records managers do a little better. Wilenski starts by defining a profession as "group doing full time the things that need doing". The group should be reasonable, self identifying and able to be distinguished from other groupings. Secondly, training and selection procedures are established which leads to general recognition of the standards expected within the profession. Thirdly, a professional association is formed to enhance the work performed and make provision for the future. Fourthly, there is public recognition and recognised standards for entry to the profession together with standardisation of job titles. Finally, a code of ethics should be developed.

Records managers certainly do better in Wilenski's model but it is clear that a lot more work needs to be done in order for the issue to be finally resolved and records managers to be recognised as a true profession.

What can be said about the work currently being performed by today's records managers. Perhaps the simplest analysis is to examine job advertisements, for this will reveal the current market characteristics applicable in records management. Unfortunately, it is perhaps the only way currently possible. The Australian Bureau of Statistics does not identify information workers in its groupings and it will only be in 1990 that records management will be entered into the ASCO Index of jobs.

Just a few words and warnings about using job advertisements to draw conclusions about work. Be aware that they are limited in numbers, they only document publicly advertised positions, and many positions are advertised and filled internally. To be a good representative sample of

positions available, data would need to be drawn from around Australia. An advertisement is also not necessarily a good description of the job. These problems highlight the little research undertaken in records management in order to improve its professional position.

A copy of all job advertisements published in Melbourne newspapers from 1987 to the present was compiled. This incorporated 162 jobs across all sectors. From these advertisements it was possible to place them into the following categories

State Government	30
Local Government	71
Federal Government	7
Private Industry	7
Statutory Authority	29
Other	<u>18</u>
	162

The largest group offering positions was Local Government, followed by State Governments and Statutory Authorities. The other category includes trade unions, political parties and hospitals. The Federal Government and private sectors recorded the lowest number of positions.

The results indicate that records management in local government areas is reasonably well developed. The production of manuals and standard records disposal schedules in three states shows that management recognises the issue of good records management procedures and are moving to provide resources.

The second largest grouping in the survey was in State Government with most positions being in the Victorian Government. This probably reflects the emphasis given to the area since the late 1970's with the landmark work undertaken by the Task Force on Records Management (1979) and the subsequent introduction of FOI legislation (1982) which sharply put into focus the records management practices of government agencies. The Victorian Ombudsman has also been very critical of records management procedures with hardly an annual report being published which does not criticize in some way the methods of record keeping. Thus, departments and agencies have had to deal with

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the problems of poor records management systems.

The next group of Statutory Authorities indicates a high awareness of records management. Like State Governments some are subject to FOI and the Ombudsman and seem to have reacted accordingly.

Perhaps most surprising of all the results was the few positions offered in the Federal Government area. It is not clear why this is so as this area of government is subjected to similar scrutiny as State Government. The private sector positions were low but probably anticipated as this appears to be an area still to recognise the benefits of a good records management program.

It was also possible to gain some insight into the type of tasks performed by people working in records management. Basically they fell into two groups; records managers and records officers.

Records managers duties were typically described as "establish and monitor procedures, train and direct staff, develop strategies to achieve goals and provide expertise". The role of the records officer was usually subordinate to the records manager. Typical descriptions included "supervise day to day activities, classify, co-ordinate, train and motivate staff, and monitor systems".

The distinction between the two groups is quite marked. A records manager is there to manage a process whilst the records officer is primarily employed to do the physical tasks associated with maintaining the system.

To these two groups there must be added others which engage in information processing tasks - the librarians, archivists and EDP specialists. Here lies an interesting problem. Often people from these other categories are employed as records managers or records officers but it is highly unlikely that you will find a records person in their category. This one way flow of people into records management highlights a real problem facing organisations these days - attracting and keeping records management staff.

The problem has been perpetuated by the advent of technology. Since the 1970's, particularly in the library and records management fields, the storage, retrieval, control and tracking of records and documents has progressively been assigned to computers. Computers have taken a lot of the boring and routine tasks out of human hands, but records management is still often perceived to be a place where only the foolish get a job - little skill is required and it is only a stepping stone to other more rewarding tasks.

The adaptations required to cope with new technology seems to have come more slowly to records management than to other areas where technology has revolutionized work. Perhaps there are several reasons for this. One is probably the background from which records management has evolved. With a recent history dating only from the 1940's, records management was very much a clerical job. By comparison librarianship has considerable status, archivists had built up some respectability in the disguise of historians and computer people were able to claim elitism due to the newness and mystique of the technology.

Records management, by comparison, suffers from a cultural cringe. The transition from clerical to professionalism has not been a smooth transition and there are still pockets of resistance to change. This resistance come in many ways, ignoring the problem, understaffing, denying resources and restricting financial support are some of the commonest trends.

Education is another factor. In comparison with other information workers previously mentioned those associated with records management are perhaps the least educated. "Education" is meant in this context as specialised learning applicable to the field. The librarian has undergone at least a three year undergraduate degree plus additional post graduate studies. Also, to be a librarian requires membership of the Library and Information Management Association which sets minimum standards for professional recognition.

Archivists will possess an undergraduate degree and membership of the Australian Society of Archivists which demands a minimum qualification for associate membership.

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Computer specialists, whilst lacking a professional association do usually require an undergraduate degree. But the records manager requires none of this. There is no undergraduate degree in Victoria and membership of a professional association such as the RMAA is voluntary. Of the job advertisements surveyed only three listed professional membership as desirable and ten suggested formal studies in records management desirable.

Whilst this situation remains it is highly likely that records management will continue to be the 'poor cousin' of the information workers.

Records managers have in some ways missed the point in attempting to cope with their new environment. The focus has changed from being concerned mainly with storage and retrieval of information to one of placing greater emphasis on the management of information with increased controls, more efficient operations and being held accountable for their actions.

It is essential that the records manager understands the technology now available and learn how to be controlled by it. The emphasis must be upon more managerial tasks such as co-ordination and planning and the broadening of horizons to incorporate new responsibilities.

It could be that the new breed of records managers will not be technical experts but people who are first of all managers whose skills are not the technical aspects of the work.

This brings us to the question of careers and salaries in records management. From the original data the average salary offered for records managers was \$29,600 (in 1989 terms). For records officers it was \$23,780 (in 1989 terms).

The most interesting fact to emerge from the data was the distribution of salaries. Whilst Local Government accounted for the most positions it rated the poorest on salary with an average salary of \$25700. The best salaries were offered in the Statutory Authorities and State Government areas. The Commonwealth Government average was \$36090 and private

industry \$32888. But as the sample from these groups was low it is difficult to draw firm conclusions.

Possible reasons for this are difficult to determine without more detailed research. Some possible answers may lie in the examination of such issues as the records manager's status in the organisation, percentage of budget allocation, size of the organization and attitude of management.

From the sample the highest salary offered was \$46370. In today's terms that is quite a reasonable salary. The most significant factor was the absence of any clear succession in careers beyond this level. In effect, the highest salary one can expect in records will be around \$37000. There may be the odd exception to this.

Any position beyond this salary level is usually described in terms of responsibility for planning and co-ordination in an information resources environment. This shows a marked movement away from the keeping of records as traditionally applied to records management. It is highly likely that computer people have a mortgage on these positions. Records managers are then faced with a dilemma. They soon become very aware that there are limited career opportunities and to gain further promotion will usually involve moving to another area within administration. So long as this situation continues records management cannot be classed as a profession for it has not provided a life long career and good people will leave.

What is known of the industry? Unfortunately, very little. To date little research is being undertaken into aspects of records management and it is difficult to draw conclusions. Some of the last research to be done was in 1979 by the Task Force on Records Management. In its report it highlighted the high turnover rate for staff of nearly 100%, lack of training, poor career opportunities and shortage of resources. One suspects that whilst there have been some steps forward much still waits to be done.

So towards the future. This paper was to be about records management staff, their training, management and retention. What we have today

is a workforce largely neglected, poorly trained, poorly educated and with poor morale. Decades of neglect cannot be undone and fixed in the space of a few years.

Fundamental shifts must occur at all levels in response to the problems in records management. Senior management must be made to see that records management is a valuable tool to their organization. Records managers have to get out from behind their computers and start managing not only the information resource but also the human resources. They have to display motivation and leadership to their staff. Records staff have to improve their level of education.

Finally records management staff need to start believing in themselves. They have to take control of their lives as a means of improving their self-esteem. Using technology wisely is also important. Removal of hack tasks is needed and their replacement with more interesting and

worthwhile work, but at the same time enhancing future job prospects by improving skills. Good team building will enhance the overall effort achieved from staff.

Only then when all the parts are placed together will it be true to say that records management has come of age.

## Notes

### Salary by Employment Sector

State Government	\$32300
Statutory Authority	\$31550
Commonwealth	\$36090
Private	\$32888
Other	\$30700
Local Government	\$25700

Average Salary \$32165  
All salaries in 1989 terms

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## CANON AWARD TO TOP TAFE RECORDS MANAGEMENT STUDENT

*Vicky Webber, winner of the inaugural Canon Annual NSW Records Management Student of the Year Award, with (from left) Keith Pirie, Head of the Division of Information Systems & Records Management at TAFE; Peter Smith, teacher at Newcastle TAFE; and Tony Poynton, National Marketing Manager of Canon's Information Management Division. Vicky won a Canon computer & software valued at \$7000 for an essay on the impact of EDI on records management.*



Winner of the inaugural Canon Annual NSW Records Management Student of the Year Award, organised through the TAFE records management course, is Vicky Webber, a student at Newcastle Technical College.

For her essay on the Impact of EDI on Records Management, Vicky was awarded a Canon computer and software equipment to the value of \$7000.

Mr Tony Poynton, national marketing manager of Canon's Records and Information Management Division, said the Award recognised that today's records manager was the true professional in the information business.

"Advances in technology, necessitated by the sheer volume of information generated, has made this a dynamic and critically important discipline, especially where the success or otherwise of a business is determined by how it

manages and uses its information." Mr Poynton said.

The chairman of the judging panel, Mr Robert Jones, who is EDI manager for TNT Australia, said that competition entries were of a high standard and well researched. "I found them interesting, and I encourage the participants", he said.

The Head of the Division of Information Systems and Records Management at TAFE, Mr Keith Pirie, noted that while the computer industry had long been a generous supplier of equipment and software for teaching, the Canon Award was the first to recognise the efforts of students in the School of Computing and the recently-formed Industry Training Division. "Such a recognition of TAFE's role in preparing students for industry is most gratifying", Mr Pirie said.

The award was presented on Wednesday night, March 27, in Sydney.

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# MULTISKILLING, ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT AND RAMIFICATIONS

by Elaine Eccleston, BA, FIPS, ARMA

*Elaine Eccleston is Acting Head, Centre for Office Management Faculty of Communication University of Canberra. This paper was presented at the RMAA Seminar on Productivity and Information Management, Canberra March 1991 and is reproduced here with permission of the author.*

## Introduction

Within the scope of this Seminar, PRODUCTIVITY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, I wish to develop a particular theme: that of increasing the effectiveness of individuals within an organisation, through multiskilling, with the object of achieving productivity growth. This process will involve changes to the basic structure of management within organisations and the consequent demands of, and commitment to work.

First, I will look at productivity and the elements that are necessary for productivity growth. I will then address Information Management: the process of managing the volume of information accessible through today's information technology (IT) and the impact that accessibility to information has on management styles.

Next, I will review the changes that are evident in today's organisational structures to accommodate advances in information technology.

After that, I will introduce my concept of multiskilling in today's changing organisations, and some ways to introduce multiskilling.

Finally, I will look at the impact and ramifications of being a multiskilled person, and the place of those multiskilled people in tomorrow's organisations.

## Productivity

"Productivity is what you get out of what you put in".<sup>1</sup> This wonderful truism, when expanded, can help us identify how we achieve

productivity growth. Some of this growth might be brought about by

- increased capital investment
- introduction of new technologies
- improved employee efficiency, and
- effective and timely use of relevant information

It is the blending of two of these elements - improved employee efficiency and the effective and timely use of relevant information - through the introduction of structured multiskilling in organisations, that forms the basis of my paper.

Of course, these are only some of the sources of productivity growth. The reality is that productivity enhancement is dependent on the quality, adaptability, reliability, dedication and innovation, that is, the *excellence* that individuals within an organisation can provide, if the organisation structure permits acceptance of these attributes.

## Information Management

It is axiomatic that information is an essential asset in the processes of industry, commerce, public institutions and Government. Information is used in planning, monitoring and controlling institutional activities, and in making decisions - or, indeed, in deciding NOT to make a decision!

The decision making process itself makes calls on getting relevant, collated information; analysing that information to develop options; taking a decision, and then, instructing and monitoring its implementation.

Information management implies control of acquisition and selection, processing, distribution, storage and ultimate disposal of information.

Management information systems provide the hardware and software which accept data, store

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and process it, and present it in an appropriate form.

The information manager has the prime responsibility to provide the right information to the right person at the right time and cost.<sup>2</sup>

It is for the decision maker - the user - that the product of the information managers and their information systems is designed and designated. But it is up to that user to have the competence to access, discriminate, and apply that information to the ultimate advantage of the organisation.

Two Australians, James Saville and Timothy Sowerbutts<sup>3</sup> suggest that "Information technology could soon bring about the following changes in the ways organisations function

1. Top management will be able to get more involved in day-to-day decisions
2. Everyone will have better access to information in easily usable formats, thereby enabling quicker response times
3. Ready access to information will end problems associated with managers who withhold or ration information as a means of maintaining power within a hierarchy
4. Decentralisation will be possible without loss of control
5. The overhead costs associated with maintaining a management structure will be reduced
6. The knowledge held by an organisation need not be reduced by the retirement, resignation or death of a key employee, as all information can be held by computers
7. Employees will have to be more flexible as work will involve more creative projects and fewer routine activities
8. Leadership will fall to those with the expertise to complete a particular task rather than those in traditional management positions"<sup>3</sup>

Saville and Sowerbutts continue by suggesting that "successful organisations will be the ones that are most skilled in grasping the concept of

organisations being knowledge- or information-based."<sup>4</sup>

However, as Peter Drucker noted in his *Frontiers of Management*, "the information-based organisation is not permissive, it is disciplined. It requires strong, decisive leadership. .... leadership that respects performance, but demands self-discipline and upward responsibility from the first level supervisor all the way to top management."<sup>5</sup>

To support organisations which aspire to be knowledge- or information-based, the management structure must include an information management competence which is capable of interpreting the information needs of management, and which is able to provide it when it is needed in an easily usable format.

### **New Forms In Organisation Structures**

There is now widespread acceptance that information technology, properly managed and applied, has changed from being a supportive activity within an organisation, to a functional element in a new organisational structure.

As projected by Ian Meiklejohn in *Management Today* we should "discard the straitjacket of current hierarchical, departmentalised organisations" and adopt a "... genuine cross-functional integration, with IT as the crucial ingredient"<sup>6</sup>.

He suggests that such a change "... rests on eliminating all the delay and distortion introduced by the current process of communicating between separate departments and systems. ... We pay large numbers of people - clerks and middle managers - to act as information buffers between these various systems and functions... but in so doing very rarely do they add any value."<sup>7</sup>

Meiklejohn believes that "As increasing numbers of clerical and middle managers are replaced by cross-functional systems, organisations will be de-layered, becoming flatter and less hierarchical."<sup>8</sup>

Peter Drucker has been propounding this view for some time. He maintains that, in the future, "the typical large organisation ... will have no

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more than half the levels of management of its counterpart today, and no more than a third the number of managers."<sup>9</sup>

Previously, in organisations with clear hierarchical lines of command and responsibility, managers could expect to have gained their expertise; that is, learned their 'trade', either by working their way up through the organisation's hierarchy, or by specialist courses in say, accounting, economics, political science, engineering, and so on. That, of course, is not to say that I believe those who had the 'professional' education were inherently able to 'manage'. Management, I maintain, is a separate field of study.

### **The Concept of Multiskilling**

The current trend towards devolution of responsibilities, increased productivity, and accountability, demands greater conceptual abilities and intellectual flexibility in a wider spectrum of management.

For people to work effectively in this new environment, which requires the introduction of the cross-functional, integrated organisation structure, they need to be **MULTISKILLED** - to have wider skills and expertise than previously.

The cross-functional organisation, instead of relying on vertical lines of management command, requires people to think and work laterally. There is a need to consider other people's input into the overall objectives of the organisation; to have a consciousness of what everyone is trying to achieve. This would create a culture which looks at the broad issues rather than the narrow.

Multiskilling is central to achieving greater employee effectiveness. In addition to other skills, managers must develop technical competence to gain access to the volumes of information now available through integrated information management systems, and to make good use of this information - in an effective and timely manner.

Even more importantly, being 'multiskilled' presumes an ability to comprehend the entire spectrum of functions, aspirations and goals not

only of their own organisation but of others as well. Multiskilled managers must be able to apply that understanding to achieve *their* organisation's objectives.

Diversification of duties within an organisation is not a new concept. It has been an accepted requirement in a number of managerial circumstances such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Officers, on return from diplomatic postings are required to adapt to managerial functions as diverse as Disarmament and Arms Control to managing a Resources and Liaison Branch or Protocol Branch. But this diversification of function should not be confused with the concept of multiskilling.

A primary element of multiskilling is for managers to be competent and comfortable in the use of computers and the management information systems they provide. This competence must include a basic understanding of both the hardware and software available, but not a thorough knowledge which will continue to remain a mark of the professionals in those areas.

All managers need to be able to access information, to be able to interpret and use that information in the format that it is presented, and to apply it to their functional processes.

All too often managers today are still uncomfortable when presented with information; for example, from a spreadsheet, and ask others to 'summarise' or 'interpret' the information for them. This could mean that they themselves don't understand how to use the information available to them.

Another reason managers need this computer competence is to be able to plan ahead what it is they expect their computers to provide for them. They need to recognise the tools which can enhance productivity by the **TIMELY** provision of information.

### **Introducing of Multiskilling**

In a multiskilled management structure, organisations must provide the environment, both technical and cultural, the support and the training to achieve multiskilling.

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The introduction of the concept of multiskilling into organisations is by training people in the broader sense, by introducing them to information technology, and by identifying how to apply that technology in their managerial roles.

This 'broadening' can be achieved by

- structured management education
- information management training - theoretical and practical
- developing individual awareness of corporate objectives
- encouraging participation in setting those corporate objectives
- ensuring group participation in management activities, and
- nurturing flexibility in adapting to change

### Impact and Ramifications

What, then, are the IMPACT and RAMIFICATIONS of multiskilling?

Earlier I referred to the current trend towards devolution of responsibilities, increased productivity, and accountability. The speed at which information is accessible today means that individuals in organisations will have to take responsibility for much of their own research, policy development, decision making and consequential directives, and not least, they will have to take responsibility for the accuracy and pertinence of the preparation and presentation of policy options, whether in the public or private sectors.

They will take this responsibility, because decisions may not wait for senior management to review personally and decide in either board rooms or inter- or intra-departmental forums, how to act on even quite major decisions. That time taken in traditional decision-making processes may deny organisations access to the full range of opportunities presented.

Many people could work simultaneously, and effectively, on the preparation and presentation of policy options because the information needed for this work can be available simultaneously through communications systems.

We will have less *managers* as we know them. This will come about because individuals will take control of the decision-making process. Those remaining Managers will be 'leaders' with the responsibility to motivate, guide, and encourage ... those who work with them. John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene in *Re-inventing the Corporation* describe this new manager as teacher, facilitator, and coach, as opposed to managers as order-givers.<sup>10</sup>

But, this responsibility and control will not just happen to be part of people's job statements. The 'devolution' of responsibility and control will have been decided in a truly participative way, with people taking part in that devolution process, rather than as in the past, being TOLD what they will be responsible for. Goal and objective setting for the whole organisation will be part of this process, and its implementation will be facilitated by more effective use of electronic communications technology.

Nowadays, joint and several links can be made instantly with people working in almost any part of the world. This enables individuals to take decisions, not necessarily independently of senior management, but certainly with the knowledge that all levels of the decision-making process can have access to all the relevant information needed for that process to be efficient and effective.

Some of these advances in productivity may be stalled because of the traditional view of the need for senior managers to continue the traditional process of decision-making. Yet, if we do not move in these directions now, we will surely continue our downward trend in productivity - with disastrous effects on our already depressed economy.

Let me give you some examples of positive developments in organisations. In the United Kingdom many organisations have faced the prospect of very high costs of office space in large cities; for example, in London, and realised that they no longer *need* to have all of their employees in the office building *every* day. What is happening is that employees, having determined with senior management their areas of responsibility and the limits of it, spend most of their time either calling on clients or working

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from home. They only come in to the central office for meetings. These meetings, by the way, are *not* regular meetings. My old favourite: 'why have a meeting if there is nothing to discuss?' is put into practice much more often today!

By running their business in this way it is possible to rent less office space, thereby achieving considerable savings. These savings can be used for other purposes, including more attractive remuneration packages.

Many companies now locate their offices outside London. BP Oil UK Limited built a new office block alongside the M1 at Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. Some of the facilities provided for its employees include a heavily subsidised restaurant which provides cooked breakfast, as well as luncheon. Sporting facilities at nearby gymnasiums and clubs are available at special rates. Day care facilities for very young children were to be introduced last year. Maternity leave is also available.

Excellent training programs are available in-house or externally. Great emphasis is placed on 'Putting People First' - and that means colleagues as well as customers.

Mobility within that company and other companies in the BP Group is actively encouraged. The notion of multiskilling is very real. An example is that of people who joined the company as records management professionals. Later these people are much sought after by other divisions of the company, including information systems, sales, and personnel management.

Line management in BP Oil UK Limited is clearly defined. No-one is 'left on their own'. Each employee is aware of a network of people who can provide support.

The acceptance of the concept of multiskilling could be said to be a pre-requisite to employment.

## Conclusion

Some writers have foreshadowed that, in the future, people will be more specialised, while others maintain we will have wider skills, that is, be less specialised.

Through personal development, people at various levels of management will learn how to use the information technology systems now available, and broaden their outlook so they can adapt to the whole spectrum of their organisations.

The potential impact, overall, is flatter organisations, with less 'managers' as we now know them and more *multiskilled* employees. These people will take responsibility for their own decisions, because they will take part in determining goals and objectives of their organisations, and have access to larger volumes of information, more quickly and reliably than in the past.

Multiskilling at its best or worse, I am looking forward to meeting the person who meets all the selection criteria for a position advertised recently by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The position was Principal Adviser in charge of a group responsible for:

'arrangements for government hospitality and the organisation of official ceremonial occasions, as well as for the provision of information services to the Department. This includes the Guest of Government program, the records management function, and the Ministerial Correspondence Unit.'<sup>11</sup>

Whoever she or he is, that's a person who could rightly claim to be multiskilled, in my view. That person will have taken multiskilling to delightfully new lengths to meet those diverse needs - and presumably have excellent communication and 'people skills' as well.

Endnotes - See page 67

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## RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND RECORD KEEPING THE ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT

by Frank Upward, MA, Dip Ed

*Frank Upward is a lecturer at Monash University in the Graduate Department of Librarianship, Archives, and Records. He has had extensive and varied experience in records management, archival administration and information management. As a records manager this experience ranges from the design and implementation of systems to daily work "at the coal-face".*

### Introduction

The full range of "archives and records" courses offered at Monash University are now in their second year of operation. Within those courses we team-teach on the basis of the "record keeping continuum", (an approach being developed with my colleague, Sue McKemmish), which has some similarities to the life-cycle concept but is better able to cope with the complexities and inter-dependencies of modern information management. This will not be an article on the continuum, however, as before one starts to understand what is meant by record keeping one has to understand one of its basic building blocks - the archival document.

From a records management perspective, Monash seems to be unique. As far as we can judge, we are the only University in the English speaking world which offers courses which are routinely structured around record keeping and which peak with a possibility of specializing in records management issues at post-graduate level. While only a few students have taken the opportunity so far to specialise in records management, and no-one has yet completed research projects in this area, we would hope that the number increases. We certainly have a number of students moving in that direction.

Records management is a practical activity, involving techniques which may be complicated but are seldom complex. As a number of writers have pointed out there is no shared professional

identity for records managers even within this practical base. Records management, to many, seems to be a natural part of technical education programs, and an activity which can best be learned "on the job", with the assistance of further education. Why, then, have university level courses and research?

Our answer has been that by changing the focus from records management as a day-to-day activity (the approach in the English speaking world) to record keeping and its role in society (the European approach) and then looking back to those very same day-to-day activities, new perspectives are opened up and the full significance of records management is revealed. The first universities in Europe developed in response to the need to train record keepers. Records management, in the sense of a profession having a strong educational base, is most definitely amongst the oldest professions. Until the "information revolution" commenced in the last part of the nineteenth century, record keepers were an elite class in most societies. Records management, as an activity separate from record keeping, has developed in response to the growing record keeping dysfunctions of the twentieth century, in particular those caused by the growth in the number of records. It can further develop as a professional activity by re-establishing its links with the record keeping role. But it can only do so if it develops an understanding of the broad significance of that role, and this, along with applied research arising from this understanding, is well worth fostering at post graduate level.

After fifteen months of team-teaching, Sue McKemmish and I have developed a number of concepts which help explain the part records management has to play in the broad field of information management, can lead to a better understanding of the diversity of records management, can help provide frameworks for the assessment of techniques, and can lead to

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better preparation for the complex and interdependent nature of future record keeping processes. We find ourselves covering so much partly explored territory that communicating our findings to the professions will be a long process that will have to be squeezed into our work programs as best we can, and which, in most cases, will open up more research issues than it will close. The key concepts, however, are the broadest ones, and some of these are set out below.

### **The Archival Document**

Describing the archival document as an important component of records management in an English language journal is virtually a contradiction, given the definitions we have developed for archives and records. To Europeans it would be equally illogical to argue that records precede archival documents in the natural order of creation, since they identify the archival document as one of the main types of record. (To such an extent that in Italian, for example, the word "records" has no linguistic equivalent other than the word document itself).

In preparing a submission to the House of Representatives Committee inquiring into the need for, and nature of, an information policy at national level, Sue McKemmish and I found the concept of the archival document formed a natural framework within which to present many records management and archival issues which we believe the Committee should address. In that submission we defined the archival document in the following terms:

For anyone not familiar with the term, the archival document can best be conceptualized as recorded information arising out of transactions - it is created naturally in the course of transacting business of any kind, whether by governments, businesses, community organisations or private individuals. The recording of transactions may be in any storage media and is increasingly becoming an electronic process. The concept of the archival document is a common-place within European thought, but in English-speaking countries it is often confused with documents that have

been selected for retention within an archival institution.

The archival document could be referred to as "recorded information about transactions" and at times I will use that phrase, but that is a weak term which conveys no real concept of purposeful record keeping. The archival document is a useful term in defining boundaries since it separates archival and records management activities from librarianship where the focus is on the published document. It also provides an ideal framework for crossing boundaries in accord with the interconnectedness of all information management activities, and I put forward our submission on Information Policy as evidence of this. It could enable us to establish a clear role for records management within modern information systems without setting up barriers or starting "turf wars" with other information professionals. In our submission we linked the archival document to the following areas for policy action, amongst others:

- The need to develop a set of record keeping principles (the type of policy direction needed for records management codes of practice)
- The need for guidelines on the role and legislative base for archival authorities (which is needed for consistency in Australian approaches to records management, apart from the broader needs for such guidelines)
- Promotion of integrated access and privacy codes along with the development of a more co-ordinated approach to record keeping legislation (of obvious relevance to records management)
- Promotion of debate on shared responsibility for record keeping (which would raise community awareness of the role of records management)

For those interested in following up on these arguments the submission referred to above will be published in the May issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*.

### **The Keeping of Records is Fundamental to an Organised Society**

In our course outlines and in other texts, we like to quote the following passage from Luciana

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Duranti's article on the odyssey of records managers:

The first and fundamental need of any organised society is the regulation of its network of relationships by means of objective, consistent, meaningful and usable documentation.

This quote might seem like the sort of overstatement which we are all prone to make where our own interests are involved. Since we incorporated the Duranti quote in our course pamphlet, however, we have been testing it, particularly against newspaper reports of matters of key significance to the way Australian society operates, and we have found its truth to be demonstrated on almost a daily basis. The clearest proofs come from negative examples, those instances of people who did not keep records or destroyed the ones that did exist, and who have caused much social and economic disruption in Australia. As numerous royal commissions, parliamentary questions, and enquiries by Ombudsmen and Auditors-General are demonstrating, the non-record keepers and shredders of documents are repeatedly being tripped up by those who do keep records or are being exposed as irresponsible by the very absence of documentation. (It is one of the features of transactional information that there is more than one party involved, and another feature is that there is a community expectation that proper documentation should occur). A representative list of examples would be depressingly long, with Victoria providing many examples including the "Nordlinger Affair", "Tricontinental", The National Security Council, and "Pyramid". The west provides us with "W.A. Inc.". At the time of writing this article Tasmania looks as if it is not going to allow itself to be left out, and South Australia's State Bank has provided a few newspaper cuttings. In the far north, things have been a little quieter on the bad record keeping front since the Fitzgerald Inquiry finished - although that Inquiry did give us the good record keeping habits of Commissioner Lewis.

Record keeping is fundamental because it ties individuals and organisations to society, to other organisations, and to each other in ways which

make them accountable. In the above examples I have tried to give an indication of this as it relates in a negative fashion at the broadest level of activities in society, but it operates at all levels in both a positive and negative fashion. Most readers are likely to know of at least several people whose attitude to record keeping reflects their reluctance to be held accountable for their actions or inactions. Hopefully, they know of many more whose attitudes are responsible.

### **The Archival Document and the Fundamental Importance of Record Keeping**

The main way this fundamental context is codified is through the legal system, which places greater emphasis on documentation for business regulation, for evidence within cases, and for insights within commissions of inquiry. The legal system, however, is struggling to cope with the changes to these documentation processes that new technologies are causing. "The Document and the Law" is now an area of legal specialisation, and has become a larger part of the necessary education for those involved in the branches of the record keeping profession. The "legal document" and the archival document share a common ancestry, and through this we share concerns with the legal profession.

Archival documents are crucial to accountability within society, and within organisations, and accountability is becoming a real issue to Australians as we ponder what went wrong in the eighties, and how better directions can be developed. For too long emphasis has been placed on "management information", a valuable approach when applied to appropriate decision-making tasks, but a relatively useless means of establishing accountability. A number of government organisations have already turned to simpler information reporting techniques, backed up by the establishment of record keeping requirements and supported by a process of records audit. The Australian Taxation Office is the most obvious example. We can expect even greater emphasis on record keeping in the nineties, as we have stated in our submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry:

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Because the archival document is created naturally in the course of our transactions it provides a much better means of controlling our inter-relationships than information reporting. This simple concept, understood by the earliest Mediterranean traders, has been neglected during the process of financial deregulation. Record keeping places no particular burden on commercial or financial actions, other than for the subsequent maintenance and disposal of the record itself. It is noteworthy that records management, as a profession, is at its strongest within the privatized American society. Few complaints are raised about the cost of record keeping including the cost of staff infrastructures. When American business complained about government paperwork in the 1970's it was information reporting, not record keeping, that was the target. No one ever goes broke by keeping proper records, unless those records reveal activities which a society wishes to penalize.

The growing recognition of the importance of accountability in Australian society can be further promoted by consciously incorporating the archival document in the process. As an example, the recent Foley-Russell "Strategic Management Review of the Parliament of Victoria" set out a number of bulwarks for making the Executive Government more accountable to Parliament, and listed a number of key agents in the process including the Ombudsman, but would have been even stronger if it had drawn more direct attention to the role of record keeping or the role of the archival authority in Victoria, the Public Record Office, which itself seems to be under attack from the same Executive Government. To some extent records management suffers from what one author has referred to as the "historical shunt" which relegates the social aspects of the evidential role of records to the past. As a member of the Victorian Parliament stated in a recent debate canvassing the Victorian Government's behaviour in relation to the Public Record Office:

Public records are kept because of the ability they provide to determine what has happened in the past. They are an extremely important repository of the actions of government and public servants. They are essential for historians...

The statement is valid as far as it goes, and the member himself produced an excellent defence of the proper functions of the Public Record Office, but it still shunted the evidential value into the past when the main role is a current one for present purposes. Earlier I suggested records managers could keep clippings from newspapers which show how important record keeping is in today's social issues, not just those of the past. Those that do will get a sense for current history, and for the changes occurring in community attitudes. We are now looking for an analysis of what happened in the immediate past, not only the more distant past. Only records of transactions can provide a solid foundation for such analysis. The analysis will never be as sharp as that which historians can provide at a later time, because we are too close to the events. Without records, however, the analysis can only be guesswork, or will be based mainly on "hearsay".

Our view that the archival document is the main pillar in an organised society can be demonstrated in relation to its importance in information based activities. Information drawn from archival documents is based on direct evidence and is therefore one of the few forms of information which can be acquired as knowledge. It underpins the development of knowledge about the world around us precisely because it captures our direct experience with that world. Published documents are vital for marshalling and ordering our knowledge, but the archival document is the foundation of knowledge, the source from which reliable information can be drawn, and the testing point against which information can be verified.

Its importance makes its neglect within modern information systems all the more worrying to those who are looking at issues raised by electronic record keeping. When the Western

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Continental Corporation presents records about political donations to a Royal Commission, records which apparently have floated about in their accounts, or when Mr. Bourke's personal secretary admits to destroying documents of a type that businesses would be required to keep longer than such destruction would allow, or when evidence is given that Tricontinental, a financial institution dealing incompetently in large loans, did not even keep minutes of board meetings, our nose twitches. We can smell poor record keeping. When someone walks away from a Swiss bank with a fortune as a result of computer fraud, or our own account at the bank develops a host of erroneous computer indicated additional charges, or we get an unending stream of invoices from a library about a missing book which demonstrably is not missing, we put it all down to "the computer system". We are wrong. It is a sign of poor procedures and poor record keeping within electronic systems.

A lot of interesting work is going on with regard to electronic record keeping at present, but the impetus is coming from archivists, not records managers. It is not only being directed at the retention of the records (the archival record keeping concern) but at the establishment of complete, usable, accurate and reliable documentation processes as well (the current record keeping concern). As someone whose primary identity is currently a records management one, I find it unfortunate in many ways that records management education in English speaking countries is not structured to encourage research, and that records managers will have to wait for the archivist researchers to tell them what to do.

Records managers and archivists have yet to develop consensus on what, in the jargon, constitutes our mission. The best records management systems and procedures I have worked in or designed have achieved a level of excellence because they have concentrated on establishing a framework in which complete, accurate, reliable and usable documentation of transactions can occur. In other words, they provide a good framework for the acquisition and care of the archival document. Over this, one needs to place archival activity, in such a

way that the record remains usable and reliable, and is stripped of unnecessary documents which are not only expensive to maintain, but clog the system. In most European countries this occurs without the establishment of separate professional groupings. In Australia we have moved to separate the main branches of record keeping but this could be a strength if we get our work-sharing arrangements in place, and develop educational programs which give the records manager some parity with the archivist, or, as is the case with Monash's courses, gives them some commonality through a concentration on record keeping concepts. The records manager and the archivist should work together within a continuum of processes if we are to achieve maximum benefits at minimum cost from our record keeping activities, but they should have their own focus, or they will continue to trip over each other as they have been known to do in the past. For current record keeping purposes the focus should be the integrity and usability of archival documents created, acquired and maintained within current record keeping systems; for archival purposes the focus is to maintain that integrity, and to form the documents into an appropriate memory bank.

As a resource, archival documents have special characteristics which set them apart from other information resources and which require the development of special approaches to their management. This is observably true for paper records, and is becoming understood in relation to electronic records. This does not mean, however, that records managers and archivists are isolated from other information management professionals, handling other forms of information. The whole process of information management is becoming too complex and interdependent for that. Nevertheless if records managers wish to make a strong contribution to future developments, and enhance their relevance to current activities, then they should look back to their part in the processes of record keeping before returning to the information management fray.

The most immediate practical implication of the concepts set out in this paper relate to information policy formulation. As I have

already mentioned, at Monash we have found they provided a very useful focus for giving coherence to our ideas on the need to incorporate records management and archival issues into the process of the formulation of a National Information Policy. Currently I am exploring their relevance to information policy at a workplace level with a group of students, and am finding them to be even more useful. They also trail down into technical issues where they are the starting point for the development of other concepts, but that would need to be the subject of another article. Read this article with an open and questioning mind, get to know the concepts in it and, if my own experience with them is any indication, you will come to records management with a fresh understanding of its importance, and will have acquired some useful perspectives for the promotion and development of record keeping programs.

#### FURTHER READING

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#### Electronic Record Keeping

- Dollar, Charles M, *Electronic Records Management and Archives in International Organisations: A Ramp Study with Guidelines*, Unesco, Paris, 1986
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- *A Strategic Plan for Managing and Preserving Electronic Records in New York State*, the State Education Department and the State Archives and Records Administration, Albany N.Y., 1988

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## ARCHIVAL CHALLENGES IN THE NINETIES

by Christopher Coggin

*Chris Coggin is Director of the State Archives of Western Australia. He has had many years experience in the fields of library, archives and records administration both in Australia and southern Africa, and is currently President of the Australian Society of Archivists. A founder member of the WA Branch of the RMAA, he was Chairman of the Branch's Education Committee for several years.*

### Preface

This is a much shortened version, edited by the author, of a paper presented to the 1st Biennial Conference of the Australian Library and Information Association, Perth, 30 September - 5 October 1990. As a presentation to an audience consisting mainly of librarians, some of the observations are to be understood in the context of a comparison between the library and archival professions - and, to a great extent to records management.

### Archives: Viva la Difference?

What are the features of an archivist's job that to a significant degree still set it apart from that of a librarian and from other workers in the information field?

In common with records managers, archivists have a responsibility for records that form or formed part of an organization's management information system.

Secondly, the records are original, or primary records. Before being transferred to archival custody they are generally available only to the organization that created or received them, to people who have a legal right to consult them (eg land title documents), or who have formally applied to see them, eg through Freedom of Information Legislation.

From this point of view alone records are very different from library materials which typically

have a cycle of creation, printing, publication and then sale either to the public or to a library. The originality of the materials they handle has many ramifications for archivists.

One of these is the status of an archive as a major primary source record. In a sense it is the raw material from which much original research is carried out, directly or indirectly. As information that has been created in a relatively unselfconscious way, it has attributes of impartiality that derive from the fact that the purposes of research which archives serve are not the purposes which were contemplated by the people who created the record in the first place.

The tremendous problems faced by archivists today in the preservation of their records comes about because of the fourth factor in this checklist of attributes. It is simply that just about every record an archivist has is unique. Each is the one that was chosen to be kept, and it alone survives. Except where other copies have consciously been created (eg in microform, photocopy or some other media), there is no looking to other institutions to provide the required information source, unlike the situation applying in the library world.

Archivists have to anticipate the needs of the future. That is central to their selection techniques. Unlike book selection, as applied to most library collections, their primary focus is not on the needs of researchers right now, nor those for the next few years, but for those in 50, 100 and more years time! An American archivist, Gerald Ham, put it bluntly when he said "archivists are in danger of distorting the study of culture by the deliberate preservation of unrepresentative indicators of that culture" (Ham, 1975). Ham went on to suggest ways in which the trend could be reversed through structured approaches to the problem. Over recent years the literature has not been short of methodologies designed for meeting that aim. (Endelman, 1987; Boles, 1987).

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Having made a sort of projection into the future, archivists need to know what to select for that future in the way of original records. This is easier, I hasten to add, for the needs of the organization whose records are being preserved for that organization than it is for the needs of researchers external to that organization. Fortunately there are tried and tested criteria, those codified by Brichford being particularly useful. (Brichford, 1977).

Archivists have a big say in just what will be accessible to the public. Here I do not refer to intellectual access such as that facilitated by information retrieval methods, but rather to the establishment of the right or opportunity to have access. While access to records is often regulated by the creating agency in terms of controlling legislation, a great deal of interaction between agency and archives occurs, and the agency relies very often on the advice from the latter. The archivist is painfully aware of the need to strike the right balance between research needs and privileges on the one hand and factors of confidentiality and security etc. on the other, and is therefore in a good position to give that advice.

### Some Issues For The Nineties

The adumbration of the abovementioned attributes is not to imply that their possession is a prerequisite for success as far as archival issues and problems of the nineties are concerned. What is implied, however, is that they give a peculiar perspective to the context in which archivists tackle them. That having been said, it will be obvious that the issues and problems I'm about to highlight have much in common with those of other groups in the information industry in Australia today.

#### Economic factors

The effects of the prevailing economic situation are likely to be as gloomy for archival programs as they are for library programs. However, in the case of archives whose acquisition programs are linked to the creation of records by the parent organizations the capacity to continue building up their collections will be limited by staffing levels far more than other cutbacks.

As libraries are under pressure to charge for certain services, it is likely that archives themselves will have to find an increasing proportion of the funding they are constantly demanding. Indeed, the Archives Authority of New South Wales has been charging for services since 1984.

Services that might be identified as ones suitable for raising income are file issues (already practised in New South Wales), records management consultations, storage (eg charged on a sliding scale with discounts for the proven maintenance of efficient operational schedules by agencies), transmission of facsimile documents, information retrieval, notarial certification, fees for records reproduced in entrepreneurial publications, and the use of terminals and word processors by researchers.

#### Computerization

For archivists, computerized records are not only an internal product assisting document management procedures, but are also a very major external product emanating from records-creating agencies.

The implications for archivists arise as a result of

- the different physical form of the record and the need to ensure that it is amenable to appraisal, selection and storage
- the increasing amount of data being generated by the automated office. One of the factors bringing this about is the demystification of the computer and other technologies, so that managers and other staff will, more and more, make use of electronic inter-office messaging and so on. (The spectre of the paperless office, until recently thought to be a fading one, is looming again!)

In Australia a landmark step has been taken in the direction of planning for the capture of computerized data. The Australian Archives has commenced a series of interactive seminars involving organizations with a demonstrated interest in the problem. In concert with this initiative is a commitment by the Australian Council on Archives to provide background training and workshop instruction. To this end

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a three-day seminar will be held in Sydney next month.

### Records Management

It is a truism to say that acquisition librarians must have a through knowledge of their sources of supply in order to provide a good service. In like manner archivists need to have an all-round knowledge of the records management system within which their raw material is created. Indeed, for archivists to operate their programs in the most efficient manner, active involvement in the earlier phases of the records cycle is essential. Richard C Berner has pointed out that "the degree to which archivists exercise full (records management) functions determines the quality of any institutional archives". He goes on to remind us that records management in fact owes its origins to the archival concern with appraisal, adding "consequently, curators of contemporary records... need to master those RM functions relating to appraisal". (Berner, 1983).

The practicalities of including the first two phases of the records cycle in any archival program will have to be examined very closely over the next few years. The field of records management has become a complex one, employing systems and hardware common to a disparate range of disciplines from librarianship to systems management. For archivists to address the identification, selection and preservation of the end-products of the information management phenomenon successfully, as well as client access to those products, it will be shortsighted for them not to enter the records cycle as far upstream as possible. If they do not, a time will come when archivists will merely be custodians of static collections, whose holdings will no longer be enriched by an automatic flow of material from their parent or supplier bodies. The reason for this will be that the only archives being created will be disappearing as fast as they appear or, because of their digitized nature and size, will be staying in the offices of the organization that created them.

One of the characteristics of managing paper records emanating from a parent body is the fact

that they are under the control of a recognized administrative unit, usually a registry or records office. Until now, however, computerized records have not been centralized in this way. In most government agencies it is not unusual to find different branches caring for their own computing records, or for the information technology branch (ITB) itself doing so without any particular concern for their potential as historical records eligible for selection as archives. Master tapes etc kept by the ITB are preserved, erased and manipulated for reasons which have little or nothing to do with archival programs. Seldom is there liaison between the ITB and the archives on such matters as survey, appraisal and transfer, to mention but three common archival actions. Nor is it essential that this should occur: after all, in the archival context the ITB specialists perform a specialized technical function. Where the interface between archives and agency should occur is at the appropriate systems management level. And this is where the grey area is. Senior administrative officers may confidently look to the registry for guidelines and action on traditional records, knowing that the departmental-archives link is built in to the system, but in how many departments is a similar link built into those processes which generate machine-readable records?

### Legislation

Freedom of Information legislation has been an issue off and on for some years. The Commonwealth and Victoria legislation was promulgated in 1983, New South Wales last year, and Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia are working towards it. Western Australia's is in the early stages of preparation. In FOI legislation archivists have problems peculiar to their role as custodians of the original working records of Government (as opposed to published material). For that reason I believe FOI legislation has the potential always to be an issue. Given the fact that it typically refers to young records, and records moreover that are more often than not in the keeping of the creating agency, most problems are handled by the agency - to a great degree through records managers. However, problems can arise for archivists in several areas, especially

- if there is no clear link between the age of records subject to FOI on the one hand and to archival legislation on the other. This is the case with Federal legislation, where there is a "gap" between records eligible for FOI inspection and those that have still to attain 30-year archival maturity.
- where private archives have been donated to a government archival authority and the legislation does not make it absolutely clear that those private records are exempt from FOI considerations.

If it could be assumed that individual provisions of FOI legislation were immutable, then once these factors had been resolved there would no longer be any reason to think of FOI as an "issue" for archivists, records managers or librarians. It remains to be seen, however, how agencies are likely to withstand pressures on them to divulge information it does not suit them to. We have seen an instance of this quite recently - not in relation to FOI legislation per se, but to Commonwealth archival legislation. In terms of the latter legislation (as is the case with other State archival legislation) access to records is a matter of consultation between creating agency and the Australian Archives and its subject to carefully-formulated guidelines. In this particular case the Australian Security and Intelligence Organization (ASIO) is "seeking a review of the legislation governing the 30-year-release provision" (Australian Security Intelligence Organization, 1989) and a Parliamentary Joint Committee is currently inquiring "how the activities of (ASIO) are affected by the operation of the Archives Act". (The Australian, 1990).

Earlier I mentioned impartiality as a characteristic of archives. Will FOI legislation lead officers and others to write with a greater degree of self consciousness as opposed to the detachedness we've previously associated with archives? Privacy legislation, too, is of interest here, as one of its fundamental principles is ensuring that personal information collected is of good quality. While no-one could quarrel with the need for such a principle, and leaving aside the question, "How does one define good quality?" the fact is that the hallmark of

impartiality for so long taken for granted may require fresh analysis and redefining in this situation.

### Resource Sharing

Resource sharing in archival terms - analogous, say, to the Australian Bibliographic Network - will come, but this will take time. It may well develop as local area networks are set up.

Information about records transferred from an agency, for example, could be downloaded digitally to the archives system - a procedure analogous to the downloading of ABN data when a library has the corresponding book in stock. In the RM/archives interface, this means that clients in the archives reading room could have almost immediate access to records just received from a department. The traditional way of doing things would be for the archivists laboriously to list and index the records themselves. In the new scenario that listing and indexing would have been carried out as part of the current RM program at the agency of origin. Using the archives' terminals, clients could access data about records even if still in an agency. Information about records would become even more widely accessible through local area networks resulting from linking the archives data base with those of other organizations (Coggin, 1989).

### Education and training

Education will be no less of an issue for the nineties for archivists than it will be for librarians, records managers and other information professionals.

In my view this is because the de facto convergence of the various streams represented in information management needs to be rationalized into a scheme that will accommodate them and equip students for effective participation in the new-look workplace now evolving. Should this new discipline be founded in librarianship or in some other area?

Given what could almost be called a fluid situation in the converging areas that information professionals occupy, those

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responsible for teaching archives administration in Australia today face tremendous challenges. They need to ensure that their courses are placed in the correct perspective, are responsive to dynamics which are changing form constantly, and most importantly they need to formulate a theoretical framework in which the position of each discipline is identified, its content set, and its relationship with others determined, and expressed, in terms of a broader overview. Would that overview constitute "information management"?

### **The Australian Society of Archivists And Its Planning Strategies**

(Note: Because of space limitations, I have confined this section to a brief discussion of national policy only - author)

#### A framework for national policy, development and funding for archives and manuscripts.

This is likely to be a complex matter for resolution. First, there is the matter of defining exactly what is meant by such a framework, and what that framework would set out to achieve. Already there are two bodies representing archival endeavour in the country: the ASA and the Australian Council on Archives.

Rather like ACLIS, the ACA represents institutional interests. As an amalgam of some sort would these two organisations not together constitute the co-ordinating link of such a framework? Perhaps so, but this depends on the environment, and that in turn as we know, includes records managers, archivists, librarians, computer professionals and as far as cultural heritage is concerned, museologists and conservators. What is the common ground? By identifying and defining that is it possible for archivists to get on the agenda for large-scale, co-ordinated funding as part of a national body aimed at uniting these disparate but converging strands?

A national framework might have these functions

- frame national policy on archives
- make grants available for the development and maintenance of archival collections

- provide co-ordination, leadership, standards and information services
- foster research and publication in the fields of archival work
- provide a link on policy and planning with Government, eg with the Cultural Ministers' Council.

### **Conclusion**

What, then, are the perspectives for the nineties? As for everybody else, I believe they will be challenging and exciting times, but for archivists the following might well be some of the main features of the professional environment

- resource and collection management issues that will continue to demand the specialized skills and techniques of trained archivists
- progress towards the establishment of a national framework
- the development of education and training courses reflecting the converging nature of records management, archives, librarianship and associated information disciplines, while at the same time providing for the appropriate specialization of archivists, librarians, and records managers
- an increasing participation in the archival workplace of professionals with qualifications and/or training other than archives work
- the implementation of archival networks at both national and local level
- dialogue amongst information-based professional groups aimed, *inter-alia*, at identifying commonalities requiring joint action

In ending on the latter point, it is heartening to know that a feature of the ASA conference next year will be the opportunity for the executives of like-minded bodies to meet.

(Postscript. The RMAA plans to participate in a joint meeting at that forum - author.)

**References - see page 67**

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## CONFERENCE INFORMATION SYSTEMS - THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

18 - 20 September 1991  
Reading University, UK

The Records Management Society of Great Britain is staging an International Conference and anyone professionally involved in the control of information - whatever the level of expertise - should be there.

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There will also be a wide range of visits to places of professional interest including **Burmah Oil plc Archives and Records Centre, Eton College Library** and the **BBC Written Archives Centre**. There will be a small but comprehensive **exhibition** of the latest services and equipment about which records managers need to know. There will be opportunities for "hands on" experience, and for advice from the experts on your Company's particular needs. No conference is complete without the opportunity to socialise. There will be a **drinks reception** and **banquet** as well as other meals in the University at which delegates can exchange news and share problems.

This Conference, which is being held in association with the International Records Management Council, takes place from **18th to 20th September 1991, at Whiteknights Parks, University of Reading, England, UK.**

For further details (including early booking discounts) contact Sally Templer at the Conference Office, Templer Associates, 25 Chiswick Lane, London W4 2LR England, UK

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### INFORMAA QUARTERLY

Many thanks to people who have contributed articles for the journal; however we still need more. To produce a balanced and interesting publication we need articles from all states and territories. Papers may be articles, seminar or conference papers, discussion papers or any report which may be of national interest.

Articles must be ready for inclusion in INFORMAA QUARTERLY by the following dates:

19 July - for August issue

18 October - for November issue

Articles should be typed, double spaced and with a profile (and photograph if possible) of the author. Send articles to Judith Ellis, Co Editor Informaa Quarterly, ph, (03) 890.3530, or GPO BOX 2270U Melbourne, Vic. 3001.

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## BRANCHING OUT

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE STATE ARCHIVES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

by Janine Douglas, B. App. Sci.

*Janine is Manager, Records Management Branch at the State Archives of Western Australia. Prior to taking up this post she held a variety of positions in records management and library services including that of Manager: Corporate Information for the Western Australian Department of Productivity and Labour Relations.*

#### Introduction

In 1988 the Western Australian Public Service Commission conducted a Functional Review of the State Archives. The report of that review released in 1989 made recommendations concerning the need to engage more actively in public records management matters.

State Archives responded to these recommendations by planning for and establishing a Records Management Branch within its organisational parameters. On November 5th 1990, this Branch officially came into being with the appointment of a Manager: Records Management.

#### Directions, Roles and Responsibilities

The Branch's recently appointed Manager is Janine Douglas, who prior to joining State Archives, was the Manager: Corporate Information for the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations. Janine had previously held a variety of positions in both records management and library services. She sees the new Branch as providing an important consultative and advisory role in support of records managers in both State and Local Governments.

Under Janine's direction the new Branch will focus on the management of current and

intermediate records and records systems. It will provide comprehensive professional support and assistance for records management throughout government agencies. This assistance and support will be provided through

- Advisory and Consultancy Services
- Training
- Intermediate Storage Facilities
- Resources (texts, guides, publications)

#### Issues and Priorities

The number and range of issues in relation to records management raised by the Functional Review and associated surveys and reports is quite daunting. Nonetheless, with good planning and the support of the Archives Branch and Government records managers, the Records Management Branch in embarking on a systematic path to achieving them all.

Priorities for the Branch relate to standards for records management, training programs and the provision of adequate and appropriate storage for intermediate records. Much valuable work has already been undertaken on rationalising and optimising the current available facilities. The Branch will also be encouraging and assisting agencies with the formulation of Retention and Disposal Schedules.

Both the existing Archives Branch and the new Records Management Branch will work cohesively to contribute to the essential components of the records life cycle that begins with the creation at source and ends with the delivery of a record to the client. While some aspects of this cycle are more or less exclusive to one or other of the Branches, some are not. One area of overlap will be the issues associated with appraisal.

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## Appraisal Process

Until recently, appraisal has always been done by the Archives Branch but the establishment of the new Branch has revealed that some records management involvement is also warranted. In appraisal, there is potential for every record to become an archive and therefore archivists need to enter into the situation. By the same token, records managers have a good understanding of the factors leading to disposition decisions. They know what precedents there are in the nature of legislation and/or pre-existing schedules and they can offer valuable input on the design and formulation of schedules.

With these points in mind it has been possible for State Archives to formulate an appraisal process which revolves around an interface between the two Branches. This process is illustrated below

### Records Management Branch

Provide advice to agency on formulation of schedules

Advise on known retention periods (eg. in terms of Treasury regulations etc)

Finalize document for presentation to Standing Committee on Public Records (SCPR)

### Archives Branch

Carry out archival appraisal as now

## Standing Committee on Public Records

The Branch Manager will also act as Executive Secretary to the newly formed Standing Committee on Public Records. This Committee has been established to make recommendations to the Library Board of Western Australia with regard to

- the retention and destruction of public records
- other matters incidental thereto (eg. about access periods for sensitive records)

Prior to the establishment of this committee, under the terms of the Library Board of Western Australia Act, decisions on retention and disposal of public records were made by "an authorised officer of the Board". In practice this has meant that the professional officers of the State Archives made recommendations on these matters to the Director, State Archives. The Director then made the ruling as to whether or not records should be preserved or destroyed.

This process has two significant shortcomings. Firstly, information relayed to the Director may have been subject to inadequate knowledge, unconscious bias or misinterpretation of factors governing creation and retention. The decision made to destroy or retain records, based on the information presented, may therefore not be the correct one. The second problem relates to perceptions on the part of the public that there may be potential for political and other pressures to be placed on the Director of the State Archives.

These situations give rise to implications and ramifications for the protection of Government rights, public sector management, and the expectations of researchers using the State Archives. They also place a heavy burden of responsibility on one public servant.

Under the new arrangements the Director, State Archives will pass requests to dispose of or destroy records to the Standing Committee. The new mechanism will be more on keeping with the spirit of public accountability. In addition, because various interests will be represented on

the Committee, a wide range of view points will be addressed, insuring a fair assessment is made of the records under consideration at any time.

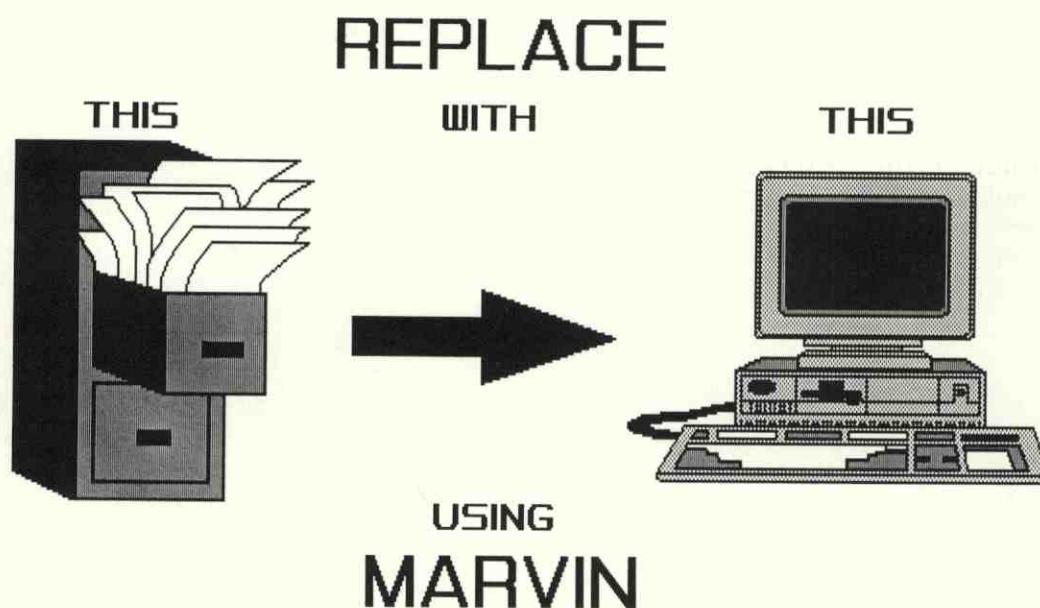
### Conclusion

Awareness of records management is growing rapidly today. Managers and executives are increasingly acknowledging that the direct corollary of the efficient control of records is effective management. In recognition of these movements and in support of the Functional Review recommendation, the Director, State Archives and the Chief Executive Officer of the Library and Information Service of Western Australia consistently and emphatically agitated

for the formulation and resourcing of this Branch. Fortunately all their good work has been acknowledged, and in these times of severe constraint in Government it is to their credit that this Branch is now operational.

Staffing levels may be less than ideal at present but enthusiasm and commitment abound. The State Archives of Western Australia is pleased and excited to be involved with this most important area of information management. All of the staff involved are committed to a Branch which aims to support and encourage the advancement of records management, and are facing the tasks ahead bolstered by a rugged optimism.

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## QUEENSLAND AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

### A SUMMARY OF THE ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LEGISLATION IN QUEENSLAND

by Jackie Elliott ARMA

*Jackie Elliott is the Records Manager with the Department of the Attorney-General (Queensland).*

It should be stressed that the EARC report and recommendations summarised in the following pages may not necessarily be accepted by the Queensland Parliament.

#### Background

The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission was established in Queensland by the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989 ("the Act").

The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into possible illegal activities and associated police misconduct ("the Fitzgerald Report") recommended that the Commission consider and, if appropriate, make recommendations for the preparation and enactment of Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation.

The Fitzgerald Report made the following comments in relation to FOI legislation:

"Allied to these improvements in administrative laws has been the concept of freedom of information.

Freedom of Information Acts, along the lines of the United States model, have been adopted to grant a general right of access to documents held by Government and Government agencies.

The professed aim of such legislation is to give all citizens a general right of access to Government information. Appeals are allowed to an external independent review body when a request for information is refused in whole or in part, or when a person objects to a decision to release

information about their affairs, or when the accuracy or completeness of personal information held by Government is disputed by the person it concerns.

It is true that, where such legislation has been enacted in Australia (the Commonwealth, Victorian and more recently New South Wales State Governments) there has been criticism. Government agencies say that answering requests has been costly and disruptive. Applicants claim that some agencies are obstructive, and that the exemptions are too wide or are abused, and that increasing charges make the costs of requests prohibitive.

The importance of the legislation lies in the principle it espouses, and in its ability to provide information to the public and to Parliament. It has already been used effectively for this purpose in other Parliaments. Its potential to make administrators accountable and keep the voters and Parliament informed are well understood by its supporters and enemies."

Freedom of Information legislation currently exists in the Commonwealth Government and in the State Governments of Victoria and New South Wales.

On 18 May 1990, the Commission released an issues paper (90/13) which sought public submissions on whether Queensland should enact FOI legislation and, if so, what form that legislation should take. This issues paper sought to focus attention on the nature and role of FOI legislation in order to encourage an understanding of FOI so that the community could participate in the debate on the preparation and enactment of FOI legislation.

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The issues identified in this issue paper were

- The need for legislation in Queensland
- The scope of FOI legislation - documents covered
- Bodies covered by FOI legislation
- Personal information
- Access
- Review
- Charges
- Administration of FOI legislation

A total of 125 submissions were received by the Commission in relation to the Freedom of Information (90/13) Issues Paper No 3.

In July 1990, a public seminar was conducted in Brisbane. This Seminar attracted a large number of participants who expressed a number of concerns namely

- the retrospectivity of the proposed legislation
- charges, particularly for voluminous requests
- exempt documents
- response times
- resources

The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission viewed FOI legislation as a means of achieving greater public participation in the decision-making processes of Government. It is also a means of ensuring that the Government Agencies are more accountable for decisions that they make, particularly in respect of decisions affecting individual rights or interests and that such decisions are based upon proper information.

### **Recommendations**

The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission considers that the role of administering FOI legislation should include the following functions

- Accountability to Parliament for the administration of FOI legislation
- Co-ordination of training and other preparatory work for the introduction of FOI legislation

- The provision of assistance to local government on training and other preparatory work
- Monitoring the operation of FOI in government agencies for effectiveness and consistency
- Legal advice, including scrutiny of unmeritorious appeals by government agencies
- Ongoing policy development, including future amendments
- The provision of advice and assistance and use of FOI legislation

The Commission has recommended that an FOI Implementation Unit be established within the Department of the Attorney-General to ensure timely and effective introduction of FOI legislation.

The main features of FOI legislation recommended by EARC are

(a) Like the FOI legislation of other Australian jurisdictions, FOI legislation in Queensland should confer three basic rights. First, it is access to documents held by government agencies. The only restrictions upon that general right should be specific exemptions necessary to protect essential public and private interests. Second, if information relating to the personal affairs of an individual is incomplete, incorrect, out of date or misleading, that person should have the right to seek amendment of that information. Third, government agencies should be required to publish information about their structure and functions, providing the public with knowledge about the organisation, responsibilities and decision-making processes of government agencies.

(b) Every person should be entitled to exercise the rights conferred by FOI legislation without having to demonstrate a particular need or reason. Further, there should be no requirement as to residency or legal capacity.

(c) If access to or the amendment of matter contained in a document is refused, the person who has made the decision refusing to grant access or amendment must be identified and

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written reasons for the refusal must be provided.

(d) If a person wishes to have a decision refusing or restricting access or amendment reviewed, that person should have a right to seek a review of that decision by a more senior person than the person who refused access.

(e) If, after internal review, a person is still dissatisfied, that person is entitled to seek external review by the Information Commissioner, the body which this Commission recommends should be specifically established for that purpose.

(f) FOI legislation should have an unlimited retrospective operation in respect of documents which contain information about the personal affairs of a person. In respect of all other documents FOI legislation should have a limited retrospective operation of five years.

(g) FOI legislation other than for local government authorities, should commence three months after the legislation is enacted. In respect of local government authorities it should commence nine months after enactment.

(h) FOI legislation should apply to all persons or bodies created or established by government for a public purpose, as well as specific persons or bodies to which government provides funding or over which government may exercise control. The Commission considers there is only a limited number of bodies for which FOI legislation is an inappropriate mechanism to achieve openness and accountability.

(i) FOI legislation should have a limited number of exemptions to protect essential public and private interests.

(j) FOI legislation should require all government agencies to assist persons making applications for access.

(k) There should be no charge of any kind in respect of documents containing personal affairs information. In relation to documents containing non-personal affairs information there should be an escalating scale of charges

with the first 50 pages provided at no cost. However, government agencies should be allowed to refuse to deal with applications which would substantially and unreasonably divert government agencies.

### **The Need For Freedom Of Information Legislation**

FOI legislation in the form of the draft Bill be enacted in Queensland as soon as practicable.

### **Retrospective Operation**

FOI legislation confer a right of access to, and amendment of, all documents containing information relating to the personal affairs of the applicant, irrespective of the age of the document and for up to five years prior to the commencement of FOI legislation for documents that do not relate to the personal affairs of the applicant.

### **Commencement of FOI Legislation**

FOI legislation commence in Government agencies three months after the Royal Assent with the requirement to publish functional statements, manuals and decision-making guidelines to be met within twelve months of FOI legislation receiving Royal Assent, and in local Government nine months after Royal Assent with the requirement to publish within eighteen months of Royal Assent.

### **Documents Recommended for Exemption**

- Cabinet and Executive Council
- Investigations by Parliamentary Commissioner or audits by the Auditor-General
- Affecting inter-governmental relations
- Concerning certain operations of government agencies
- Law enforcement and public safety
- Deliberative processes of government agencies
- Subject to legal professional privilege
- Personal affairs of a person other than the applicant
- Private donations to public libraries

- Business affairs or trade secrets of a person or government agency other than the applicant
- Communicated in confidence
- Related to the economy
- Financial and property interests of Government agencies
- The disclosure of which would constitute a contempt of Court or infringement of Parliament
- Adoption procedures

### **Bodies to be Covered by FOI Legislation**

All departments, statutory authorities, statutory offices and other bodies created or established by government for a public purpose.

### **Bodies Not to be Covered by FOI Legislation**

- Courts and judges in respect of their judicial functions
- Legislative Assembly, a Member or Committee of the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Services Commission
- The Governor
- Commissions of Inquiry until investigations are completed

### **Access**

- Access will be to documents only, not information
- FOI does not confer a right to interrogate a computer, and access to information stored on computer should be upon the same terms and conditions as access to documents generally.

### **Form of Application**

All applications will need to be in writing

### **Duty to Assist**

Legislation will impose a genuine duty to assist.

### **Time Limits**

- Acknowledgement of Request - within 14 days

- Decision - 30 days after the acknowledgement
- Internal Review Request - 28 days after the decision
- Internal Review - within 14 days of notification by an applicant that it is sought
- Internal review to the Information Commissioner - within 60 days of the decision on internal review that external review is sought

### **Internal Review**

- To be conducted by an officer senior to the officer who made the original decision
- Within a specified time limit
- Reasons are to be given why the request was refused or access restricted

### **External Review**

An office known as the Office of the Information Commissioner be created which will not be subject to investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner.

### **Publication - Information Documents**

All Government agencies will be required to publish information on their structure, function and law.

### **Administration of FOI Legislation**

The Attorney-General's Department is to administer FOI legislation and an implementation unit is to be set up in this Department which will be responsible for

- Accountability to Parliament for the administration of FOI legislation
- Co-ordination of training and other preparatory work for the introduction of FOI legislation
- The provision of assistance to local government on training and other preparatory work
- Monitoring the operation of FOI in government agencies for effectiveness and consistency
- Legal advice, including scrutiny of unmeritorious appeals by government agencies

- Ongoing policy development, including future amendments
- The provision of advice and assistance to FOI applicants
- Community education as to the existence and use of FOI legislation

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**"ARCHIVAL CHALLENGES IN THE NINETIES"**  
 by Christopher Coggin

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## "MULTISKILLING, ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT AND RAMIFICATIONS"

by Elaine Eccleston

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