

Territory Records Advisory Council Minutes

MEETING No.2 of 2014/15

12:00-2:00pm 26 November 2014

Darling Room,
Level 1, 221 London Circuit, Civic

Present

TRAC: Anne Buttsworth (Chair), Michael Piggott (Deputy Chair), Chris Aulich, Alyssa Blackburn, Mick Chisnall, Nick Swain, Dani Wickman (Director), Jill Divorty, Mark Semmler

Meeting opened: 12:10pm. Mick Chisnall arrived at 12:25pm.

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Ms Blackburn who had previously signalled her resignation due to her move interstate. Ms Blackburn has delayed her move and was able to attend the last Council meeting for 2014. The Chair also welcomed Ms Jill Divorty, Executive Director of Shared Services and Mr Mark Semmler, Project Manager, Territory Records Office, who is overseeing the consultancy regarding the One ACTPS Digital Records Capability Project. The Chair then advised Council that this was Mick Chisnall's last Council meeting as he was retiring from the ACT Public Service.

It was agreed by Council that when all Members arrived agenda Item 11, One ACTPS Digital Records Capability Project, would be brought forward to allow Ms Divorty to participate in the discussion.

Agenda Item 1. – Agenda and Apologies

There was one apology: Ms Amanda Harris. Ms Roslyn Brown was not present.

Agenda Item 2. – Minutes of previous meetings and business arising

Members received an updated version of the minutes which corrected some small typographical errors. The amended minutes were accepted.

Business arising: The Chair raised the proposed meeting between the Chair, interested Council members and TRO staff to develop options for the 2015 records release. Professor Aulich, Mr Piggott and Mr Swain welcomed the opportunity of being part of a Working Group on this matter.

Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No.2 2014-15: Council approved the Minutes of Meeting No.1 2014/15.

Action: The Director is to advise Council Members involved in the Working Group of a potential meeting date in January 2015. Ms Roslyn Brown is also to be invited to participate.

Agenda Item 3- Director's Update (no papers)

The Director noted that the most significant work of the TRO since the last meeting had been the One ACTPS Digital Records Capability Project, which is a separate agenda item. The Director advised members of the retirement of the inaugural ACT Government Reference Archivist, Ms Elizabeth Estbergs. The Director commented on Ms Estbergs' significant contribution to the organisation in establishing a public reference service for ACT archives, and the wealth of corporate knowledge leaving the organisation. The Director advised that in the short term Ms Lynda Weller will fill in the role on a part time basis during the Christmas/New Year break. In the medium and long term the Director will examine the broader structure of the TRO, which will need to be amended to accommodate a new position for the TRO's graduate recruit, Meg Robinson.

Ms Robinson will return to the TRO in December for her permanent placement. The Director advised her key role initially would be to consolidate and analyse the data the TRO receives from agencies. This will assist the TRO to take a more proactive approach to its dealings with agencies by understanding overall trends in their activities.

The Director advised of the Working Group of Records Information and Community Practice which the TRO has convened to examine cooperative approaches to training issues. The sub-group has met several times and it is an opportunity for them to share their experiences and provide useful training advice in a "self help" group context.

The Director advised that she and Michael Piggott attended the Australian Society of Archivists Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand. A meeting of the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities was also held in conjunction with the conference. At the meeting members discussed a number of shared issues and agreed to set up a working group to examine greater coordination of their records appraisal efforts. Mr Piggott reflected on the interesting choice of location and venue for the Conference within the context of how communities document memory.

Agenda Item 4 – Records Disposal Schedule – ACTTAB Ltd

The Chair advised that this schedule was dealt with via email and that there were no further comments by Council Members. However, Mr Aulich commented that it may need to be clarified that only the personnel files of staff who would be employed by the new owner should be transferred. The Director advised that she would make this matter clearer.

Agenda Item 5 – Records Disposal Schedule - Personnel

The Director advised that the TRO was approached by the HR Help Desk Manager to discuss disposal coverage for records created by them, specifically telephone voice recordings of callers to the Help Desk.

Ms Blackburn asked whether one year was long enough to retain records in entry no. 012.030.001 on page 28. The Director clarified that the voice recordings were made for training purposes and were not intended as a resource to clarify disputes over the advice provided by staff. Members agreed that this should be made clearer in the disposal class.

Mr Swain commented in relation to page 29, suggesting the deletion of "by" in the paragraph, entry no.012.033.002. Mr Piggott noted that the wording of the function's scope referred to "employees and volunteer workers" and wondered whether this was sufficient to describe all

of the types of staffing arrangements the schedule is intended to cover. Members also discussed classes relating to senior executives and noted that these records are retained permanently in the Commonwealth.

Members asked about the origin of the disposal action “2040 or 75 years after date of birth” in relation to asbestos matters. Ms Blackburn noted that this date had been used in relation to asbestos records in other contexts and related to the date at which all asbestos exposures were predicted to have become evident. Members wondered if this was a reasonable assumption given recent new exposures, such as in relation to the ‘Mr Fluffy’ houses, and thought the current trigger could be confusing.

Professor Aulich noted that ministers and senior officials sometimes used conferences to make major policy announcements, and wondered if the classes allowing the destruction of unpublished conference proceedings and speeches were sufficient to capture this type of record.

Mr Swain commented that there should be a distinction between high level and less significant committees in the classes on page 25. He also expressed concern about the description of the term ‘counselling’ and thought it should exclude psychological counselling.

The Director advised that she would take all comments on board and seek advice where appropriate and table the Schedule for approval at next Council meeting.

Action: Provide Council Members with advice as to the reasoning for disposal action wording and nominated years relating to the abovementioned comments.

Agenda Item 6 – Records Disposal Schedule – Road and Rail Management

The Director advised that this disposal schedule was amended to incorporate records relating to light rail. Council suggested that the disposal schedule receive another glance in terms of typographical errors and the like. However, any additional comments should be emailed to the Director.

Agenda Item 7 – Records Disposal Schedule – Traffic and Transport

The Director advised that this disposal schedule was amended in anticipation of the establishment of the Capital Metro Agency. Apart from minor editorial issues Council had no further comments.

Agenda Item 8 – Records Disposal Schedule – Technology and Telecommunications

The Director advised that this disposal schedule was created as a gap in disposal coverage was highlighted by a recent reappraisal of Election ACT records. A new class was needed to allow the permanent retention of records relating to the development of significant ICT systems such as electronic voting systems.

Mr Piggott commented on page 46, entry no.017.082.001 referring to the “master set” of agency procedures and asked if the disposal class was sufficient given the problems sometimes encountered in migrating from old business systems to new ones. The Director noted that the trigger for disposal was after the procedures had been superseded and that this should be sufficient to ensure procedures were available following systems changes.

Agenda Item 9 – Records Disposal Schedule – Child Care and Protection Programs

The Director noted that Mr Swain's comments were reflected in the draft. The agency had been asked to examine some retention periods and had confirmed that they are sufficient. Council members had no further comment on the Schedule.

Agenda Item 10 – Territory Records Act Access Arrangements

The Chair thanked the Director for the paper, noting that the Council has a particular role in advising the Director about issues relating to access to records that are open to public access under section 26 of the Territories Records Act. The paper discussed the operation of the Territory Records Act in relation to public access. Members discussed in particular the issues surrounding protection from liability for the release of records. Mr Chisnall noted that an attempt had been made to address this issue through an amendment to the Freedom of Information Act. He and the Director noted that a draft FOI bill had been circulated earlier this year and was being reviewed before it is circulated again. Members had questions about the operation of the exemption provisions, and in particular how they could be reviewed. The Director noted that the Act was unclear about the reversal of access exemptions but that the TRO's guidelines suggested that decisions should be reviewed regularly. Mr Piggott suggested that the paper could be used for training or informing others, and offered to produce a diagram from the information in the paper which summarises current Territory Records Act access arrangements.

Action: The Director to provide Council Members with the link relating to the Section 28 register available online and place the issue on the Council's agenda as a standing item.

Agenda Item 11 – One ACTPS Digital Records Capability

The Chair welcomed Mark Semmler, Digital Records Project Manager, who is responsible for managing the current digital records feasibility study project. Mr Semmler tabled a paper which updated Council members as to the work being undertaken by a consultancy group, Recordkeeping Innovation (RKI). He advised Council that RKI would be providing the TRO with a draft business case later that afternoon (26 November 2014). It was proposed that a final business case would be completed by end of next week.

Mr Semmler highlighted the key aspects of the report. He discussed the seven project phases and noted the project was running on time. Mr Semmler also stated that a significant shift in thinking from past reports on a whole of government digital recordkeeping future for the ACTPS was that the consultants no longer recommended that a single solution to meet the needs of government is viable. Mr Semmler provided members with details of the proposal as it was currently being developed.

The Chair stated that she looked forward to the draft business case. Mr Semmler advised that after finalising the business case the proposal would be considered as part of the budget process. The Chair noted that it was essential that the TRO be an integral part of the implementation so that all relevant stakeholders are heading in the same direction. Mr Semmler advised that whilst there was the digital challenge there was also the marketing challenge of selling the project to business groups.

Ms Divorty agreed that this project needed to work in partnership between the TRO and relevant stakeholders. She advised that she also wanted the Data Management Strategy, which

has been managed by IT until now, to also be linked with this project and to set up a process to further the recommendations. She stated that it was time to bring these two initiatives together and that they work in partnership.

Jill Divorty departed the Council meeting at 12.50pm.

Agenda Item 12: Report on ArchivesACT

The Director noted that this tabled paper was Elizabeth Estbergs' final report to the Council prior to her retirement.

Council members requested that they also be registered with ArchivesACT email alert service.

Action: The Director is to ensure that all relevant email addresses are provided to ensure Council Members receive the alerts.

Agenda Item 13: Report on Agency Records Management

The Chair stated that the paper tabled by the TRO clearly identified what the Office has been involved in and noted that it has been a busy period for the TRO. Mr Chisnall noted that there was a project underway to identify administrative savings across government and that there may be opportunities to simplify the records disposal process and reduce the number of records being stored unnecessarily.

Other Business –

Ms Blackburn confirmed her resignation from Council due to her departure interstate in January 2015. She thanked Council again for the positive experience. The Chair and the Director thanked Ms Blackburn and Mr Chisnall for their contributions to Council.

Mr Swain requested that Council meetings be changed from Wednesdays to Thursdays if possible. He advised that he has another commitment on the third Wednesday of each month.

The Chair asked that the minutes record Council's appreciation for the work and contribution Ms Elizabeth Estbergs has made to the TRO.

Action: Future meetings to be held on Thursdays.

Next meeting:

The Director advised that the next meeting is to be confirmed for Thursday 26 February 2015 at 12pm.

Meeting closed: 2.05pm.

Minutes confirmed on: 26/02/2015 Anne Buttsworth (Chair)