

TERRITORY RECORDS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

MEETING 12:00 – 2:00pm 29 August 2008

No.1 of 2008-09

CONFERENCE ROOM, LEVEL 2, MACARTHUR HOUSE

WATTLE STREET, LYNEHAM

Present

TRAC: Steve Stuckey (Chair), Rebecca Stubbs, Jill Caldwell, Greg Wood, Phil Tardif, David Headon, David Wardle (Director, TRO)

TRO: Elizabeth Estbergs, Rohan Clark

Meeting opened: 12:00 midday

Agenda Item 1. – Welcome

Steve Stuckey welcomed Council members, and noted that he would also have welcomed Christine Wood as a new member of the TRO team had she not been ill. Noting that Wayne Finlayson was also ill, he welcomed Rohan Clark as stand-in scribe.

Agenda Item 2. – Apologies

June Penny, Veronica Pumpa

Agenda Item 3. – Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes from the Council meeting of 22 February 2008 had not been passed at the meeting of 13 June 2008 because of concerns over parts of the wording. Proposed changes were listed at Agenda Item 3 of the 13 June 2008 meeting.

Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: The minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2008 were accepted with the revised wording as listed in the minutes of 13 June 2008.

Resolution Number 2 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: The minutes from the Council meeting of 13 June 2008 were accepted.

Agenda Item 4. – Report on access through Archives ACT

The ACT Reference Archivist, Elizabeth Estbergs, gave a report on Archives ACT since its opening on 1 July 2008. She presented a summary of enquiries received to 21 August 2008. There had been a total of 43 enquiries in the 38 working days, or a little over one a day. Of these, seven had been completed. Elizabeth gave some examples of particular enquiries to give Council members an idea of the sorts of questions that were being asked at this stage of community understanding and use of Archives ACT.

She also presented a summary of issues that had arisen for her so far. She was finding that a number of the queries were able to be answered using files that, if the relevant RDS had been strictly applied, would have been destroyed. She is providing feedback to agencies on this to inform their sentencing decisions.

Greg Wood asked where the line was between assisting with access and undertaking actual research. Elizabeth replied that some queries required research to determine which files contained the information. Where a simple query with a specific answer was requested, it was just as quick to provide the answer to the enquirer. In other cases, Elizabeth simply found the files and it was up to the researcher to trawl for

the information that was wanted. Dave Headon asked whether this was time driven. It was agreed that ultimately lack of time would provide the cut off. So far was really still a settling down period.

Greg Wood asked about the possibility of making public information about the queries. Clearly names of enquirers could not be released. At present an outline of some enquiries were being made available to Council members for information, but in the longer term it was expected that only categorised counts of queries would be available. Dave Headon asked how detailed the categories would be, and whether there was the equivalent of an international standard of categories, or was the classification dynamic, idiosyncratic and evolving. The answer was the latter.

Phil Tardif asked how well the facility in Woden was working. Elizabeth replied that it was working well at present as appointments were required, so there had been no more than two users at any one time.

Steve Stuckey requested that the Reference Archivist continue to attend future Council meetings to provide a report on Archives ACT. His interest was not simply in the numbers, but in an overview of problems she had encountered, and in Elizabeth's reflections that would provide feedback to the TRO and to Council on such matters as agency responses, experiences of RDSs, and the relationship with FOI.

Action: the Reference Archivist to attend future Council meetings to report on Archives ACT when possible – **Elizabeth Estbergs**

Elizabeth Estbergs left the meeting at about 12:25.

Agenda Item 5. – TRO Business Plan from Meeting No.4 2007-08

David Wardle gave an overview of the Business Plan and some of its uses.

Greg Wood suggested that the TRO Strategy of responding to Government views of community need could usefully include, in the signs of success, views of the public and of Council members.

Council discussed broad priorities of the TRO and upcoming big issues that ACT records management was likely to have to face.

The Council is very interested in the development of a Territory records repository, and recognised that in the context of the ACT it would probably need to be a joint facility, perhaps with CMAG and the Heritage Library. The Chairman drew Council members attention to the report by David Chalker in 2004, which is the latest report canvassing a repository.

David Headon suggested that it should be considered as part of a scoping study presently being commissioned, and that a meeting should be held with the Centenary of Canberra Task Force.

Action: David Wardle to provide Council members with a copy of the Chalker Report for information.

Action: David Wardle to arrange meeting of himself, David Headon and the Centenary of Canberra Task Force regarding the impending scoping study.

Agenda Item 6. – Auditor-General's Report

There was discussion of the Report. The Chairman expressed the view that it was a good Report that provided clear guidance to Government and reflected well on the work of the TRO so far. All council members agreed with this sentiment.

There was discussion of pros and cons of locating TRO in Shared Services.

Resolution Number 3 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: Council commended the Auditor-General's Report No.3/2008 Records Management in ACT Government Agencies as being supportive yet nicely directive of what needs to be done to advance good records management in the ACTPS.

Agenda Item 7. – Briefing on the requirement to revise Standards and Guidelines 1 to 5 and TARDiS

The Director advised Council that a Melbourne company, Records Solutions, had commenced a review of Standards and Guidelines 1 to 5, as required by these Standards. TARDiS was included in the Review, and all comments about Standards, Guidelines and TARDiS by Council members over the years had been

recorded and provided to the consultant for consideration. The report had not been received in time for this meeting.

The Chairman expressed the view that, before seeing detailed wording changes, it would be useful for Council to see what the consultant says about how the Standards measure up after 5 years.

Action: David Wardle to provide Council with the Consultant's findings and well as detailed proposals for changes to Standards and Guidelines 1 to 5 and TARDiS.

The Records Disposal Schedule for Governance Records was discussed with Management Council by the Director. Agencies wanted to comment further, which has delayed the preparation of the RDS. When comments are received, the RDS will be brought to Council.

Agenda Item 8. – Records Disposal Schedule for Business Development Records

All Council comments were incorporated into a draft RDS, which was then circulated for comment to all Records Managers across the ACT Government. All changes since the last version seen by Council were shown in this draft and discussed by Council.

Resolution Number 4 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: Council accepted the Records Disposal Schedule for Business Development Records.

Agenda Item 9. – Records Disposal Schedule for Justice of the Peace Records

All Council comments were incorporated into a draft RDS, which was then circulated for comment to all Records Managers across the ACT Government. All changes since the last version seen by Council were shown in this draft and discussed by Council.

Resolution Number 5 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: Council accepted the Records Disposal Schedule for Justice of the Peace Records.

Three new Records Disposal Schedules are approaching readiness for Council consideration: Victims of Crime RDS, Security Coordination RDS, and the Ombudsman's RDS. The Ombudsman's RDS has been held up because of the complexity that the Commonwealth Ombudsman is also the ACT Ombudsman, and it is desirable for the Commonwealth and ACT records disposal authorities to be consistent. It is hoped that these Schedules will be available for consideration at the next Council meeting.

Agenda Items 10 and 11. – Draft Standard and Guideline on the Physical Storage of Records

At the last Council meeting (13 June 2008), Council requested legal opinion as to the affect on the evidential value of records if records are stored outside the ACT. Advice obtained from the ACT Government Solicitor said that protection of records is critical, and not whether they are stored in the ACT or NSW.

There was discussion between Greg Wood and Steve Stuckey about the storage requirements for vital, archival and other records. Vital and especially archival records have overlapping but different storage requirements. Jill Caldwell pointed out that these categories are not mutually exclusive. David Wardle accepted that the Standard and Guideline must make clear the different storage requirements for different categories of records.

David Wardle pointed out that the draft Standard had already influenced records storage design as agencies were aware of these impending standards. In addition to Records Managers, a major "market" for this Standard and Guideline is property managers. The Chairman emphasised the task for the TRO in ensuring that agency Records Managers and property managers understood the needs of different categories of records.

Resolution Number 6 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: Council accepted the Draft Standard and Guideline on the Physical Storage of Records, subject to the Director reviewing the clarity of the storage requirements for vital and archival records in particular.

Action: David Wardle is to review the Standard and Guideline on the Physical Storage of Records in light of Council's views.

David Headon left the meeting at about 1:45pm.

Agenda Items 12 and 13. – Draft Standard and Guideline on Business Continuity and Records Management

Council members again emphasised the need to ensure that different records management requirements of the categories of vital and archival records are understood by agency Records Managers and Senior Executives. This is not only so as to meet statutory requirements but also to ensure business continuity and the safety of the community's documentary heritage.

There was animated discussion about valuing records and providing insurance cover for this class of Government asset. David Wardle pointed out that quantification was crucial for insurance purposes. He said that it was likely that a value for insurance purposes would commence at a global rate (e.g. \$ per file, or \$ per box, or \$ per shelf kilometre), and valuations would be broken down in later years with some records depreciating in value (such as financial transaction records declining after the first two years) and others appreciating (such as archival records). For vital records, the cost of replacing or reconstructing the information in a particular class of record may take some time to calculate, and the need may be superseded by a cheaper alternative of duplicated and dispersed digital storage.

Resolution Number 7 of Meeting No.1 2008-09: Council accepted the Draft Standard and Guideline on Business Continuity and Records Management, subject to the Director taking full note of Council's views, reviewing the Standard and Guideline in light of these views, and discussing the result of this review with the Chairman.

Action: David Wardle is to review the Standard and Guideline on Business Continuity and Records Management in light of Council's views and discuss the result of the review with **Steve Stuckey**.

Thanks to Council Members.

The Chairman noted that this was the final meeting in the present terms of Jill Caldwell, June Penny and Phil Tardif. He thanked these members for their contributions, which he said had been especially valuable.

Next Meeting

The Director of Territory Records is to determine a suitable time for the next meeting, which is expected to be held on Friday lunch time around late November or early December 2008.

Action: TRO to set meeting date and advise Council members – **David Wardle**

Meeting closed: 1:59pm