

Territory Records Advisory Council Minutes

MEETING No.3 of 2011-12

2 March 2012

Murrumbidgee Room, Level 5, 40 Allara Street, Canberra City

Present

TRAC: Steve Stuckey (Chair), Jill Caldwell, Alyssa Blackburn, Anne Buttsworth, June Penny, David Headon, Andrew Kefford, Rebecca Stubbs, David Wardle (Director)

TRO: Lynda Weller, Wayne Finlaison, Rohan Clark (Minutes)

Meeting opened: 12:40

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone.

Apologies – Andrew Whale (Shared Services), Elizabeth Estbergs (Reference Archivist)

Minutes of previous meetings

Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No. 2 2011-12: Council confirmed the Minutes of Meeting No.2 2011-12, held on 25 November 2011.

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Agenda Item 1. – TRO Updates for Council information – Public Account Committee Report No.3

The Director explained that this was the final step in a process that began in 2006 with the initiation of a review by the Auditor-General into the ACT records regime under the *Territory Records Act 2002*. The review resulted in a 2008 Report that was considered by the Legislative Assembly's Public Accounts Committee, together with a response from the Government to the Report. The Committee asked for three further reports. In 2010, Report No.1 summarised progress with implementing the Auditor-General's recommendations. In 2011, Report No.2 summarised progress with implementing the *Review of the Operation of the Territory Records Act 2002* – the review by Paul Macpherson had been tabled in June 2010. In 2012, Report No.3 summarised the effectiveness of amendments to the Act and to Standards and Guidelines made under the Act.

Report No. 3, tabled in February, focused on three outstanding issues covered by four earlier recommendations. The appropriateness to the Act of exemption categories adopted under Freedom of Information Act is being considered in conjunction with a Review of the FOI Act. Ongoing consideration will be given to the case for eventually transferring custody of Territory archives to the TRO. Finally, the continuing management of digital records provided much of the emphasis in Report No.3.

Attached to Report No.3 was a report, *Digital Recordkeeping Pathway*, commissioned by the TRO from consultant Judith Ellis, which outlines the broad directions for the management of digital records in the ACT Government. With Government having recognised this Pathway, TRO will use it as a basis for discussion with agencies about continually better practice in digital recordkeeping.

The Chair congratulated TRO on such a good news story. He said this excellent result would assist in keeping the issue before the Minister, Assembly and Public Service. The Director said that he would be happy to provide briefings to any members of these groups or the public as requested and when appropriate.

Agenda Item 2. – TRO Updates for Council information – Consolidated list of *Territory Records Act 2002* Section 28 Declarations

Agenda Item 3. – Updates for Council information – Community accessibility to Territory Records

Agenda Items 2 and 3 were discussed together. On 25 November 2011, Council requested a consolidated list of S28 Declarations granting records exemption from public access.

The Director said that this material was available internally, but caution was needed in making it public. Exemptions were very often based on file title, which frequently included names of individuals. On the other hand, other files are “big-bucket” files that contain personal information about many people, together with some policy direction. The persistent dilemma is how to provide information about restricted-access material while still retaining privacy and security. It was also recognised that all material eventually loses its sensitivity so there was a need to review S28 declarations from time to time.

This listing is a first cautious attempt to make internal material more widely available. Discussions would occur with agencies before this material was released to the Territory Records Office website.

The Council discussed the Declarations and agreed with the Director about the need for caution. A balance needs to be achieved between providing advice to Council – which represents a wide range of community interests – about the types of records that cannot be released with the need to ensure that areas of sensibility and restriction are respected.

Discussion turned to the more general release of Council papers, and a proposal to make public the agenda of Council meetings up to a week beforehand. Again, the sensitivity of some material would demand its removal, such as items yet to be decided by Government. Council considered that to do justice to its task of advising Government, there would be times when it would be appropriate for Council to have access to material that is not generally available.

Agenda Item 4. – TRO Updates for Council information – Report on ArchivesACT

There was general discussion about the report from ArchivesACT, arising from the previous agenda items of allowing public access to records. Council noted the Report on ArchivesACT.

Agenda Item 5. – TRO Updates for Council information – Report on Agency Records Management

There was discussion on the Report on Agency Records Management in the context of the TRO’s work agenda, and in particular the work resulting from legislative changes allowing the bringing together of clinical and administrative records under a single Records Management Program for the Health Directorate. Council noted the Report.

Agenda Item 6. – TRO Updates for Council information – Records of the Planning Institute of Australia

David Headon reported that he had been working with the ACT Reference Archivist to evaluate

historical material in the collections of the Planning Institute of Australia.

From this experience he suggested a public appeal to encourage members of the Canberra community to who may be in possession of material formerly in the custody of government to notify ArchivesACT of the existence of such material so that arrangements could be made for its return and copying for the current custodian as required.

Other Business

The Chair interrupted the agenda sequence to deal with some other business prior to the departure of any member.

The Chair noted that this was the last Council meeting for June Penny, Jill Caldwell and Andrew Kefford. He expressed Council's appreciation to them for their contribution and added his personal thanks for their support, effort and wise counsel. He wished them luck and offered his best wishes for their further advancement.

The government is considering placing notification of the vacant Council positions on the Community Noticeboard that appears in the Canberra Times to ensure that the community is aware of the vacancies so that individuals could seek information from the Director if they had an interest in the Council positions and met the criteria for appointment.

Agenda Item 7. – TRO Updates for Council information – Address to Records and Information Professionals Australasia – *The Challenges for Recordkeepers with the approaching Centenary of the ACT*

Council expressed appreciation for being advised of the paper, which Alyssa Blackburn reported had been well received.

Agenda Item 8. – Draft revised Standard for Records Management No.1 – Records Management Programs

Agenda Item 9. – Draft revised Guideline for Records Management No.1 – Records Management Programs

Agenda Item 10. – Model Records Management Program

As these three papers comprise a proposed revision to Standard and Guideline 1, the three items were dealt with jointly.

The Director said that these three documents had been introduced at a recent Record Managers Forum, and now that they have been presented to Council for discussion and comment, they would be widely discussed with agencies.

The Director said that very few changes were made to the Standard itself. It has stood the test of time very well, with only minor amendments being required.

However the new draft Guideline, including the new Model Records Management Program, has been significantly modified in response to the recent Hawke Review and the new Directorate structure of government. There is now far greater consistency between Directorates and recognition by agencies in the benefits of a common approach while accepting that operational demands would necessitate some variation between agencies.

Another operational demand was to recognise existing Directorate business systems where

appropriate through the agency Records Management Programs for their role in creating and managing agency records.

The Model Records Management Program is the largest change to address these demands, and was well received at first sighting by Records Managers. Two small agencies that were about to revise their Records Management Programs had agreed to trial the Model Program in the first half of 2012.

Council asked to see the result of these trails, and to be kept informed about any other feedback provided by Records Managers. Council's initial reaction to the Model Program was positive.

The Director said that he would welcome comments from members at any time.

Agenda Item 11. – Draft Records Disposal Schedule for Compensation Records (including attachment setting out related classes)

Council noted that this Records Disposal Schedule had been tabled previously, and comments by Council members had been addressed. In particular, the table of related classes of Schedules was well received.

Resolution Number 2 of Meeting No. 2 2011-12: Council endorsed the Records Disposal Schedule for Compensation Records.

Agenda Item 12. – Draft Records Disposal Schedule for Fleet Management Records (including attachment setting out related classes)

Council noted that this Records Disposal Schedule had been tabled previously, and comments by Council members had been addressed. Again, the table of related classes of Schedules was well received.

Resolution Number 3 of Meeting No. 2 2011-12: Council endorsed the Records Disposal Schedule for Fleet Management Records.

Other Business

The Director drew attention to the next release of Territory records on 13 March 2012, the day after Canberra Day.

The Chair reiterated his thanks to June, Jill and Andrew.

Next meetings:

4 June 2012, celebrating 10 years since the passage of the *Territory Records Act 2002*

17 August 2012

23 November 2012

Meeting closed: 2:40 pm

Minutes confirmed on: / /2011 _____ Steve Stuckey (Chair)