

## Territory Records Advisory Council Minutes

### MEETING No.2 of 2015/16

12:00-2:00pm 19 November 2015

Darling Room  
Level 1, 221 London Circuit, Civic

#### Present

TRAC: Anne Buttsworth (Chair), Michael Piggott (Deputy Chair), Amanda Harris, Nick Swain, Roslyn Brown, Geoffrey Rutledge, David Brumby, Sim Prescott, Dani Wickman (Director).

Meeting opened: 12:10pm.

#### Welcome

The Chair welcomed Council Members to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed new members David Brumby, Records Manager, Australian National University, and Geoffrey Rutledge, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Cabinet. Both Amanda Harris and Nick Swain's reappointments were also approved for another three years. Ms Buttsworth also advised that Sim Prescott has been appointed as the Digital Records Project Manager and will be working closely with the Director on this project.

The Chair also congratulated Michael Piggott who has been awarded a National Library of Australia Fellowship for Research in Australian Literature. The focus of Mr Piggott's project will relate to the manuscripts of Sir John Ferguson.

#### Agenda Item 1 – Agenda and Apologies

There was one apology: Chris Aulich.

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

Mr Piggott noted that Professor Aulich's correct title had not been used consistently throughout the minutes. The minutes were subject to that correction.

**Business arising:** The Chair noted that at the last meeting members had asked that the Self Assessment check list be provided with the Standards and Guidelines. The Director advised that this matter would be discussed under agenda item 6.

**Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No.2 2015-16:** Council approved the Minutes of Meeting No.1 of 2015/16, subject to amendments.

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

The Director advised that the Annual Reports have been tabled including the TRO's. She noted that it was encouraging at the Annual Report Hearings, Assembly Members continue to be interested in progress being made in the area of digital record keeping.

This year's annual report was the first time that the whole of government reporting on records management had been undertaken. This process encouraged some agencies to update their reporting and to ensure that they met all their compliance requirements.

The Director advised of Sim Prescott's appointment as the new Digital Records Project Manager and that he was in week three of his management role. Mr Prescott stated that in this period he has been considering all aspects of the digital recordkeeping landscape and working towards a project plan and project governance structure. He noted that a project Board is to be established and would meet before

Christmas.

Mr Prescott also advised that self selected pilot sites would be established for the Project, including in the Strategic Policy and Cabinet area of Government.

The Chair advised that the TRAC encourages and fully supports the work in this area.

**Agenda Item 4 – Section 28 declarations (verbal)**

The Chair explained to new Council Members that the TRAC takes an interest in Section 28 declarations and that the Director provides a report at each meeting on new applications and whether they have been accepted or rejected. The Director advised that some 193 entries are now registered on line. Since the last meeting the University of Canberra applied for exemptions for a range of records including compensation cases, health care records, salary records and the like. These applications were for exemptions of categories of records commonly withheld from public access and similar to exemptions already made for other agencies, and the Director has approved these applications. She advised that the University had also sought to exempt some categories of research records, particularly those that involved human subjects. The Territory Records Office had advised that these types of records would need to be assessed on a case by case basis, as it would not be appropriate to exempt all research records from public access.

**Agenda Item 5 – Records Disposal Schedule – Disability Services**

The Chair stated that she was pleased that this Schedule was proposing to amalgamate three existing Schedules into one and that the aim was to simplify records disposal processes. The three existing schedules relate to the functions of Community Access Services, Community Concession Services and Health Professional Services. The activities under each of the previous functions were also combined under the new function. Consultation was conducted with Disability ACT and Therapy ACT staff in Community Services Directorate.

Ms Roslyn Brown advised that “Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people” is preferred terminology, rather than referring to “Indigenous people”. Members agreed that the TRO should adopt this terminology.

Nick Swain raised page 27 re “evaluations”. It was suggested that it be discussed with the team as some broad evaluations, which have a significant effect on the community, would require retention for longer than 7 years.

**Action:** Director to advise Council after discussion with team.

**Agenda Item 6 – Review of Standards and Guidelines**

The Director advised that the TRO Standards and Guidelines were last reviewed between 2009 and 2012. Good practice dictates that the Standards and Guidelines be reviewed every five years. Council members are invited to comment on the draft standard and guidelines by 18 December. The TRO expects to finalise consultations with various groups, including agencies and the archival profession, in mid-December, so that feedback can be incorporated over the Christmas-New Year period. This will allow the formal consultation process to take place in February, with a view to finalising the new documents in March. The deadline is, however, of the TRO’s own making, and if additional time is needed to respond to feedback then the finalisation of the documents may be delayed.

The new structure of the standard and guidelines takes a principles-based approach. There is now a single standard which articulates seven core principles. Each of the seven principles is supported by an associated guideline. Copies of the standard and the seven guidelines, along with the model policy and records management program, have been provided to members in their papers. At the last meeting members also asked to see the records assessment checklist, and the Director informed members that this is not yet available. Amanda Harris suggested that the existing detailed Guidelines could still be useful to some agencies and could perhaps be made available on the website.

Members had a number of initial comments about the drafts:

Guideline to the Capability Principle: Page 4 and 5, Nick Swain suggested additional wording required in relation to the heading “Annual” as in “Annual Assessment” or “Annual Plan”.

Guideline to the Identify Principle: The Chair noted that the draft has no page numbers. Mr Piggott asked about the use of the word “appraisal”. The Director noted that in focus group discussions with records managers there was some resistance to the word “appraisal”, and the term “identify” had been adopted instead. Members noted that the term appraisal continued to be used throughout the document and more thought needed to be given to the terminology used in this guideline.

Guideline to the Protect Principle: Council members observed that there was some overlap in the retain and protect principles. The Chair noted that there was an inconsistency in the introductions of some of the guidelines, with some having 3 paragraphs and others two.

Guideline to the Retain Principle: Members noted that the wording relating to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people should be reflected in this guideline.

Guideline to the Access Principle: Nick Swain suggested “Openness and Equity” as wording relating to Access Principle.

Council Members agreed that the template is significantly simplified from the existing Model Records Management Program. The Director noted that this template was intended to meet agency needs by being less daunting while also comprehensively addressing recordkeeping compliance requirements.

Members agreed to advise the Director of any other amendments, including typographical errors, by email. It was expected that final versions of the documents would be provided to members at the February meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Chief Minister’s Governance Lecture**

The Director advised that the TRO has established the Chief Minister’s Governance Lecture as a means of promoting the archives of the ACT Government that are made available to the public on Canberra Day each year. Head of the ACT Public Service Ms Kathy Leigh will be the MC for the event, and the Director is hoping for approximately 120 people to attend. The TRO has invited Dr Allan Hawke, AC, to be the inaugural Chief Minister’s Lecturer. Dr Hawke will speak on the theme “governing the City State: Yesterday, today and tomorrow”. The TRO staff have been assisting Dr Hawke with his research and with access to the archives.

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Report on ArchivesACT**

Members noted the document.

#### **Agenda Item 9 – Report on Agency Records Management**

Members noted the document.

#### **Other Business –**

Nick Swain commented that he was launching his book relating to the history of Manuka shops that evening. He particularly wished to thank Archives Officer Mark Dawson, who had been extremely helpful in providing access to important ACT government records related to the project.

#### **Next meeting:**

The Director advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 18 February 2016 at 12 noon.

Meeting closed: 1.30pm.

Minutes confirmed on: / /2015 \_\_\_\_\_ Anne Buttsworth (Chair)