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Territory Records Advisory Council Minutes

MEETING No.4 of 2013/14

12:00-2:00pm 1 May 2014

Darling Room
Level 1, 221 London Circuit, Civic

Present

TRAC: Steve Stuckey (Chair), Anne Buttsworth, David Headon, Rebecca Stubbs, Alyssa Blackburn, Mick Chisnall, Amanda Harris, Dani Wickman (Director)

Meeting opened: 12:15pm. Alyssa Blackburn arrived at 12.30pm and departed at 1:45pm. Amanda Harris departed at 1:45pm.

Incoming Council Members also attended the meeting at opening and departed at 12.50pm. The incoming Council Members are: Chris Aulich, Michael Piggott and Roslyn Brown

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the incoming Council Members. Mr Stuckey advised that this meeting was his last Council meeting. He expressed his thanks and genuine appreciation for having had the role as Chair for 3 years as well as having been a Member of Council for 4 years prior to that. The Chair advised of other outgoing Council Members which included Dr Headon and Ms Stubbs. Dr Headon and Ms Stubbs have both been Council Members for six years.

The Chair advised that he represented the archival profession and wanted to mention, for the benefit of incoming members, the experience other Council Members brought to the table. Ms Buttsworth's interest and area of expertise are accountability and governance. Dr Headon's areas of expertise have been ACT history and community engagement. Mr Chisnall, an IT expert, covers ACT Government agencies. Ms Harris represents the general community and has had a long and distinguished career as a records manager both at the Commonwealth and Territory level. Ms Stubbs represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests relating to the work done in the Territory Records Office and Archives ACT. The Chair stated the importance of indigenous interests, particularly since the inquiry which examined the issue of indigenous children separated from their families. Ms Blackburn represents the records management profession. Mr Swain (not present today) represents local history organisations.

The Director also stated her appreciation to those outgoing Council Members and the support she has received from the Chair and other Members. She advised that Council was excited about the new incoming members and the different expertise they would bring to the group. Ms Brown is to replace Ms Stubbs. Ms Brown is a Ngunnawal representative who advises ACT Government on issues relating to the Ngunnawal people. Mr Piggott is the incoming Deputy Chair and brings much technical expertise to Council. He is a well respected archivist and librarian and his representation is to replace Mr Stuckey's expertise. Professor Aulich's expertise is in the area of governance, particularly through government integrity agencies, as well as privatisation issues.

The Chair advised Council that Ms Buttsworth is expected to be appointed as the incoming Chair of Council. The Chair indicated that he hoped Council members would have the opportunity to meet the Minister, Andrew Barr soon. He advised that the Government is interested in records

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management and its contribution to accountability, open government and archives. The Chair advised Council of the strong powers the Director of Territory Records has and that the Director reports directly to the Minister. The Chair advised that Council has been a strong voice to the Minister in support of the Director on issues of accountability by ACT Government agencies.

Mr Piggott asked whether there are any agencies or matters the Act does not cover. The Director advised that the Act does not cover the Ministers. The Legal Aid Commission and ACT Policing matters are also not covered by the Act.

Agenda Item 1. – Agenda and Apologies

The Agenda was amended; Item 9 (Records Disposal Schedule – Youth Services) was moved to be discussed after Item 1. However, please see comments relating to Item 9 under Item 9. There were apologies from Nicholas Swain.

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

The minutes were accepted.

Business arising: Dr Headon advised that he was filming a piece on Charles Weston in the next few days and that it was scheduled to be broadcast on the ABC 7.30 Report in the next two to three weeks.

Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No.4 2013-14: Council approved the Minutes of Meeting No.3 2013/14.

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

The Director informed members of a restructure taking place in the Territory Records Office's parent agency, the Commerce and Works Directorate. The TRO currently forms part of the Shared Services division of the Directorate. Shared Services is being significantly restructured to support the implementation of new arrangements for providing finance, procurement and other services to the rest of the ACT public service. At this stage a decision has not been made on where the TRO will be placed in the new structure. The Director noted, however, that the Territory Records Act largely defined the work of the Office and that there will be little disruption to the TRO during this interim period. She also noted that Andrew Whale, who had been responsible for the TRO within Shared Services, has moved to a new role. Mr Whale had sent his apologies for not being able to attend this meeting of the Council.

The Director also advised that the Digital Records Policy was considered at the ICT Business and Infrastructure Committee of the Strategic Board. The Committee was provided with a recommendation either to comment on the paper or refer it to the Strategic Board for approval. The Committee agreed to refer the Policy Paper to the Board. The Director stated that, as part of the budget process, a proposal has been put forward to invest in a feasibility study relating to this IT project. The Director considered it necessary to seek consultancy advice on how to move forward with the digital records policy.

The Director advised that two more agencies have completed records management programs, which the Territory Records Act requires Directorates to have in place. In response to a question from the chair, she confirmed that Justice is one of those agencies. There are now eight out of ten Directorates that have complied with records management program responsibilities.

Agenda Item 4 – Report on Archives ACT

Council considered the new format of the Report on ArchivesACT Activities was well drafted and far more useful. The Chair highlighted the drafting of the "Canberra and Region Heritage Festival and Capital Metro Agency" paragraphs as a good example of why ArchivesACT participated at the

Festival and its relevance to the work of the agency.
Agenda Item 5 – Report on Agency Records Management
Members noted the report
Agenda Item 6 – Records Disposal Schedule – National Bodies
The Director advised that this draft Schedule was not prepared by the TRO, but by the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA) National Bodies Working Group in accordance with CAARA Policy 11 – Guidelines for the Treatment of Records of Inter-Governmental Agencies. The purpose of this Records Disposal Schedule is to provide for the authorised disposal of administrative records created or maintained by ACT Government Agencies that are National Bodies. The Australian Health Practitioner Agency is the only body of this kind in the ACT. Victoria has the National Transport Commission and NSW has the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority. The Director emphasised that she would be more concerned with the Schedule if it covered the core business of these agencies’ records, but as stated the schedule is for administrative records only.
Agenda Item 7 – Records Disposal Schedule – Elections & Referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly
The Chair stated that this Records Disposal Schedule has been previously examined by Council members. Council approved the Schedule as tabled.
Agenda Item 8 – Records Disposal Schedule – Elections & Referendum Services to Other Agencies
The Chair stated that this Records Disposal Schedule has been previously examined by Council members. Council approved the Schedule as tabled.
Agenda Item 9 – Records Disposal Schedule - Youth Services
As requested by Council Members Mr Kevin Knudsen, Records Manager from Community Services Directorate attended Council’s meeting. The Chair stated the importance of this schedule, the significance of the records and the proposed retention periods. Mr Knudsen advised that a review was undertaken with the intent of identifying the areas where a great deal of duplication occurred between the schedules for youth justice and youth programs, hence the amalgamation of the schedules into Youth Services. The activities under each of the previous functions were also combined under the new function. Mr Knudsen emphasised that there was significant consultation with staff regarding retention periods so as not to impact negatively on the agency or disadvantage relevant individuals.
The Chair praised the proposed Schedule and said that it should simplify the day to day operations of the organisation, with the removal of duplication. He raised a number of specific issues in the schedule. In relation to <i>case management</i> (page 23) Council suggested that the class description be reviewed to ensure users had a clearer understanding that the case file should <i>include everything to do with the agency’s involvement with the particular client</i> . Council also suggested that wording be included which reads that <i>“this deals with everything with the client except for its disciplinary issues which are covered in a separate schedule”</i> . It was also Council’s understanding that the disposal action has been amended to read “destroy 50 years after date of sentence” not “birth”, which Council approved. Ms Harris asked whether a review period on the disposal schedule could be recommended to ensure that the action is working effectively. Overall, Council considered that they are satisfied with Mr Knudsen’s advice that this schedule has been rigorously analysed and that an appropriate risk assessment has been made and documented. Council suggested that if the agency has any concerns relating to its implementation that they should talk to TRO. Council’s view was that to set a precedent on requiring a single class in a schedule to be reviewed was a complex decision and was

