

# **TERRITORY RECORDS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

**MEETING 12.30pm 22 August 2003  
No.1 2003/04**

**LEVEL 3 Macarthur House, Lyneham**

Present: George Nichols (Chair), Judith Baskin, Meredith Whitten, Sigrid McCausland, Lawrence Gilbert, Veronica Pumpa, David Wardle (Director), Amanda Harris (Secretariat)

Apologies: Jill Downer

The meeting opened at 12:35.

### **1. Welcome**

Mr Nichols welcomed members. Mr Nichols advised members that sitting fees can now be paid to eligible members. Mr Wardle will arrange the details of the payments and members should contact him to confirm their eligibility.

### **2. Minutes**

The Council resolved to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting of the Council held on 13 June 2003. (Resolution No.1 of 1-2003/04)

### **3. Draft Guideline for Records Management Number Three: Records Description and Control**

The Council enquired about the intended audience of the guidelines. Mr Wardle explained that the intended audience would probably be agency staff responsible for records management and staff working in the records management environment.

It was suggested that there should be more information in the introduction to the Guideline about the registration process and the need to capture records. Ms Pumpa will forward her suggested amendments to the Territory Records Office.

Mr Wardle explained that the Territory Records Office is hoping to collaborate with ACT Information Management (ACTIM) on the production of guidelines dealing with topics such as managing electronic records held in agency's systems, which may include their finance and human resource systems.

Guideline 3 was adopted with changes from Ms Pumpa. (Resolution No.2 of 1-2003/04)

#### **4. Draft Guideline for Records Management Number Four: Access**

Ms Baskin had previously asked Mr Wardle to discuss with agencies the possibility of gaining access to records before 1 July 2007. He had now discussed this with agencies and found that there were reservations about doing this. A preliminary investigation has found that some records contain private material that had been placed on records in error and this could have privacy implications for the agencies. Agencies require the lead in time of 1 July 2007 before open access to ensure no private material is publicly released.

Mr Nichols expressed some concerns about the notion of automatically closing records to public access because they may contain manuscript annotations deemed to be inappropriate. He warned that these records may reflect the business of government at the time and would not necessarily be considered a breach of privacy after 20 years.

Anticipating these concerns, Mr Wardle advised that the Territory Records Office has let a Consultancy to the Stuartfield House Consulting Group to 'Scope the requirements for access to records', which is to advise on these issues.

Ms Baskin expressed a particular interest in records that were publicly available through the National Archives of Australia but have not been publicly available since their transfer to the ACT Government.

Mr Gilbert welcomed the inclusion in this Guideline of Section 3 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols for libraries, archives and information services.

Mr Gilbert has spoken to representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community about forming a committee to discuss the community's issues with access to records. Mr Wardle appreciated this offer and said that it would be good to have such a network established within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This will allow the Government as custodians of the records to provide assistance in accessing records.

Mr Gilbert enquired whether some sort of partnership could be established between the Territory Records Office and State Records of NSW for access to records of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders community held by NSW. Mr Wardle will report back to the next meeting.

Ms Baskin wanted further direction provided in the Guideline on access to records for people from disadvantaged groups. She also expressed concern about the statement that researchers could have their notes and research papers inspected because of the privacy implications this may have. Mr Wardle explained that all public servants are bound by the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* for confidentiality in their work, however this section of the Guideline will now be amended.

Guideline 4 adopted with changes from Ms Baskin. (Resolution No.3 of 1-2003/04)

#### **5. Draft Guideline for Records Management Number Five: Recordkeeping and Outsourced Government Business**

Mr Gilbert was happy with the guideline and expressed the hope that it will assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in accessing records of private institutions when they have provided a service on behalf of government.

Guideline 5 adopted. (Resolution No.4 of 1-2003/04)

## **6. Records Disposal Schedule for Ombudsman Complaint Records**

It was suggested that there be some further clarification of the title of the sections referred to in the Records Disposal Schedule. Mr Wardle agreed to pursue this.

The Records Disposal Schedule for the Ombudsman Complaint records was adopted with the suggested changes. (Resolution No.5 of 1-2003/04)

## **7. Draft Records Disposal Schedule for Advocacy Records**

The Council expressed considerable concern that the records relating to people who are in the care of government should be retained for at least as long as the people are in care. Mr Wardle will discuss this matter with the Community Advocate and report back to Council.

Ms Baskin enquired what consultation was done with stakeholders to produce this Records Disposal Schedule.

The Council requested that in future each draft Disposal Schedule be submitted with a brief statement from the creating agency, explaining the consultation that was done in preparing the schedule.

Mr Wardle invited any interested Council member to accompany him when he meets with the Community Advocate to discuss the Records Disposal Schedule.

## **8. Draft Records Disposal Schedule for Tourism Records**

Mr Nichols suggested that any comments on this Records Disposal Schedule should be forwarded to Mr Wardle.

## **9. Draft Records Disposal Schedule for Registrar-General Records**

Mr Nichols suggested that any comments on this Records Disposal Schedule should be forwarded to Mr Wardle.

## **10. Other business**

Nil

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Next meeting – Friday 31 October 2003.  
The meeting closed at 13:57.