



# **DIRECTOR OF TERRITORY RECORDS**

## **ANNEXED REPORT**

**2010 - 11**

In carrying out the broad range of functions listed in the *Territory Records Act 2002*, the Director works closely with each Director-General and nominated Records Manager within ACT Government directorates.

The Territory Records Office (TRO), led by the Director of Territory Records:

- provides advice to directorates and monitors compliance with the Act;
- maintains the whole-of-government records management thesaurus to ensure consistency across the ACT Government;
- provides support for the Territory Records Advisory Council;
- helps members of the public to find records;
- develops standards and guidelines for records management;
- advises on records management;
- monitors the disposal of records by directorates; and
- manages copyright administration across directorates.

The Territory Records Advisory Council met four times during 2010–11. Membership of the Council during 2010/2011 was:

- Mr Steve Stuckey (chair)
- Ms Veronica Pumpa (deputy chair)
- Ms Jill Caldwell (deputy chair)
- Dr David Headon
- Mr Andrew Kefford
- Ms June Penny
- Ms Rebecca Stubbs
- Ms Anne Buttsworth
- Ms Alyssa Blackburn
- Mr David Wardle

Ms Veronica Pumpa, the deputy chair and a member of Council since 2002, retired with Ms Jill Caldwell taking over as deputy chair. Ms Anne Buttsworth and Ms Alyssa Blackburn were appointed to fill vacancies. Mr Steve Stuckey, Dr David Headon and Ms Rebecca Stubbs were reappointed for a further term.

The 2009-2010 Annual Report identified two priorities – the implementation of changes in response to the Auditor-General’s report and the completion of legislative amendments to the *Territory Records Act 2002* in response to the Review of the Act, both responses to reinforce the Government’s commitment to a rigorous and robust records management regime.

The Auditor-General’s Report and the Review of the Act provided the most thorough scrutiny of the Act and its operation since recognition of the Act over a decade ago and the need to address the legal basis for ACT records management. In undertaking the Review of the Act, Mr Paul Macpherson commented that: The regime is rigorous, comprehensive and robust, and is changing to reflect the increasingly digital records environment.

Facilitating public access to the ACT’s documentary heritage retained its high priority. The number of records made available for public access grew steadily over the year, and the range of research guides and finding aids was expanded. To assist public access, increased effort was

given to making these research guides and indexes available online. Following the amendments to the Act, an annual release date for Cabinet records at ten years and administrative records at twenty years was implemented in 2011, with Canberra Day established in the legislation as the date for the annual release of records.

## **AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

The Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative Assembly tabled its *“Review of Auditor-General’s Report No 3 of 2008 Records Management in ACT Government Agencies”* on 25 August 2010. The Government accepted the Committee’s three recommendations which essentially required the Government to keep the Legislative Assembly informed of progress in implementing a better records management regime in the Territory.

In December 2010 the Government met the Committee’s first recommendation by reporting on the progress and effectiveness of the implementation of the Auditor-General’s recommendations.

All of the Auditor-General’s recommendations had been resolved and met. Many of the recommendations require continuing action by all directorates as part of a process of upgrading records management in a changing environment. The lead up to the Auditor-General’s report and its recommendations have resulted in the development and implementation of three new Standards and their associated Guidelines:

- Territory Records Standard – No.7: Physical Storage of Records (2008)
- Territory Records Standard – No.8: Business Continuity and Records Management (2008)
- Territory Records Standard – No.9: Records Digitisation and Conversion (2011)

The last Standard creates a clear process for the digitisation of records, on which both Directorates and the public can rely. Acceptance of the evidential value of digital records will now become clearer. It is a significant advance in directorates’ recordkeeping capabilities in an increasingly digital environment.

The process of striving for better practice in records management is ongoing while addressing constantly emerging demands for efficiency and effectiveness in business practice. There are now 62 Records Advices to assist directorates, and many Records Disposal Schedules have been updated to reflect the practical experience gained by using them to decide which records should be kept and for how long. Many are small, technical amendments, but some represent significant advances, such as a Records Disposal Schedule for *Preserving Records Containing Information That May Allow People to Establish Links with Their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Heritage*.

The Committee’s second recommendation was met in June 2011 when the Government reported to the Assembly on the Review of the *Territory Records Act 2002* (see below). The third and final progress report is due in February 2012.

## **REVIEW OF THE TERRITORY RECORDS ACT 2002**

Section 58 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* required the Minister to review the operation of the Act as soon as possible after 1 July 2009 and report to the Assembly within a year. Mr Paul Macpherson, Manager of Records and Archives at the University of NSW, undertook an independent review. He consulted widely with Directorates, professional organisations, community associations, the Territory Records Advisory Council and the public.

Mr Macpherson's Review was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 1 July 2010. The review summarised that:

"There was universal agreement that the Act was important for the people of the ACT and facilitated good administration, accountability of government to people and access to records for historical and cultural purposes. There was also universal agreement that the Act was in general operating well and its implementation and operation had not resulted in any major problems for the Territory or its people."

The Government accepted the recommendations of the Review and legislative changes were completed by the end of 2010. The provisions of the former *Executive Documents Release Act 2001* were brought under the *Territory Records Act*. The Director was recognised as having a greater role in the monitoring of the disposal of records by Directorates and records were able to be transferred to other jurisdictions when required. Some matters raised did not lend themselves to quick resolution and remain under active consideration:

- the appropriateness of the exemption categories of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* to the *Territory Records Act 2002*;
- the appropriateness of the digital records regime; and
- the appropriateness and timing of transferring the custody of Territory archives to the Territory Records Office.

## **COUNCIL OF AUSTRALASIAN ARCHIVES AND RECORDS AUTHORITIES**

The Director represents the ACT on the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA) to ensure that ACT records management is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions and Australian best practice. Ongoing issues include the increasing importance of digital records, the preparedness of jurisdictions in dealing with disasters and providing public access to records.

The ACT hosted the 2011 meeting of CAARA in Canberra which was the first time that the meeting had been held in this jurisdiction.

## **100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN 2013**

The Director is considering options for the establishment of an ACT Archives and Heritage Centre to celebrate the Centenary of Canberra in 2013. The Centre would house significant records and objects held by ACT Government directorates and help ensure their preservation. The anniversary celebrations will heighten the awareness to the community of the documentary heritage of the ACT.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In responding to the need to provide advice and direction for the management of digital records beyond that already prepared by the TRO, the Director commissioned advice from Judith Ellis of Enterprise Knowledge to assist in developing a 'Digital Recordkeeping Pathway' for the Government. The Director will be working with the Government's ICT service provider, Shared Services ICT, to develop effective strategies in managing the digital records environment of the Government.

Governing the City State, One ACT Government – One ACT Public Service (The Hawke Review) commissioned by the Government will impact on every aspect of government administration with the importance of effective records management being noted throughout the Review. The significant reorganisation and restructure within government administration will require all directorates to develop and have approved new Records Management Programs. Assisting directorates with this will have high priority for the Territory Records Office for the coming year.

The Director now reports through Shared Services HR which is in the Treasury Directorate.

Further information may be obtained from:

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