



# DIRECTOR OF TERRITORY RECORDS

The purposes of the *Territory Record Act 2002* are to:

- encourage open and accountable government by ensuring that Territory records are made, managed and, if appropriate, preserved in accessible form;
- support the management and operation of Territory agencies;
- preserve Territory records for the benefit of present and future generations; and
- ensure that public access to records is consistent with the principles of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

The Director of Territory Records works closely with ACT Government directorates to achieve the purposes of the Act.

The Act gives a number of functions to the Director of Territory Records in support of these purposes. The Territory Records Office, led by the Director of Territory Records:

- develops and approves standards and codes for records management;
- monitors and regulates the disposal of records by directorates;
- provides advice, assistance and training on record management;
- assists directorates to meet their obligations to provide public access to records;
- maintains the whole of government records management thesaurus which supports consistent records management practice across the ACT Government;
- administers copyright licensing across directorates; and
- provides support for the Territory Records Advisory Council.

The inaugural Director of Territory Records, Mr David Wardle, retired in July 2012.

Mr Wardle was appointed soon after the Territory Records Act was passed in 2002, and was responsible for establishing the Territory Records Office and the administrative and regulatory regime for records management which the Office supports. Mr Wardle was succeeded by Ms Danielle Wickman, who was appointed by the Minister on 1 October 2012.

The Act also creates the Territory Records Advisory Council, which provides advice to the Director on records management issues, particularly in relation to access to and disposal of records, and on the protection of records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. The Territory Records Advisory Council met four times during 2012–13. Membership of the Council during the year was:

- Mr Steve Stuckey (Chair);
- Ms Alyssa Blackburn;
- Ms Anne Buttsworth;
- Mr Michael Chisnall
- Ms Amanda Harris
- Dr David Headon;
- Ms Rebecca Stubbs;
- Mr Nick Swain;
- Mr David Wardle (to July 2012);
- Ms Elizabeth Estbergs (July to October 2012);
- Ms Danielle Wickman (from October 2012).

The Council considers that the Territory Records Office's greatest priority should be to facilitate and encourage appropriate management of digital records. Council recognises that securing centralised

storage and management of the ACT archival collection remains an important longer-term goal. Public access to that collection through ArchivesACT is of ongoing interest to Council, and members consider that work to enhance the public accessibility of Territory archives must also remain a priority for the Territory Records Office.

## Overview and Highlights for 2012–2013.

With the amendments to the Territory Records Act in 2011, the ACT Government has in place a robust, coherent legislative framework for delivering strong records management outcomes. While its role in assisting directorates in meeting their recordkeeping responsibilities continues, the Office is increasingly putting its resources towards guiding a transition to digital recordkeeping within the ACT Government. There has also been a special focus for the Office on enhancing public access to Territory archives during the Centenary of Canberra celebrations.

## Support for records management

The key mechanism for establishing and maintaining good records management practice in Territory Government directorates is the development of records management programs, as required by section 16 of the Act. In July 2012 the Territory Records Office released its Model Records Management Program, which can help agencies to develop records management programs that comply with the various requirements of the Act. The Model Program supports the Director's role in achieving consistent records management across the ACT Public Service, and significantly simplifies the compliance process for agencies. A number of directorates are using the Model Program as a template for their records management programs, and the Territory Records Office will review this guidance in the light of their experience. The Territory Records Office continues to work with agencies to assist them in reviewing and maintaining their records management programs.

## Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

One of the Director of Territory Records' important roles is to approve schedules for the disposal of Territory records. Records disposal schedules identify the types of records that should be created in managing of the various functions of the Territory Government. The schedules also authorise the destruction of those records by setting minimum periods for which they must be kept to meet business, legal and accountability requirements and community expectations. This can include specifying which records must be retained in perpetuity as Territory archives.

The 2011 review of the Act introduced a power to suspend previously approved records disposal schedules. This power was used in January 2013 to suspend previous approvals for the destruction of any records that may be relevant to the Commonwealth's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. ACT Government agencies are not authorised to destroy any record that:

- documents, or supports an assessment of, institutional responses to child sexual abuse, including those which document policies, procedures and actions, and the review of these; or
- documents, or supports the investigation of, reports, suspicions, allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse including, but not limited to records that may provide evidence of the actions or circumstances of either the perpetrators or victims of child sexual abuse.

The Director wrote to all ACT Government directorates informing them of the need to protect these records, and continues to work with records managers and the Government Solicitor's Office to provide advice to directorates on the implementation of the new arrangements. In July 2013 the Director also became a member of the ACT Government's working party on the Royal Commission.



## Records and Information Management Community of Practice

The Territory Records Office facilitates a community of practice among ACT Government officers who have an interest in records and information management issues. The group meets four times per year and schedules its meetings to enable it to provide input to meetings of the Territory Records Advisory Council.

The community of practice has proved an important forum for exchanging ideas and identifying common challenges. In 2013 the Territory Records Office established a working group under the community of practice to work on solutions to commonly identified problems with physical records storage. The group is currently examining the range of records storage and related services used across the ACT Government, with a view to specifying common service standards and requirements.

## Digital recordkeeping

The Territory Records Office continues to pursue initiatives to support a move to digital recordkeeping within the ACT Public Service. The principles underpinning the Office's standards and guidelines are independent of format, and are applicable to ACT Government records whether they are managed in paper or digital systems. A number of reports in recent years have pointed to the increasing need for the ACT to effectively manage 'born digital' records. The Territory Records Office has responded to these drivers by extending and refining the tools available to agencies to manage the transition from a paper to a digital recordkeeping regime.

In 2012–2013 the Territory Records Office has worked on a whole of government digital recordkeeping policy that builds on the accumulated knowledge developed over the last few years. The policy is intended to remove any remaining doubts directorates may have about the directions for digital recordkeeping within the ACT Public Service. The draft policy emphasises the need for a whole of government approach to digital recordkeeping that creates, protects and provides access to records consistent with the Territory Records Act and the ACT Government's Open Government policy.

## Auditor-General's Report

In June 2012 the Auditor-General completed her Report No 2 of 2012 Whole of Government Information and Communication Technology Security Management and Services. The report recommended that the Shared Services Division should improve whole of government security management practices by planning for an ACT Government electronic records management system and pursuing funding for its implementation.

The Territory Records Office's draft policy on digital recordkeeping, when finalised, will support the implementation of this recommendation. The Office is also committed during 2013–2014 to developing an implementation framework for whole of government digital recordkeeping.

## Centenary of Canberra

As the archives authority for the ACT Government, the Territory Records Office has an important role to play in the celebration of Canberra's centenary. The Office is participating in three key events during the Centenary year. The first of these was to sponsor the March 2013 issue of the *Canberra Historical Journal*, which is published twice each year by the Canberra and District Historical Society. All papers published in the March 2013 issue were written using ACT Government archival records. The journal was an opportunity to showcase the kinds of research that ACT Government archives can support. Topics ranged from the Duntroon school, established in Pialligo in 1894, to the contribution of the School Without Walls from the 1970s to its closure in 1997.

The second project, which culminated in a formal ceremony on 1 July 2013, was to pursue the transfer to the ACT's custody of the original documents granting the Coat of Arms to the City of Canberra. Initiated by the previous Director of Territory Records, David Wardle, the transfer involved close collaboration with the National Archives of Australia, which has cared for these documents since the 1950s, and the Canberra Museum and Gallery, which will provide specialist storage and exhibition facilities into the future. The

transfer is an important symbol for the ACT, and for the Territory Records Office in particular, signifying that we are mature enough as a city and as an archival institution to manage the care of these important documents for ourselves.

The Territory Records Office's third Centenary initiative, a joint publication with the National Archives of Australia, will continue into 2013–14.

## Outlook

For the Territory Records Office, 2012–13 has been a year of consolidation, building on the growing body of knowledge and expertise it has developed in the 10 years since the Territory Records Act commenced. In 2013–14 we expect to see further concrete results of this progress. Among these will be an unambiguous policy direction for the ACT Public Service on digital recordkeeping, clear specifications for agency needs for physical records storage, and a key publication celebrating the ACT's archival riches as part of Canberra's Centenary year.

Over the horizon, the Centenary of World War I will present a series of significant anniversaries for communities across Australia. The Territory Records Office hopes to work with other ACT Government cultural institutions, as well as with our Commonwealth, state, territory and also international counterparts, in projects that will contribute to these commemorations, through our membership of the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA).

CAARA is made up of the heads of the Commonwealth, state, territory archival institutions, as well as Archives New Zealand. CAARA works cooperatively on a range of issues of common concern, and has a long history of sharing expertise. The Territory Records Office continues to rely greatly on the assistance of its CAARA colleagues in addressing issues such as digital recordkeeping. The ability of a small jurisdiction like the ACT to solve problems jointly with its larger colleagues is invaluable. Joint efforts such as CAARA's Australasian Digital Recordkeeping Initiative (ADRI) also help to drive consistent approaches to recordkeeping standards and technologies, which increases the ability of private sector providers to meet the requirements of all jurisdictions. The Territory Records Office will draw on the experience of, and tools created by, ADRI in developing a whole of government digital recordkeeping framework for the ACT.

The Territory Records Office will also in 2013–2014 examine how it can add to the suite of tools it provides to directorates that will help them to be self-sufficient in meeting their obligations under the Act. Initiatives being pursued in the coming year include tools for assessing the recordkeeping capabilities of business systems, and proposals to improve the capabilities of agencies to manage the authorised disposal of their records.

These initiatives will complement our ongoing work with agencies to develop, review and maintain their records management programs. The Office's role in assisting the public in gaining access to the rich archives of the ACT will also continue through the remainder of our Centenary celebrations and beyond.

Further information may be obtained from:

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