

## Territory Records Advisory Council Minutes

### MEETING No.1 of 2014/15

12:00-2:00pm 27 August 2014

Policy Boardroom, Level 4, Nara House  
Cnr Constitution Ave and London Circuit, Civic

#### Present

TRAC: Anne Buttsworth (Chair), Michael Piggott (Deputy Chair), Chris Aulich, Alyssa Blackburn, Mick Chisnall, Amanda Harris, Nick Swain, Dani Wickman (Director), Josephine Brown (Graduate Program participant)

Meeting opened: 12:10pm. Alyssa Blackburn arrived at 12.30pm.

#### Welcome

The newly appointed Chair, Ms Buttsworth welcomed everyone to the meeting, including incoming Council Members, Michael Piggott, Chris Aulich and Roslyn Brown. She advised that her appointment was for three years and that she was excited about the matters ahead for Council consideration. The Chair also advised Council members that Ms Blackburn was to give her resignation from Council, as she was moving interstate, and as such a replacement would be sought. The Chair also welcomed Josephine Brown who would be working in the area for three months in the second round of the Graduate Program.

#### Agenda Item 1. – Agenda and Apologies

There was one apology: Roslyn Brown.

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

The minutes were accepted.

**Business arising:** Nil.

**Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No.1 2014-15:** Council approved the Minutes of Meeting No.4 2013/14.

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

The Director provided background for the incoming Council members as to the work of the Territory Records Office (TRO) and Council. She considered that the proposed work plan of the TRO was the most coherent that it has been in the last two years and provided a strong sense of direction for the Office. She explained that the Territory Records Act is primarily focussed on regulating government recordkeeping, and agency records management programs are a key mechanism for achieving this.

The TRO has worked closely with the Directorates to help them meet their obligations under the Act, particularly with regard to records management programs. Records management programs provide the TRO with a mechanism to monitor the activities of Directorates, and the TRO intends to focus more on this kind of work in the future. In response to a question from

Mr Aulich, the Director advised that there are now eight out of ten Directorates that have complied with their records management program responsibilities. She advised that the TRO is satisfied that the two outstanding Directorates are working on new programs. The Director also noted that a key role of the Council was to consider the disposal of records.

The Director commented that another specific role of Council was advising the Director on recordkeeping standards and guidelines. The first TRO standards were drafted in 2002 and others were added in response to particular issues as required. The most recent review was in 2011. The Director advised that the TRO is proposing to review standards this year. The question is to what depth each standard will be re-examined. It is a requirement of the Act that agencies be given the opportunity to comment.

The Director advised that there had been a restructure in the ACTPS resulting in the amalgamation of three former Directorates, that is, the Chief Minister and Treasury; Commerce and Works; and Economic Development. The TRO remains within Shared Services in the amalgamated directorate. Jill Divorty continues to be Executive Director of Shared Services and Ms Wickman now reports directly to her rather than through Andrew Whale. Ms Divorty would like to come to the next meeting of Council.

The Director mentioned the invitation which was extended to all Council members concerning the Speakers Corner Event relating to the ACT Public Service separating from the Commonwealth Government. The Director advised that the occasion received good media coverage and that it was a successful event.

The Director referred to access questions and noted that she had recently received three applications for Section 28 declarations exempting 20 year old records from public access. The first two related to personal information held in some groups of records held by the Electoral Commission and the Chief Minister, Treasury Economic Development, and these had both been agreed to and placed on the public s28 Declarations register. The third was a request from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, which the Director is still considering. She has asked the Directorate for additional information before making a decision on this matter. Members of Council asked for a briefing on the operation of the access provisions of the Act and what the Council's role might be in an advisory context.

**Action: Provide a paper to Council members on the processes and responsibilities of Council relating to access questions – Section 28 declarations.**

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Report on Archives ACT**

Mr Chisnall and Ms Blackburn congratulated TRO staff for conforming to the guidelines to meet the WCAG standards. The Director noted that WCAG compliance has been a significant issue for the ArchivesACT website and noted that while the office was very close to meeting AAA standards it may not be possible to completely comply because of technical issues with scanned pdf documents.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Report on Agency Records Management**

All Council members considered the new format of the Report on Territory Records Office Activities well drafted and very useful. Ms Blackburn, in particular, congratulated the authors of both this and the ArchivesACT paper on the quality of the material, stating that it was now "analysis and not just data".

Mr Piggott agreed with the quality of the reporting in this document. He asked about the report relating to Totalcare Records which involved a CWD Records Manager identifying a

number of records that appear to have been inappropriately sentenced for destruction. The Director noted that she does not consider that this was an isolated case, and that this matter is on TRO's radar. Ms Harris advised that the inappropriate sentencing of records does happen, and will continue to happen, but that it is important that appropriate reviews and resentencing of records occur

#### **Agenda Item 6 – One ACTPS Digital Records Capability**

The Director advised that Council members have been provided for information with a request for quote and position description papers concerning approaches to whole of government digital recordkeeping for the ACT Public Service (ACTPS). The Director said that there are many stakeholders with different preferences on software and business systems. However, she advised that there is strong support for a whole of Government digital recordkeeping system.

Recordkeeping Innovation has been selected to undertake the feasibility study examining possible approaches to digital recordkeeping for the ACTPS. The outcome of that study is then expected to be a business case for funding in the 2014-15 ACT budget for acquisition of a whole of government digital records capability for the ACTPS. The consultants are to provide a business case for discussion by November and a final business case needs to be prepared by Christmas. The company is highly respected and has done similar work for the Government of Hong Kong.

The Director stated that the position description paper seeks the temporary appointment of a Digital Recordkeeping Project Manager. She hopes to make an appointment in late September/early October. Mr Chisnall emphasised that it was important for the Project Manager to work closely with the consultants and relevant stakeholders, to ensure that existing technology is used to its full potential. He said it was critical that we build on existing investments in developing a new system.

The Chair and Director noted the importance of Mr Chisnall meeting with the consultants and that any other interested Council members are also welcome to meet with the consultants. The Director advised that she will discuss the consultants' availability and invite Council members to an out of session briefing. The Director also wanted to acknowledge Mr Chisnall's assistance in the TRO receiving the necessary budgetary approvals to undertake this study.

**Action: The Director to organise a meeting between interested Council members and the successful consultants for the digital recordkeeping feasibility study.**

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Records Management Tools and Guidance – Agency Consultation Report**

This report was written for the TRO and other stakeholders with an interest in the needs of records managers within the ACTPS. Its primary aim is to provide an overall picture, discuss emerging patterns of concern and identify potential solutions.

A key conclusion was that while well resourced agencies are doing well in managing their recordkeeping requirements and obligations, others may not have the appropriate resourcing or adequate understanding of records management tasks. A particular area of need was in training, and the TRO has established a working group to share ideas about how agencies can deliver training in a cost effective way.

Ms Harris commented on the report's recommendation 7, to develop a self-assessment tool for

agencies similar to the National Archives of Australia's 'Check-Up'. She advised that Check-Up had not been well received by all Commonwealth agencies and that the TRO should look carefully at whether it was an appropriate model to follow. Ms Blackburn advised that her organisation also completed Check-up, and careful thought needs to be given as to what value it will add to agencies.

Mr Chisnall said the paper was a useful document and that the TRO could consider a more radical approach in future, such as by developing a greater whole of Government approach to the responsibilities of records managers.

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Canberra Day Records Release**

The Director drew members' attention to the paper in which ArchivesACT is seeking advice from Council on options to promote the 2015 and subsequent public releases of Territory archives.

The Chair said that given the many other events on Canberra Day, it did not seem a suitable occasion to hold an event highlighting the release of records. However there should be a press release drawing attention to the public release of records and some of the key events covered by these records.. Council discussed the possibility of holding a workshop at a later date for interested researchers. The research community could perhaps be surveyed to determine topics are of interest. The Chair suggested that a meeting of interested Council members and TRO staff be held to discuss possibilities.

**Action: The Director is to organise a meeting between the Chair, interested Council members and TRO staff to develop options for the 2015 records release.**

#### **Agenda Item 9 – Territory Records Office Work Plan 2014-15**

The Director alerted Council members to an error on page of the plan, where "2012-14" should read "2014-15".

The Chair referred to the long term vision of a purpose built repository. The Director noted that the ACT's current facilities at Mitchell had been refurbished to a high storage standard and could one day be designated as archival storage. Ms Harris noted that the costs of storing temporary value records in commercial storage can be high when the cost of permanent removal and destruction are taken into account.

The Director advised that if Council members have any other feedback their comments could be emailed to her.

#### **Agenda Item 10 – Records Disposal Schedule – Child Care and Protection Programs**

Mr Chisnall departed from Council meeting at 2:08 pm but indicated he did not have any comments to add to the records disposal schedules identified in agenda items 10 and 11.

Mr Swain noted that he had had similar comments to make on the "youth services" records disposal schedule which Council considered at its last meeting. That is, on page 18, the classes under "Advice" suggest that advice against a course of action that resulted in significant change should not be kept, while advice supporting the action would be retained. He also noted that the class for "Arrangements" should perhaps be retained longer than one year, and members

discussed whether relevant information would be kept on a child's case file, which would be retained for longer.

Members also noted other classes where they thought the retention period may not be long enough. They were under Investigation, mandatory reporting where the child has not been identified, and under Reviewing for minor reviews. Mr Piggott noted that some judgement is required to determine the application of some of these classes, such as identifying events which are 'significant' or 'major'.

Mr Swain also raised the class under Inquiries, where records about substantial inquiries would be retained for only 10 years. The Director explained that this is because the substantial records of such an inquiry would be retained by the inquiring body, such as a Royal Commission or an Ombudsman.

The Director suggested that Council members email any additional comments relating to this schedule.

**Agenda Item 11 – Records Disposal Schedule – National Bodies**

The Chair stated that this Records Disposal Schedule has minimal impact on the ACT. It was prepared by the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA) National Bodies Working Group. The purpose of this schedule is to provide for the authorised disposal of administrative records created or maintained by ACT Agencies that are National Bodies. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency is the only body of this kind the ACT. Council members did not have any further comments on the Schedule.

**Other Business –**

Ms Blackburn confirmed her resignation from Council due to her departure interstate. However, she thanked Council for the positive experience. The Chair and the Director thanked Ms Blackburn for her contribution to Council.

**Next meeting:**

The Director advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 26 November 2014 at 12pm.

Meeting closed: 2.10pm.

Minutes confirmed on: 26/11/2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Anne Buttsworth (Chair)