

# Territory Records Advisory Council Minutes

MEETING No.1 of 2011-12

19 August 2011

Board Room, Level One, Canberra Museum and Gallery  
London Circuit, Civic

## Present

TRAC: Steve Stuckey (Chair), Jill Caldwell, Alyssa Blackburn, Anne Buttsworth, June Penny,  
David Headon, Andrew Kefford, Rebecca Stubbs, David Wardle (Director)

TRO: Elizabeth Estbergs (Reference Archivist), Rohan Clark (Minutes)

Visitor: Andrew Whale, Director, Shared Services HR, Treasury Directorate

Meeting opened: 12:30

## Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Andrew Whale in particular, noting that this was Andrew's first attendance at a meeting of the Council since taking responsibility for supervising the day-to-day operations of the Territory Records Office (TRO).

The Chair also noted that Council members would meet the Minister responsible for the Territory Record Office, the Treasurer, Andrew Barr MLA in his office at 2 pm.

**Apologies** – There were no apologies.

## Minutes of previous meetings

**Resolution Number 1 of Meeting No. 1 2011-12:** Council approved the Minutes of Meeting No.4 2010-11, held on 3 June 2011.

There was no business arising from the minutes.

## Agenda Item 1. – TRO Updates for Council information – Report on ArchivesACT

Before discussing the tabled report, the Director noted that ArchivesACT had participated in the exhibition at the meeting venue, *The Cotter: Watering The Garden City 1912 – 2011*, from 26 March – 21 August 2011. The exhibition focuses on stories in the lives of dam workers, and the use of the facility for recreation. This led Council to discuss the challenges of obtaining, preserving and accessing records of local stories and local histories some of which could potentially be used by a proposed National Museum of Labour.

The Chair noted that the ways of increasing the awareness of ArchivesACT were broadening with the widespread use of social media. Elizabeth Estbergs saw a noticeable increase in the use of social media to access ArchivesACT following recent notifications by followers on Twitter. There had also been a rise in interest following the release of documents on Canberra Day 2011.

**Agenda Item 2. – TRO Updates for Council information – Report on Agency Records Management**

The Director reported that the significant changes to administrative arrangements in the ACT Government from 17 May 2011 to create an integrated ACTPS involved considerable work for Directorates in preparing new Records Management Programs. Functional responsibilities had to be correctly identified and aligned with the new structures as the basis of good records management. Assisting the Directorates with their new Records Management Programs would be a major focus for TRO for the current financial year at least.

Council supported this strategic focus for TRO, and Steve Stuckey said that in his experience, bedding down the records management aspects of a major administrative change took more than a single year. Council discussed trust as a vital element in any recordkeeping regime, both in its processes and administration and between participants, including other Directorates, agencies and outsourced providers.

The example of records relating to children in care provoked discussion of appropriately gaining custody of archival records, and of appropriately obtaining copies of archival material where the ownership of the source material lay outside of the ACT Government.

**Agenda Item 3. – Updates for Council information – Public Accounts Committee Report No.2**

The Director outlined the history of the PAC enquiry following the Auditor-General's Report in 2008 and the Macpherson review of the *Territory Records Act 2002* in 2010. The first report to the PAC in 2010 provided the Assembly with a progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the Auditor-General's Report. The second report, tabled on 30 June 2011, provided the Assembly with a report on implementation of recommendations arising from the review of the legislation and subsequent amendments to the Act. A further report is due to the Assembly in February 2012.

Council noted favourably the way in which the recommendations from the Macpherson review had been addressed. It noted that the implementation of four recommendations of the Review of the Act remains incomplete, covering three topics: FOI exemption categories, management of electronic/digital records, and archival records storage. The first would be addressed through the review of the FOI Act, and the management of digital records was a major and ongoing issue that would be discussed under the next agenda item.

The Chair said that an ACT repository for archival records is a major strategic focus for Council, which he expected would be raised with the Minister shortly. Providing storage and access to older records no longer needed for business purposes form a critical part of the strategy for preserving the documentary heritage of the Territory.

Referring to the newly provided Council function of advising the Director on access to records, Council requested information about records that had been withheld from public access. The Director said that there were now 147 s28 Declarations, and he would provide general information about these for Council's next meeting.

Council members strongly agreed that, while it was appropriate that they focus on records being withheld from public access, they also had a responsibility to encourage use of archival material. Council suggested for consideration the possibility of having former Chief Minister Stanhope available at the 2012 Canberra Day release, as this would be the first time in Australia that Cabinet records of an existing Government are released. Andrew Kefford undertook to look into

this possibility.

With the first annual release of 20-year-old records (10 years for Cabinet records) on Canberra Day 2011, many records had been available on the day while others were able to be requested then and provided at a later time. There was discussion of whether it was possible in 2012 for all newly released material to be available on the day.

**Agenda Item 4. – TRO Updates for Council information – Digital Recordkeeping Pathway – Judith Ellis Report**

The Director explained that the greatest general issue facing records managers across the ACTPS was digital records, and a critical aspect was ensuring the evidential value of digital records was preserved. Records Management Standard No 6 manages digital records while Standard No 9, issued in March 2011, manages records converted from paper and other formats into digital format. This Standard had been discussed with both the Courts and the administration and the response so far has been very positive. Drawing on NZ and Victorian IP in particular, it provides agencies with a means of converting records into digital format while preserving the evidential value of the records, and providing the approval to destroy the source record in certain cases.

While this has met the immediate recommendations of the Macpherson review, the management of digital records remains a major issue, partly because the digital environment is evolving so rapidly as the earlier discussion on social media indicated. To this end, TRO has commissioned a well-respected records management consultant to identify directions for the further development of ACTPS's digital records management. A copy of Judith Ellis's report was tabled to allow Council members to contribute to the internal discussion of directions of digital records management.

Andrew Whale added that he was keen to obtain Council feedback on the concepts and directions of the paper. The next steps will be to obtain agreement within Government. The Government Information Officer (GIO), the Shared Services Information and Communications Technology (ICT) group within Treasury and records management professionals need to agree on the proposed directions. It will then be possible to build specific policies and detailed action plans to implement the strategy. This paper sets out the broad pathway.

Council agreed with the directions contained in the paper. Steve Stuckey said that in his view it was a high-level paper that did not require formal Government endorsement; the policies and actions that would sit below it would require Government approval. Cooperation with the GIO and the Shared Services ICT group was vital. It was suggested that Council might usefully meet the GIO.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40pm as members prepared to meet the Minister. The meeting resumed at 2:35pm.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance, and David Headon for his impassioned exposition of the need for, and benefits of, a records repository.

The Chair summarised the main topics discussed with the Minister as being:

1. Council's view of the importance of recordkeeping to accountability, as well as its importance for heritage and business purposes;
2. Council's view of the need, at some time, to have an ACT repository to ensure the

survival of ACT's archival heritage; and

3. The vital importance of managing digital records well.

He noted that these were in line with Council's previously established strategic priorities. The Chair said that both the repository and digital records were now clearly on the table as issues to be addressed.

Further discussion ensued about the desirability of having the Minister note the entire Digital Pathways report, as against simply endorsing the main directions and key points of the paper.

**Agenda Item 5. – Records Disposal Schedule for Equipment and Stores**

The Director outlined the processes by which RDSs were approved. Council members had no further comments beyond those that had been provided out of session to the Director.

**Resolution Number 2 of Meeting No. 1 2011-12:** Council approved the Records Disposal Schedule for Equipment and Stores.

**Agenda Item 6. – Records Disposal Schedule for Financial Management**

**Resolution Number 3 of Meeting No. 1 2011-12:** Council approved the Records Disposal Schedule for Financial Management.

**Other Business**

Council congratulated Dee Macarthur employed in the Treasury Directorate, on being awarded the Loris Williams scholarship by the Australian Society of Archivists to support indigenous records managers and archivists. The scholarship provides mentoring and a relatively small amount of financial support. ASA's creation of the scholarship supports the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report to support indigenous archivists.

Steve Stuckey wished David Wardle well during his long service leave. He noted that David would return in early November – in time for the next Council meeting. David thanked all Council members for their continuing support. Elizabeth Estbergs will take over the Director's role in his absence. Council welcomed Elizabeth to that role again.

**Next meetings**

25 November 2011

9 March 2011

Meeting closed: 2:55pm

Minutes confirmed on: 25/11/2011 Signed by Steve Stuckey (Chair)