Reviews

Archives New Zealand, *Storage Standard – Standard for the Storage of Records and Archives,* Wellington, Archives New Zealand, 2007. 28pp. Available at <*http://continuum.archives.govt.nz/files/file/standards/s2.pdf*>.

In June 2007 Archives New Zealand released the second version of its *Storage Standard,* the first edition appearing in February 2000. The new edition is revised and enlarged – increasing from 19 pages to 28 pages – and has been brought about primarily by the passage of New Zealand's *Public Records Act* in 2005.

The standard is intended to assist those involved in government recordkeeping, and specifies the minimum requirements necessary for the storage of public records and local authority records, whether by government agencies or storage providers on their behalf, in order to ensure their preservation and accessibility when needed. It deals primarily with physical, not digital, records.

The standard is in six parts: Introduction; Mandate and Responsibilities; Overview of Requirements; Principles; Glossary of Terms; and an appendix – Checklist of Minimum Requirements. While the 2000 edition had a reading list of secondary sources, this has been deleted in the new edition.

The new edition includes a brief section entitled 'Benefits of Compliance', which was not in the first edition. The section lists a series of reasons why agencies should comply with the requirements contained within the standard. Effectively, the section is intended to answer the question 'what's in it for me?'. Eight benefits are given, with most taking the form of the carrot and stick. One benefit that is not listed, though, is public relations disasters that can arise when records cannot be located or have accidentally been destroyed.

The standard contains six principles – identification and control, facilities, protection against disaster, security, shelving and packaging, and environmental control. By contrast, the 2000 standard had seven principles. For each principle there is a series of requirements – thirty in all – and all are listed in tabular form. Each requirement has a short explanation together with examples of risks as to what might happen

due to failure to comply with that requirement. Although the explanations are brief, they are most useful.

One notable improvement between the two editions is that while both have a checklist of minimum requirements, in the 2000 edition the checklist merely consisted of a series of boxes to be ticked. In the 2007 edition the boxes have been replaced with sufficient space for anyone undertaking a self-assessment of their facility to write detailed notes.

Although pitched at government agencies, the standard can be used by anyone wanting to undertake an assessment of their own recordkeeping program and storage practices. It is a very worthwhile document and Archives New Zealand is to be commended for producing it.

Ted Ling

Jackie Bettington, Kim Eberhard, Rowena Loo and Clive Smith (eds), *Keeping Archives,* third edition, Canberra, Australian Society of Archivists Inc., 2008. 648pp. + CD-ROM. ISBN 978 0 9803352 4 8. $145.00 ($100.00 + postage and handling for ASA members).

The third edition of *Keeping Archives* has been a most anticipated publication. When I started working in an archive ten years ago, I did exactly what I'm sure countless other novice practitioners have done: looked at the large, messy pile of boxes and files and thought, right, what do I do now? I borrowed a copy of *Keeping Archives* second edition (KA2) and started the work with a little more confidence, before feeling the need for more theoretical understanding, and enrolling in a postgraduate archives course. But copies of KA2 became rarer and rarer, and through my later involvement in the NSW Branch Committee of the ASA I often received those slightly desperate emails: When can I get a copy of *Keeping Archives*? Is the new edition out?

It is clear there remains a need for a practical manual for managing archives in accordance with Australian archival theory and practice, particularly as the options for archival education have narrowed over the past twenty years. The two previous editions were both successful, with the second edition reprinted five times. The third edition, however, has set out to address comprehensively the technological changes over

the past 15 years, which have impacted on how archivists work and the nature of recordkeeping systems. It also incorporates significant developments in archival theories, and national and international standards in description and records management.

The novice archivist remains the primary audience for the new edition, although Clive Smith notes in the preface that *Keeping Archives* also has a role as a textbook for students, and a refresher for the experienced archivist (p. 8). The look of the book is clear and well presented. It is divided into four colour-coded sections: Getting Started, Managing the Archives, Promoting the Archives, and Managing more than Paper! The book is further sub-divided into a total of eighteen chapters. Written by many of the experts in their field, the book has an assured tone that is both practical and authoritative. This edition also introduces many new authors, although David Roberts and Ann Pederson have updated their respective chapters on 'Using Computers', 'Documentation Programs' and 'Advocacy and Outreach' (formerly 'User Education'), which have been in all three editions.

It has to be said that each successive edition of *Keeping Archives* has grown by thirty per cent. Where the first edition was a relatively modest 374 pages, the third edition is a solid 648 pages plus CD-ROM containing resources and appendixes. The structure of the book essentially mirrors the two previous editions, moving from a general understanding of archives, policy development, storage and preservation, to explaining archival tasks such as appraisal, and arrangement and description, setting out practical approaches for promoting archives, and then looking at managing special archival formats. The last section in particular contains far more extensive information than previous editions, expanding from a single chapter to four. Given the length and structure there is some overlap and, at times, duplication of topics, although the editors have cross-referenced throughout the book, enabling the reader to link sections relatively easily.

One major difference is that the new edition is printed in colour. The inclusion of practical forms and structured tables has been a feature of the *Keeping Archives* format, which has meant that the layout was quite dense in previous editions. The look of this edition does assist in the absorption of large amounts of information, with the eye drawn to case studies and tables highlighted in coloured boxes. Another feature of this edition is the inclusion of a CD-ROM containing all the examples of

forms, policies and documents, which previously were embedded in the text. I have a mixed response to this: while the CD-ROM allows for more extensive forms to be provided as templates to readers, there was some advantage in being able to review examples while reading through the text. For the novice archivist, having access to templates might well be the most useful aspect of the book. It also might be a long-term preservation strategy for any future reprints to ensure the appendixes be available from the ASA website with readers given access to a 'key' provided in the book, just in case the CD-ROM becomes unreadable!

As mentioned above, this edition seeks to address technological changes, and the resultant impact on archival theory, standards and practice. Jackie Bettington's chapter on appraisal updates theoretical positions, particularly macro-appraisal and the more established use of functional appraisal in archives since the early-1990s. While it is necessarily theoretical in approach, and perhaps more tailored to the archival student than novice archivist, the accompanying appendixes on the CD-ROM are certainly very practical and user-friendly. In her chapter on arrangement and description Lyn Milton includes a summary of functional provenance, as well as ensuring the advice on implementing the series system is compatible with the recently produced *Descriptive Archives in Context: A Guide to Australasian Practice* (ASA, 2007).

David Roberts outlines how archives can use collection management software and tools like the World Wide Web to manage their records. He also examines imaging technologies including digitisation, as well as providing a useful methodology for planning a digitisation and microfilm project. Cassie Findlay provides a comprehensive overview of digital recordkeeping incorporating a case study in using the DIRKS (designing and implementing recordkeeping systems) methodology, which, to her credit, should make the approach appear plausible and manageable to the novice archivist. Digital media also features in the sections on audiovisual archiving and moving images, with the inclusion of a useful summary of data formats and recommendations for managing and preserving digital records and optical discs.

To some extent, all the authors have tried to address changes in practice and technology, and incorporate these into their chapters. However, not all archival practice differs much since the first edition (for example, acquisition), and I wonder if a radical overhaul of the structure of *Keeping Archives* might be necessary for any further editions. There is a growing

tension between providing a practical manual for the novice archivist, and presenting a comprehensive overview of archival practice in Australia at a given point in time, which means that the case studies and chapters are not always applicable to the novice. A shorter book might cater more specifically to this reader, while directing the student to other theoretical books about archives, and the professional in search of specialist advice to a website with up-to-date technical advice. Perhaps too, the distinction between paper-based records and other formats will be reduced - the chapter on preservation might as easily have been incorporated in the last section on managing record formats, avoiding the impression that archivists deal with paper, and then some.

Overall, *Keeping Archives* continues to provide the reader with a valuable in-depth reference tool, offering practical approaches and templates, a summary of archival endeavour as practised in Australia, and just the occasional bit of cross-promotion for the Australian Society of Archivists Inc.!

Julia Mant
University of Sydney Archives

Jackie Bettington, Kim Eberhard, Rowena Loo and Clive Smith (eds), *Keeping Archives*, third edition, Canberra, Australia, Australian Society of Archivists Inc., 2008. 648pp. + CD-ROM. ISBN 978 0 9803352 4 8. $145.00 ($100.00 + postage and handling for ASA members).

Enquire Within About Everything, a compendium of domestic information first published by Holster and Sons, London, in 1858, rapidly became a standard in Victorian and post-Victorian homes, reprinted and revised through over 112 editions, selling over 1.5 million copies, and reportedly, inspiring Tim Berners Lee as he contemplated the invention of the World Wide Web. *Keeping Archives*, a comprehensive manual of archival practice, was first published in 1987 by the Australian Society of Archivists. The second edition appeared in 1993 and the third edition in 2008. It may never reach the publishing heights *Enquire Within About Everything* but it is nonetheless fulfilling a similarly valuable function for the archival world - Enquire Within About Everything Archival.

The third edition of *Keeping Archives*, or KA3, retains the lucid structure of its impressive predecessors. It may be one indication of the growing complexity of archival practice that the first edition had eleven chapters, the second, fourteen, while the third comes in at eighteen - and there may still be areas that are not completely covered! As in the two previous editions, each chapter is written by an Australian area expert. Many chapters have been repeated through the editions, although not necessarily written by the same authors. A number of chapters in the third edition have been reconfigured, whereby the eighteen chapters have been divided into four sections, each section discussing a major aspect of archival theory and practice. Not incidentally, the progressively complex picture of archival work that emerges through all these editions, evident not only in the increase in chapters, but also in the increasing length in pages (374, 491, and 648 respectively), also affords a series of fascinating and important historical snap shots of the archival profession as it develops in breadth and complexity.

From its inception, it seems clear that *Keeping Archives* was designed to fulfill multiple agendas. The basic purpose as stated by the editors in the preface to KA1 was 'to provide practical guidelines based on sound archival principles and wide experience for the management of archival and manuscript collections, however small.' This goal was expanded in the preface to edition two to acknowledge the many different venues and institutional contexts within which archivists work. That preface also tended towards some analysis of archival practice in Australia but the effort to provide proscriptive direction through the preface seems to have wisely been abandoned in KA3. Briefly tracing the history of the publication, KA3 acknowledges the multiple roles that the volume plays, 'as a practical manual for the novice archivist, a textbook for students and refresher for the experienced archivist' (p. 8). At the same time, the four editors, noting their own diverse backgrounds, suggest that 'various ways of doing archival work are emphasised throughout the book and readers may need to select the approach or advice they think best suits their needs.' However the editors also reassure us that 'where we think one approach is preferable we say so' (p. 8). The book is not only a manual then, but also a guide and advisor.

KA3 is a hefty volume but is crammed with all the information that both beginning and experienced archivists will find invaluable. Typically archivists work with few professional colleagues or alone. *Keeping Archives*

can be both a useful companion and a forceful professional advocate for archivists needing support for their policies and methods. Beautifully and copiously illustrated, and engagingly formatted, this may not be the book for a cosy read (weighing almost 3 pounds or 1.36 kilograms), but will be the book that archivists keep handy for reference and reassurance. Case studies liberally sprinkled throughout the book help to clarify both archival concepts and practice and could be very effective in walking new archivists through difficult decisions.

Each book comes with a CD-ROM that contains appendixes primarily consisting of a wide range of forms and policies. Putting them in a flexible and easily downloadable format not only avoids adding them to the weight of an already weighty volume but makes them easily accessible and adaptable, giving them greater practical use than they might have had if they were just printed in the book, a well-thought out outcome that is clearly the authors' intention. However, listing the various appendixes in the table of contents, rather than merely listing them individually in the abstract of the appropriate chapter, would have made them even more accessible and provided the reader with a useful overview.

KA3 is divided into four sections each consisting of several chapters. The four sections are: 'Getting Started'; 'Managing the Archives'; 'Promoting the Archives'; and 'Managing More than Paper'. These headings reflect an approach that many archivists would agree with: laying down the basics, moving into the specifics of archival processes, considering access and use, and then proceeding into special formats. Including a chapter on the physical facility ('Buildings and Storage' by Ted Ling) and one on preservation ('Preservation' by Elizabeth Hadlow) in the 'Getting Started' section sends the important message that the primary responsibility of archivists is the material that has been entrusted to their care. Likewise, the emphasis on policies and governance, also in that first section (Chapter 2), focuses on structure and framework and offers invaluable advice particularly to archivists building from the ground up. The second section, 'Managing the Archives', focuses on archival activities such as appraisal and accessioning, and includes a useful chapter on evaluating and selecting computers and systems. Section 3, 'Promoting the Archives', moves into aspects of access and use, encompassing a wide range of activities from traditional finding aids to digitisation. The final section focuses on electronic recordkeeping, and briefly, other non-textual media. The chapters on records management

cover the basic concepts and terminology, opening the way for readers to intelligently move on to more comprehensive sources.

Is *Keeping Archives* specific to Australian archival practice? As an American archivist reviewing this book, I would generally say no, although it certainly paints a picture of Australian archives and Australian archival concerns. KA3 has wide applicability to archival practice and most of it should resonate with archivists globally. Some areas, such as continuum theory, are clearly of greater local concern, although archivists outside Australia might find the clear and lucid explanation in KA3 enlightening.

One particularly interesting section in Chapter 1 is an annotated outline of professional debates, defined as 'a number of issues and debates which challenge the profession and that 'can affect the work we do now, and how it may change in the future.' It is both refreshing and revealing to consider the seven items on this list, from custodial vs postcustodial archives to converging vs diverging profession, with other topics ranging from memory to power to privacy (pp. 24–25). This list, perhaps somewhat startling to a newcomer, not only reveals some of the complexities of the profession as Australian archivists see it, but perhaps also tells archivists everywhere some of the things, beyond practice, that they should be thinking about.

Another interestingly Australian (or at least, non-American) chapter is 'Enriching the Record: Documentation Programs', in section 2, 'Managing the Archives'. This chapter considers the various ways that archivists 'complement, enrich and fill gaps in the archival record' (p. 292), essentially suggesting three methods for documentation programs: created documentation such as oral recordings; facsimile copies of 'existing records and images that are not otherwise available for research' (p. 293); and transcription or compilation of material in locations or configurations that would be difficult for researchers to access (for instance, gravestones or caves). Creating such a documentation project is set out in considerable detail. In addition to offering insights about the particular challenges of Australian archival practice, more importantly this chapter contains useful suggestions on how archivists anywhere might expand archival practices to record both undocumented and under-documented activities and communities.

So, in this voluminous manual is there anything left out? Every reader who 'enquires within' will have their own caveats. I would have liked to see a more direct discussion of ethics. While issues of privacy and confidentiality are mentioned at several key points, those of ethics and codes of ethics do not seem to have received focused attention, although the chapter on advocacy comes close to some of these concerns. In compiling a manual that is this comprehensive many difficult choices must be made and it is clear that the editors not only had to set strict limitations on what they could include and how they could include it, but also had to stay true to a particular mission. Explaining archives to the newly initiated, promoting good theory and good practice, and encouraging archivists to be innovative and proactive in their efforts to promote and develop their archives seems to be a mission well fulfilled.

Jeanette Bastian
Simmons College, Boston

Louise Craven (ed.), *What are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader,* Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate, 2008. 214pp. ISBN 978 0 7546 7310 1. £60.00.

I don't closely monitor the UK archival scene, but it is clear much has been happening in the past decade or so. Aside from renewal of institutions, national arrangements policies and legislation, the work of taskforces and commissions, academic research addressing the digital challenge, and the coordination of access and cooperation with related domains, the professions associated with archives seem to have woken up.

The year 2003 provides a convenient illustration of this progress, when past achievements were honoured and new directions flagged. In that year from Liverpool University's Centre for Archive Studies came a *festschrift* honouring Michael Cook, a key intellectual leader from the profession's immediate postwar generation. Elizabeth Shepherd produced for the new generation a single-volume text *Managing Records* (Facet Publishing), and the festschrift editors Margaret Procter and Caroline Williams also brought out (with Cook) the papers from a conference representing something of the broader implications of our

work, *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* (Society of American Archivists).

Since 2003, this momentum gained a second wind, partly led by university based archival educators and researchers at Dundee, Liverpool, London and Glasgow. In her introduction to *What are archives?*, based on a session of the Society of Archivists' 2006 annual conference, Louise Craven explains that new ways of thinking and writing about archives have emerged in the UK, not only from information scientists and a dramatic upsurge of public interest in archives by genealogists, but from academics within the social sciences and humanities. In 2008 alone there have been conferences on the philosophy of the archive, the ontology of the archive, and the nature and relevance of the archival narrative. 'Even a year or two ago this simply would not have happened' writes the editor.

From the conference papers, Craven selected nine chapters placed within four themes: continuity and change in the archival paradigm; the impact of technology; the impact of community archives; and archival use and users. The authors are experienced archival and library practitioners with strong records of publication and engagement; a computer scientist; and an eminent archivist academic.

Judged as published and ignoring their origins, the chapters vary markedly in quality. The least satisfying are Gerard Collis's 'Permitted use and users: The Fallout Shelter's Sealed Environment' and Andrew Prescott's 'Archives of Exile: Exile of Archives'. The former lacks logical flow, reads in part like written-up research notes and is dotted with unsubstantiated though potentially interesting assertions. For example it is not really good enough to state, without references or discussion in a book titled *What are Archives?*, 'The writers Bataille and Malraux each recognised the paintings in the caves at Lascaux as documents, and the actions undertaken by Malraux in effect established the caves as an archival repository'. He simply implies via quoted definitions the paintings are documents and that because Malraux closed them to the public, they are archives. Prescott's chapter is stronger, but here too one finds statements which are either self-evident (of course the archives of official structures will tend to present exiles in particular ways), or more than a stretch (claims regarding exiles Marx and Panizzi in relation to the British Library for instance).

Having attempted it once or twice myself, I acknowledge that helping shape others' writing into a single volume under a unifying title has its challenges. When these come from a conference and your goal is a *reader* presenting *perspectives*, more than the usual unevenness is acceptable. The editor thanks those who helped produce 'a readable and coherent text' (p. xiii), a text whose title should have been *Archival issues in 21st century UK*. Based on the one chosen, we might have expected discussion of new understandings of what archives are and of the role changes of those who now manage them. Barely half the chapters try to do this however, as if adapting the point behind Umberto Eco's regret that novels have to have a title at all, given they are such an obstacle to free flowing interpretation of their contents (*Reflections on the Name of the Rose*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1985).

Excited by the title and calibre of its key authors, I had hoped, and half expected, to find at least an extended sequence of chapters explaining what it means to be speak of archives today, similar to the way editor David Cannadine's authors addressed what it means to study history at the start of the twenty-first century (*What is History Now?*, New York, Palgrave, 2002). *What are Archives?* opens with definitions of 'archives', 'record', 'archivists' and 'record managers' (footnote 1, p. 7), though these apply just to Chapter 1. These are seemingly simple and traditional, though definitely not without their quirks, including the strange need to limit archives to 'archives, record offices and manuscript libraries of the public sector, open to all', foreshadowing the way records management is treated in the index.

Otherwise, Michael Moss's chapter, 'Opening Pandora's Box: What is an Archive in the Digital Environment', is left to answer the short title question. He does not shy from arguing a position as well as surveying the range of available answers, along the way directing fire at the chapters by Barbara Reed (Records), Hans Hofman (The archive) and Robert Hartland, Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward (Documents) in the Australian text *Archives; Recordkeeping in Society* (Charles Sturt University, 2005). Intermittently through the remaining chapters, however, brief discussion resurfaces: for example acknowledgement that new definitions are needed (pp. 124, 140) and that they must not be limited to recordness and transactionality (p. 59). Among some authors there is an almost casual acceptance that cave paintings (p. 173), digital documents copied from a variety of sources (p. 132), pamphlets and newspapers (p. 49),

graffiti (p. 35), human languages (p. 171), a rock collection (p. 73), grey literature, reminiscence, ritual, books and artefacts (p. 138), oral history, websites and plays (p. 139), can all be regarded as archives. Ultimately, *archive* becomes 'anything used to store memory' (p. 59); 'even archivists can in a sense become the archive' (p. 73).

There is so much more to be said, that might have been said. Additional to the interdisciplinary scholar's dense and, to some, irrelevant notions of *archive*, and to the wildly varying senses deployed by novelists, we might study the public's own understandings. What is common to them? How do our own logos and communication strategies and the politics of heritage and the needs of mass and new media shape these understandings and add to their confusion and new expectations? And how has the archivist's role needed to, and possibly failed to, change accordingly. *What are Archives?* seems uninterested in definitions-in-action, save for a passing note in several chapters of the implications of the TV series *Who do you think you are?* And if graffiti, oral history, ritual and cave paintings are in scope, the new archivist needs more than just Jane Stevenson's chapter, 'The Online Archivist: A Positive Approach to the Digital Information Age'.

What then *is* offered? If this collection is representative, while as noted earlier it signals renewal, it also tells me there is little genuinely new in theoretical and philosophical thinking in the UK. Indeed parts of the book have the feel of catch-up and excited discovery that other disciplines are deeply interested in the archive. You can sense it in the extent of overseas archival literature cited, particularly *Archivaria*. The chapters by Craven and Prescott especially read like efforts to convince colleagues to get more interested in the *why* rather than *how* questions. One gets the sense that many remain to be convinced our traditional role must change. Indeed Craven is blunt: 'The profession in the UK is focused on practice and process: it is pragmatic and long has been, but now we need to think about how we might change this' (p. 25). Even so, the directions of change are not agreed. Between the authors a lot is unresolved, as in the contrasting discussions of the continuing relevance of Jenkinson's ideas (Prescott, Moss) and the case for involvement in records creation (Flinn, Moss). Overall, there is an awkwardness about recordkeeping. As for the continuum, it is seen fleetingly in Caroline Williams's chapter on personal papers (p. 63); basically, it hovers as the concept that dare not speak its name.

It is traditional for reviews to include a passing nod to pedantry, or as some prefer, to accuracy. One hesitates to proceed given this journal's copyediting record has never been perfect, but among the types of slips I noticed were: misspellings (Ketellar, pp. 14 and 28 and Ketlaar twice on p. 73 – rather than Ketelaar); inconsistencies in spelling (recordkeeping p. 65, record-keeping p. 117, and record keeping p. 89); and inconsistencies in referencing (for date websites were accessed, some authors noted day-month-year, some just month and year, and one adopted one then the other). There are also simple errors of fact: the National Archives of Australia is *not* a repository 'solely for the records of government' (p. 54). The index contains errors (for example, Jenkinson) and curiosities (records management is found as the subcategory 'management' under a main term 'records, public'). Then there's the design of the chapters. For some unhelpful reason, half the nine chapters have subheadings and the other do not, while three open with synopses and the other six have appropriate quotes or just begin.

In summary, there is much to admire about this book. It provides overseas readers with a window through which to begin understanding the current mindset of the UK archives profession. Inevitably the resultant view is static in contrast to the fluidity of a listserv or blog such as that for the Archives Hub, where some of the book's chapter authors – the most energetic being Jane Stevenson – can be read at <*http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/blog/*>. We have also enjoyed hearing others at recent Australian conferences such as I-CHORA 4 (for example, Flinn) and read them in *Archives and Manuscripts* (for example, Moss). Their book brings detailed reports of important developments we all should know about, such as by Andrew Flinn on documenting minority communities in a digital environment and Andrea Johnson's progress report on her doctoral research investigating archives user behaviour in an online environment. And its best chapters inform us in an engaging way, adopting a blend of theoretical argument illustrated from fiction and archives based historical research.

Michael Piggott

Terry Cutler, *Venturous Australia: building strength in innovation*, Canberra, Australia, Australian Government, Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, 2008. 204pp. ISBN 978 0 646 50110 9. Available at <*http://www.innovation.gov.au/innovationreview/pages/home.aspx*>.

Venturous Australia, or as it has been better known 'the Cutler review', is the product of the recent review of the National Innovation System commissioned by Senator the Hon. Kim Carr, the Australian Federal Government Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. The commission was issued on 22 January 2008 and the report published in August of the same year. The aim of the government was to respond with a policy white paper early in 2009. The work of the review body and its conceptualisation was done before the full extent of the global financial crisis became evident. These massive changes in context add to the possible readings of *Venturous Australia*, and create new and unexpected layers of meaning. However, the challenge for this reading is what the review might be saying to the archives and recordkeeping communities in Australia.

As a record of the twenty-first century, the primary mode of publication for the review is in digital form – on the Web – which, while it adds elements of complexity for citation and persistence purposes, does enable text searching and alternate reading paths in addition to tackling it cover-to-cover. A search for the terms 'archive' and 'record' did not offer encouragement (2 and 5 hits respectively). Did this mean that our community was not on the radar of Cutler and the minister or did it mean that the language we use to define ourselves is not the language that actually captures the intersection of innovation policy and the archival endeavour? Searches for the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' yielded quite different results (about 130 and 180 respectively). If we accept that archives and records lie at the evidential heart of the information and knowledge economies then Cutler deserves a close reading to tease out the intersections, even though they might not have been foremost in the minds of review panel.

The relationships between the idea of 'innovation' (creating value by doing things differently or in a novel way, p. 15), the economy, science, research more generally, and government action, can be seen in various guises throughout the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it was not until late in that century that government policy on innovation was articulated

in those terms. The Cutler review is light on historical depth. In some senses this is a shame, but on the other hand it may have distracted from the purpose of the review. This purpose was focused on the reappraisal of the existing, generation-old, national innovation system and the related policies that were seen to need 'renewal, refurbishment, recasting and in some cases re-imaging' (p. vii).

The review attempts to draw the connection between economic performance and the effectiveness of the national innovation system, as a means of establishing the case that investment in innovation is not only worthwhile through the tangible benefits it brings, but that it is necessary for national well-being. The role of public policy and government in innovation is articulated and it is probably in this section (Chapter 4) that the review reveals that it is trying to break from the policy approaches of the previous century. It recasts policy within the complex interactions between business, government, taxation, education, research and individuals in terms of open networks of transactions and engagements from which emerge effective collaborations, clusters and alliances. Although the review talks about this as a 'market' (a throw-back to the economic rationalist language of a receding past), what is implied is something far more complex, interesting and inclusive than free market constructs (for example, the stock market) of western economies.

Perhaps the most important reflection for our purposes is the stress placed on an open information infrastructure that must underpin the next generation of the national innovation system. Implicit in this call is the assumption that we do not, in the current environment, have open, inclusive and equitable access to information. While this is certainly the case, information infrastructure is not just about access. It is about connectivity and interconnectivity – and it is about the persistence of those interconnections. A characteristic of inequitable or limited-access information environments is that it is difficult for internal participants to be fully aware of the problem; those that have access to knowledge do not see the problem, the system works for them. However, those on the outside are frustrated by the barriers that prevent effective participation.

The review is a transitional document with a deeper underlying purpose of creating a whole new approach to public policy formulation, structure and function. There are still legacy issues in the language of the document, which reflect the biases and vested interests of some

contributors. For example, although the thrust of the review is towards openness and inclusiveness, on occasions, rather then talking about the research community in its totality (that is, including the humanities, arts and social sciences - see p. 45) the text reverts to the exclusive intersection between science and innovation - the mindset of post-World War II Australia (see p. 75).

Chapter 7, Information and Market Design, with its accompanying recommendations, is of great interest to the archives, records and cultural communities. In particular there are several pages that deal with 'unlocking public information and content', 'national collections' and 'Australia, innovation and the global public commons' with a specific focus on 'policies and systems to enable public sector information access and reuse' (pp. 93–98). It is worth quoting some excerpts more extensively:

> Along with the rise in support for access to information has come a growing recognition of the need for users to be able to search and interact with data and content. Legal frameworks must also be developed to facilitate access and reuse. This points to the need for an Australian National Information Policy (or Strategy) that optimises the generation and flow of ideas and information in the Australian economy (p. 94).
>
> Australia is behind many other advanced countries in establishing institutional frameworks to maximise the flow of government generated information and content (p. 94).
>
> To drive cumulative knowledge creation researchers and others must have access to high quality data and information on developments not just in their field but beyond (p. 95).

These are the sorts of sentiments that surround the recommendations that are most pertinent to all archivists and recordkeepers, and not just those in the government sector:

> Recommendation 7.7: Australia should establish a National Information Strategy to optimise the flow of information in the Australian economy.
>
> The fundamental aim of a National Information Strategy should be to:

- utilise the principles of targeted transparency and the development of auditable standards to maximise the flow of information in private markets about product quality; and
- maximise the flow of government generated information, research, and content for the benefit of users (including private sector resellers of information).

Recommendation 7.8: Australian governments should adopt international standards of open publishing as far as possible. Material released for public information by Australian governments should be released under a creative commons licence.

In these two recommendations the Cutler review foreshadows the data revolution that is unfolding in the twenty-first century. Networked digital technologies are transforming what is possible in the research environment in all disciplines and this, in itself, is driving massive changes in the innovation system. The major challenge facing the archives and records communities is the rebuilding of their legacy information control and provision systems, and the techno-limited policies that co-evolved with them. This will require a major piece of innovative conceptualisation and a preparedness to rethink how archives and cultural collections will evolve to meet the changing world that they should be serving, not to dwell simply on why they exist. Inertia in large organisations and large systems makes change difficult, but rather than defensiveness there must come the attitude of openness, inclusiveness and interconnectedness that permeates the Cutler review. The movement away from the command and control mindset that dominated policies of earlier generations, to a world increasingly dominated by network thinking, is an imperative that cannot be ignored.

On a positive note, Cutler recommends improved funding for the providers of information infrastructure. 'The Review has examined challenges in the provision, funding and maintenance of national infrastructure facilities and collections and identified the steps required to ensure their ongoing vitality and contribution to the national innovation system over the coming decades' (p. 96). What remains to be seen is what this might

become in the forthcoming white paper in the context of the global financial crisis that is currently changing everyone's perspectives.

Gavan McCarthy
eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne

Jean Dryden (ed.), *Respect for Authority: Authority Control, Context Control and Archival Description*, Binghamton, NY, Haworth, 2007. 183pp. ISBN 978 0 7890 3589 9. Co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Archival Organization*, vol. 5 nos. 1/2, 2007.

This useful work sets out a much needed discussion of issues to do with authority control in the archival domain. The volume contains papers by a number of leading archival practitioners including Adrian Cunningham (NAA), Gavan McCarthy and Joanne Evans (eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne), Michelle Light (University of California), Steve Billinton (Archives of Ontario) and C Jerry Simmons (National Archives and Records Administration).

The topic is introduced by an essay from the editor, Jean Dryden. Unfortunately, this piece is unsatisfactory in its approach to the discussion. The term 'authority control' will not be familiar to most archivists and records managers. It is a term widely used in the library domain but appears very infrequently in the archival literature. A recent, standard work on authority control defines the term as being 'the process of identifying the various manifestations of a name or title that will guarantee the stability of a default, "authorized", or standard form of heading'.[1] This will be understood by recordkeepers but its significance is not the same. For the archivist, it is context which is paramount and the library discourse about authority control almost completely ignores this aspect. Control of context is the archival key and authority control takes a very minor place.

---

[1] **AG Taylor and BB Tillett (eds)** with the assistance of **Mauro Guerrini and Murtha Baca,** *Authority Control in Organizing and Accessing Information: Definition and International Experience,* Binghamton, NY, Haworth Information Press, 2005, p. 6.

There is thus a very significant difference between 'authority control' and 'context control', and the existence of the former term in two archival standards does not mean that it is a term used in the professional discourse. Dryden seems to assume that the appearance of 'authority control' in the glossaries of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* and *ISAAR(CPF): International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families* is enough to frame its use in archival literature. This is not so, and Dryden's ensuing discussion is (to my mind) flawed because it rests on this assumption. Archivists have no need of the term 'authority control' and Dryden's rather tortured attempt to give the term meaning within the archival context is unsatisfying. She argues that:

> when used in relation to the names of records creators, authority control appears to be a short form or a code that covers not just the creation of unique terms to represent the names of records-creating entities, but also a host of related products or activities, such as the administrative histories or biographical sketches of organizations or individuals who create records ... (p. 4).

In other words, in the archival domain authority control is context control. But in fact in the archival domain context control is called context control, and there is little point in attempting to adopt and extend the meaning of a library term to describe an archival activity which already has an adequate professional term to describe it. Despite Dryden's view, archivists do not use the term 'authority control' as a shorthand way of referring to what she calls 'context control', but which might be better characterised more generically as 'archival description'.

Those concerns aside, this work makes a valuable contribution to the professional discourse. Although I am unsure about the theoretical argument in Dryden's paper, it deserves to be read if only to get you thinking. All the other papers in the volume are worthwhile and of considerable merit in illuminating a topic that is seldom mentioned in the archival literature. The volume is structured around discussion of the issues (three papers), and case studies, describing how various archival programs have dealt with the practical issues of context control (four papers).

In the 'issues' section, Adrian Cunningham's paper is devoted to the importance of provenance in archival description (a more generic term

for 'context control' I would suggest) in the context of *ISAAR(CPF)* development. Larry Weimer sets out his view of the implications of the 'rediscovery of provenance' (sic) for the profession in the USA in *Describing Archives: A Content Standard,* while Michelle Light provides a timely and well-controlled discussion of the perennial and complex problem of deciding, in the archival context, where one records-creating entity ceases and its successor(s) take over. The last is particularly interesting in its argument for the adoption of a functional approach to determining when entities start and finish their lives.

The case studies in the volume cover four institutions from three continents: North America, Italy and Australia. The studies present current research and assessments of how four jurisdictional archives have approached the problems of implementing descriptions of records creators. In Canada, the Archives of Ontario has implemented a version of the Australian Series System, and Steve Billinton sets out how that institution implemented a descriptive system for records creators and the organisational context of records creation in the province. Lydia Reid and C Jerry Simmons describe how the National Archives and Records Administration established a robust and consistent system for describing archival contexts, and focuses on the creation and management of name authority records and thesauruses for values for discovery metadata. By contrast, Maurizio Savoja and Stefano Vitali discuss the debate that has taken place in the Italian archival community about the relationships between the nature of archives and their creators, in the context of the connection between *ISAAR(CPF)* and archival authority records. The second part of the article then describes how the outcomes of this debate have been realised in implementing practical archival descriptive systems in three state archives in Italy. Finally, Gavan McCarthy and Joanne Evans document the evolution over the course of twenty years of a very early project to document the context of records creators in the science and technology sphere. The descriptive system that was developed focused on the records creators and their relationship to archival materials created. This case study presents a real demonstration of how to do a better job of linking archives with the whole range of potential users beyond the repository doors.

The papers in this volume remind us again how crucial proper control of the context of records creation and use is to making archives accessible and useful to potential audiences. Provenance seems, of late, to be making

something of a minor return to contemporary archival discussion, which in my mind is a cause for some pleasure. This volume is a timely addition to the discourse on provenance and archival description, and emphasises the use of authority records in achieving consistency of creator descriptions. I do have concerns with some of the theoretical discussion in the book's introduction, but that aside, the papers in this volume are a welcome addition to the coverage of these issues in the professional literature.

To offer one other minor cavil, the volume would be significantly improved by an index, and by a consolidated section giving information about the authors and their backgrounds. That aside this volume is comprehensive, thought-provoking and an indispensable collection of papers on an issue of current relevance to the archives community. It certainly deserves its place on the bookshelves of all archival institutions, and indeed even in the professional libraries of practising archivists.

Andrew Wilson
National Archives of Australia

Brian H Fletcher, *Magnificent Obsession: the Story of the Mitchell Library, Sydney,* Sydney, Allen and Unwin in association with the State Library of New South Wales, 2007. 512pp. ill. ISBN 9781741752915. $59.95.

Built on a commanding position on Macquarie Street in Sydney, the Mitchell Library opened its doors to the public on 9 March 1910. David Scott Mitchell, who had died nearly three years earlier, was the greatest private collector of books and manuscripts in Australian history and the library that was named after him has occupied a unique place in Australian cultural life. Yet although the building stood alone for many years, the Mitchell Library was never an independent institution. It was always administratively, and eventually physically, part of the Public (later State) Library of New South Wales. With its distinctive name, fabulous collections and scholarly reputation, the Mitchell Library was always known to taxi drivers and the people of Sydney generally, even though most of them had never entered its doors. In contrast, the Public Library had a lower public profile, at least until recent times, and its

name was suggestive of a local lending library. The shifting relationship between the Public Library and the Mitchell Library, and the personal relationships between six Principal (State) Librarians and the nine Mitchell Librarians over the last century form one of the main themes of Brian Fletcher's book.

Fletcher is the retired Professor of Australian History at the University of Sydney, the author of books on Governor Darling and colonial New South Wales, and a former member of the Council of the State Library. He has been a reader in the Mitchell Library for over fifty years and his great affection for the institution, its reading room, collections and staff is evident throughout the book. A highly experienced researcher, he has mastered in a relatively short time a hundred years of official records, as well as a wide range of publications, oral histories and personal interviews. If he only occasionally makes use of personal papers, such as the letters of Daphne Gollan, it is safe to assume that not many private papers of librarians have survived. The 91 pages of endnotes and the bibliography of 17 pages underline Fletcher's diligence and his scholarship.

The arrangement of the book is chronological and, in my opinion, the chapters covering the first half-century are of greater interest. In this period, the Mitchell Library was the predominant research library and archives in Australia; no other institution could match its resources, collections and ambitions. Fletcher portrays well the energetic collecting, especially in the area of archives and manuscripts, of the first two Mitchell Librarians, Hugh Wright and Ida Leeson. He recounts in some detail the successful pursuit of the Macquarie papers (1914) and the Angus and Robertson archives (1933), as well as the thwarted attempt to acquire Cook's *Endeavour* journal (1923). He is equally good in conveying the appearance and ambience of the reading room and, in perhaps the most interesting chapter, looks at the great range of researchers from all over Australia and beyond who used the room in the first fifty years. The difficulties of the Depression and World War II were followed by a golden age, when the gifted Phyllis Mander-Jones was in command, greatly respected by the trustees, the Principal Librarian and her staff. Collecting continued on a grand scale, maps and pictures were organised for the first time, there were new publication and copying projects, and exhibitions brought treasures to the general public.

Mander-Jones resigned in 1957. In its second half-century the Mitchell Library and the individual Mitchell Librarians no longer enjoyed quite

the same eminence and independence. Fletcher tries hard to be positive and fair about later State Librarians. He is, however, clearly unhappy about the centralising tendencies which sought to destroy the distinctive culture of the Mitchell Library, the moves to upgrade the image of the State Library at the expense of the Mitchell Library, and a general emphasis on a 'more corporate, managerial, technological and outward looking library'. Fletcher also refers to the external threat posed in this period by the National Library, although he refrains from giving examples of some of the angry clashes between the two libraries in collecting manuscripts and archival records.

An extraordinary amount of information is compressed into the later chapters, which the general reader may well find daunting. Library histories often focus largely on buildings, collections and the top staff. Fletcher goes far beyond these subjects and manages to encompass funding, regulations, working conditions, reader statistics, reference services, services to Indigenous peoples, copyright issues, access restrictions, reproduction fees, exhibitions, publications, copying projects, processing backlogs, catalogues, automation (briefly) and digitisation. Even changes in carpets and the acquisition of a book trolley (the Molly Trolley) get a mention. Fletcher also provides a great deal of information about the careers, personalities, achievements and outside interests of the Mitchell Librarians and many of the staff further down the hierarchy. He has quarried the personnel files of the Library, but the resulting detail is often excessive. Moreover, Fletcher is much too kind. He quotes some relatively mild criticism by colleagues of Wright and Leeson, and one or two of their subordinates, but later staff are invariably depicted as dedicated, talented and hardworking. It seems that none of them were autocratic, unimaginative, eccentric, weak or indecisive. There are, sadly, no stories of departmental and personal battles of the kind which enlivened Edward Miller's history of the British Museum, *That Noble Cabinet* (1973). Perhaps they have no place in a commissioned centenary history.

As an outsider, I would have preferred a little less about staff and more about the collections. Collection building was the magnificent obsession of David Scott Mitchell and it was shared by many of his heirs right up to the present. The pursuit of rare books, maps, manuscripts and paintings, often involving difficult owners, devious dealers and competitors, and large sums of money, is a subject that has often attracted novelists and

historians. The Mitchell Library has had many acquisition triumphs, but in some of the later chapters Fletcher hardly touches on the collections. He does refer to new areas of collecting, such as records of recent immigrants, but there is a dearth of dramatic or entertaining acquisition stories. In addition, he says little about debates among the staff about collecting policies and methods. In the early years, Wright and Leeson pursued a scatter-gun approach, extending over a huge geographical area. Eventually, the Library withdrew from the Pacific, but like other state libraries it has faced great challenges in trying to document Australian history and society in all its breadth and variety.

Despite these weaknesses, *Magnificent Obsession* is a valuable reference book. A handsome work, with good illustrations, it provides a full and sympathetic record of the growth and achievements of one of Australia's great libraries. It is extremely well documented and will be a useful source on the history of Australian libraries and archives generally. The heritage library within a general library, each with a distinctive name (La Trobe, Oxley, Fryer, Battye, and so on), is a feature of the Australian library system. Some seem to have fallen from grace in recent times. The Mitchell Library is the oldest and richest and it remains in a stronger position than most. The golden age may have passed, but it is fortunate to have retained a corps of scholarly archivists and curators working in the tradition established by Hugh Wright, Ida Leeson and Phyllis Mander-Jones in the first half of the last century.

Graeme Powell

National Archives of Australia, *Family Journeys: Stories in the National Archives of Australia,* Canberra, National Archives of Australia, 2008. 116pp. ISBN 978 1 920807 60 3. $19.95.

Derived in part from work undertaken towards the National Archives of Australia's permanent exhibition *Memory of a Nation,* and its involvement in TV programs such as *Who do you think you are?, Family Journeys* explores the family stories of nine Australians. Several of these are very well known: the landscaper and television personality James Durie; radio and TV personality Annette Shun Wah; scientist and writer Dr Karl Kruszelnicki; actor Noni Hazelhurst; and the Throssell family (the Australian author

Katherine Susannah Pritchard married Hugo Throssell). Others are not so well known: inventor, patriot and marathon cyclist Ernie Old, English war bride Carol (Fellows) Fethers; the Cubillo family of Philippine, Scottish and Aboriginal ancestry; and the Casamento family that originated from Italy.

Each story has been chosen to show the use of Commonwealth records held by the National Archives of Australia (NAA): service records from the Boer War to Word War II; records concerning prisoners of war; immigration records for 'ten pound Poms' (Noni Hazelhurst's parents and brother) and displaced persons (the Kruszelnickis); examples of the infamous 'dictation test' (Annette Shun Wah's great-grandmother and the Cubillo family); records of the patent office (Ernie Old); and for those who, like members of the Throssell family, had Communist Party connections, ASIO surveillance records.

The appendixes describe how to find and use records for family history held by the NAA, and location details for other useful organisations for family historians, including those of the state and territory registrars, state and territory archives and a few other archival institutions.

The book is beautifully produced, the reproductions of the records are excellent and the explanations of them are clear. It is a very different publication to the more traditional archival guide such as, for example the NAA's own *Finding Families*. Herein lies my only quibble with this publication - exactly who is the publication's intended audience? As stated in the text itself: 'Sometimes, National Archives is not the best place to start your research. This is particularly the case if you are seeking information about Australia before 1901' (p. 91). Indeed there is a list of the sort of information a family historian would need before approaching, or realising they need to approach, the NAA (p. 84). Perhaps this is where *Family Journeys* comes in - providing interesting stories to tempt the relative beginner into the arcane, but rewarding, mysteries of RecordSearch.

Pennie Pemberton
Noel Butlin Archive Centre, Australian National University

National Library of Australia, *Australia in Maps: Great Maps in Australia's History from the National Library's Collection*, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 2008. viii + 156pp. ill. ISBN 978 0 642 27635 3. $59.95.

As a multimedia source, maps are beautiful, complex, and intellectually and technically demanding. Information required to release the potential of an individual map or series often requires considerable research, and discovering maps themselves via library catalogues is often hampered by overly technical and often incomprehensible international descriptive standards.

As this book reveals, the National Library of Australia's Maps Collection holds a range of formats including atlases, individually published maps, manuscript maps, aerial photography and three-dimensional globes and models. The scope of this book excludes its holdings of celestial maps. This book provides descriptions of 52 individual maps representing a range of formats and themes, from Hartmann Schedel's *Secunda Etas Mundi* map of 1493 to an undated twentieth-century hand-drawn map by Torres Strait Islander Eddie Mabo on a lined sheet of A4 paper. The maps are presented around a range of themes including Aboriginal Australia, knowledge and theories about the South land, coastal surveys, exploration surveys of land, transport and geology, town planning, land administration and military and civilian hydrographic surveys. The introductory text provides information about the nature of maps and some of the key collectors who have contributed to the Maps Collection. The text accompanying each map provides some context about the period and cartographer, or more general historical context.

Maps are produced for specific purposes including for exploration, military needs, resource development and as commercial products, and these reasons shape the form and content of each map. The selection in this book documents developments in cartography alongside the gradual appearance of the Great South Land on the page. The selection also documents cultural shifts, in relation to understandings of the sea, the land and its boundaries, and how these have been figured to cater to a range of commercial and exploitative purposes. Deep in the book, and surprisingly unheralded, is the first known map to show the word Australia against a landmass, contained within Johann Honter's *Astronomia* of 1545. The colour reproductions for the most part show the condition of the items and are reproduced to the edge of the objects.

Presented in rough chronological order, the descriptions from James Cook's 1770 chart onwards include reproductions of related materials, notably from the pictures collections held in the National Library.

This book is a useful introduction to the stature and significance of the Library's Maps Collection, and for the general reader and researcher interested in maps it is a useful publication. For map experts and archivists, this book is also important for the insight it provides into the way the National Library defines a map, thus revealing some of the institutional politics that surround format definition and that inhabit the book itself.

As the writers point out, 'several maps are valued for the information they exclude rather than for what they reveal' (p. 5). While the text accompanying the maps is useful in describing the context of map-making and cartographers, particularly for the pre-1770 period, it is a shame that the writers do not make more mention of the politics of the content of the maps in the early period.

The writers note that Aboriginal maps of the landscape are entirely different to European ways of seeing, and remain 'shrouded in religious ritual and sacred mythology' (p. 5), thereby writing out the presentation of Aboriginal maps by Aboriginal people, and explaining the reproduction of those by Daisy Bates and Norman Tindale. These maps, along with Mabo's hand-drawn map of his land, are presented at the beginning of the book. The choice of first placement in the book acknowledges the primacy of Aboriginal people's existence but encourages disengagement with a chronological development of the understanding of the landscape, given these maps are the products of twentieth-century cultural and legal forces. In following the logic of primacy, William Clarke's 1880 geology map and TW Edgeworth David's 1931 geology map should have been placed before maps by Tindale and Bates.

The purpose of this book is somewhat confusing. The blurb on the back of the book states that this book 'celebrates maps, mapmakers and the treasures of the National Library's Maps Collection', while the introduction states this book 'aims to introduce readers to the richness of the National Library's map collections' as well as increase awareness and enjoyment of 'the National Library's Maps Collection' (p. v). All but one of the maps highlighted in the book originate in the Maps Collection.

The exception is the hand-drawn map by Eddie Mabo, which is classed as a manuscript, while another hand-drawn map by Daisy Bates is classed as a map. Highlighting only those maps held in the Maps Collection frames this book within an institutional politics of format definition. For example, it is a great shame that maps which show a non-European view of Australia are represented only by Mabo and Ferdinand Verbiest's *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu, 1674,* as maps held in the extensive published collections could have expanded the reader's understanding of how other cultures, particularly those in the region, were documenting their knowledge about the South land.

A more geographically parochial reading of this book shows that the developing European understandings of the Australian coastline is well represented, but as time moves towards the present, this selection emphasises Sydney and the East coast, rather than maintaining a more national representation.

There remains the question as to who is the audience for this book. The maps are unable to speak for themselves and need a guide to relate their context and content, and as the introduction to this volume notes, they 'reflect not only the practices and particular perceptions of individual mapmakers but also their cultural assumptions' (p. 1). However, if this book is for the specialist, the text shows some unease at the debates surrounding the value of maps as markers of cultural and political ideals. For example, at one point a writer states that 'cartography creates history' (p. 7) rather than thinking that it is the cartographers, who themselves are translators from the original hand drawings, that create history.

This book provides a useful introduction to Australia in maps, and to specific maps and 'Treasures' in the National Library Maps Collection. In this sense, it is a useful exposure to an often under-utilised source capable of deepening understandings of the histories of Australia. A few minor editorial lapses mean that some images do not have dimensions documented, but overall this book assists in navigating the National Library's Maps Collection, and provides a useful introduction through maps, first to the charting, and then to the conquering, of the great South Land.

Joanna Sassoon
State Records Office of Western Australia / Edith Cowan University

Bill Stocking and Fabienne Queyroux (eds), *Encoding across Frontiers: Proceedings of the European Conference on Encoded Archival Description and Context (EAD and EAC), Paris, France, 7–8 October 2004*, New York, Haworth Information Press, 2005. 286pp. ISBN 978 0 7890 3027 6. Paperback. US$27.95. Co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Archival Organization*, volume 3, numbers 2/3, 2005.

In the last ten years, Encoded Archival Description (EAD) has become the most widely-used format for the delivery of electronic archival finding aids. As well as being used extensively in North America, it has also been adopted across Europe as well in Australasia. EAD has been joined more recently by two related standards: Encoded Archival Context (EAC) for describing persons, families and corporate bodies, and Encoded Archival Guide (EAG) for describing archival repositories.

The papers in this volume, which were originally presented at a major European conference held in October 2004, provide an excellent cross-section of some of the contexts in which EAD was being used by the archival profession in Europe at that time. Although most of the focus is on EAD itself, there is also a paper on implementing EAG in Spain, and four papers looking at EAC in France, Italy and Sweden. The EAD papers are grouped under three main headings: Implementing, Using, and Publishing with EAD. They also include a series of detailed case studies from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland and Poland. These are complemented by three magisterial papers on more general topics by North Americans who were crucial in the original development of EAD. Daniel Pitti gives an overview of the history and significance of EAD, while Michael Fox looks at professional training for EAD in Europe. Kris Kiesling compares EAD with closely related standards like General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) and Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS).

Although now a little dated, this volume is still essential reading for anyone interested in the history and use of EAD and its relatives. The case studies, from a variety of European archives and libraries, provide valuable and detailed information about the practicalities and difficulties of implementing EAD, while the more general papers offer an excellent

contextual setting of a more theoretical and systematic kind. The papers on EAC and EAG round out the volume's coverage very effectively.

Toby Burrows
University of Western Australia Library

Victorian Auditor-General, *Records Management in the Victorian Public Sector,* Melbourne, Victorian Government Printer, March 2008. vii + 140pp. ISBN 1 92 1060 59 X. Available at <*http://download.audit.vic.gov.au/files/Records_Report.pdf*>.

This report reads like most other audit reports of recordkeeping. It is comprehensive, it is not easy to read, and it makes a range of recommendations which would not surprise an informed reader. The layout and style of the report is annoying to read, but I would expect it conforms entirely to current practice at the Victorian Auditor-General's Office. I am objecting here to the staccato style which is forced on the report by the extensive use of dot points, and boxing and shading, to present the evidence and carry forward the argument. I do not know why continuous prose style has become so unfashionable in presenting analysis and argument. Dot point presentations strike me as assertions rather than properly constructed argument, even when the evidence is contained in the dot points.

Having said all that, I think this is a very good report which provides a valuable addition to the repertoire and another useful compilation of facts about the state of recordkeeping in one state. Whether the relentless style of the auditor is the best device for producing such reports might be questioned.

The report considered two questions: whether Victorian agencies are managing records in accordance with legislation; and whether Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) is operating efficiently and effectively in facilitating sound records management frameworks. The four substantive chapters in the report deal with PROV's performance, records management in the public sector, PROV's management of specific recordkeeping activities, and PROV performance measuring and reporting. The preceding chapters provide a useful background of

information about records management and the regulatory framework. There are five appendixes which provide further information. There is a convenient executive summary for quick reference. In summary a model report as far as structure is concerned.

Government archival institutions in Australia periodically need to suffer reviews and reports of this type. Their chief virtue is they are conducted by external bodies which posses more credibility in political and public service circles than do the archives organisations themselves. The event then provides an opportunity for the organisation to expose its rationale, operations and, most importantly, its intentions to a form of independent scrutiny and, hopefully, approval. In this case I think PROV has succeeded.

The report follows the format faithfully. It allows PROV ample space to outline its performance and aspirations, it carries the results of a self-assessment survey by agencies and it makes a series of recommendations and observations to which PROV could scarcely take exception. One would hope that afterwards PROV could get on with its work.

Such reports do not usually produce any startling recommendations. Indeed, in this, as in most cases, the recommendations are not only bland, but rather obvious. The PROV Director in her response (not surprisingly) states that PROV generally agrees with the findings and recommendations. She then draws attention to the much more bothersome issue of limited means and prioritisation, something those writing these reports often choose to gloss over in their enthusiasm for painting Utopia.

Chapter IV deals with PROV's performance in facilitating sound records management in the public sector. This is the meat and drink of the relationship with agencies and the survey results suggest PROV is doing well. Not every agency uses their standards and some do not find them useful. The auditor suggests more strategic approaches and better communications.

I was slightly taken aback to read that the survey found that agencies require a greater need for direction on 'the "daily" operational aspects of recordkeeping, that is how to create, and capture and maintain records'. Oh dear, we seem to be going backwards sometimes.

There is also some useful discussion of the role of a regulator, and how the compliance function should be performed; of the responsibilities of

agencies in recordkeeping; and of their training and other requirements. There is also a large section devoted to the Victorian experience in the management of electronic records.

The report also neatly exposes the anomaly in the *Public Records Act 1973* whereby not all agencies of government are covered by that Act. This is something the recommended review of the Act will no doubt address.

Overall, this is a very good report of its type and I am sure it will be found by PROV to meet its objectives. It provides a comprehensive summary of what is going on, and makes a range of sensible but predictable findings and recommendations to which no archival organisation would take exception. Any criticism of PROV is mild and unremarkable. PROV can now move forward, confident that it has the approval of an independent scrutiny of its operations as a vehicle for arguing for better resources to carry out its important functions.

George Nichols

Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*, translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2008. xv + 187pp. ISBN 978 0 8047 5151 3. Paperback. US$24.95 + postage and packing.

Cornelia Vismann, a lawyer and legal historian, first published this book in Germany in 2000. Eight years later it has now been translated into English and published by Stanford University Press. The publishers categorise the book as belonging to philosophy and law (not history or information science), with the back cover blurb dropping the names of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.

While the book is certainly suffused with much philosophy, its primary orientation is legal and administrative history over several epochs of European governance. Derrida and Foucault, in fact, receive relatively little attention in comparison with Max Weber and a long list of European legal history sources and experts. Recordkeeping professionals will find little that is familiar in this book – something that makes it all the more interesting and important. It is fascinating and refreshing to see what a non-Anglo legal historian and philosopher has to say about files – those things that are so central to our daily toils.

Vismann argues that files are not simply administrative tools - rather, they mediate and process the legal systems that shape culture and the dynamics of power. We make our tools and our tools make us. 'A life without files, a life off the record', argues Vismann, 'is simply unthinkable. Babylonian stacks of files, "floods of official paper," are the inevitable consequence' (p. xii).

Chapter 1 presents a rumination on the meaning and nature of files. Vismann presents the traditional view that, because files are process generated and contemporaneous, they attract researchers who are interested in origins. She then proceeds to enrich this view by sidetracking into literary sources to consider what Franz Kafka and Herman Melville had to say about files via those archetypical creatures of files, Josef K. and Bartleby, the Scrivener. These are interesting choices of characters. Josef K. is the ultimate victim of an implacable bureaucracy and its all-powerful gatekeepers and recordkeepers. His solitary Wall Street kinsman Bartleby, on the other hand, presents an interesting contrast in subaltern agency. A superhuman transcriber who one day decides to buck the office system by means of passive aggression: 'I would prefer not too', is his immortal catchphrase. The point here is that 'files only become an object of discourse when they encounter their opposite' (p. 12). Files are an attempt by those who wield power to control that discourse, but then their ongoing value, relevance and interest is as much a part of that discourse, and of course, other discourses.

The rest of the book provides a potted history of western recordkeeping, from ancient Greece and Rome right through to today's computerised systems. The Roman Empire used files, not just as a means of refreshing one's memory, but as sources of truth and evidence to be kept in public places and to be managed in systems designed to ensure authenticity and prevent falsification. The collapse of the Roman Empire saw the replacement of the 'records-based regimen' in Europe with one based on 'documents'. Documents, according to Vismann, follow a different logic to records: they are neither registered nor stored in any central repository. Their authenticity is not guaranteed by an external recordkeeping process, but rather by internal semiotic codes (for example, signatures) that was later codified by the science of diplomatics. Documents can function in splendid independent isolation, whereas records have to co-exist with other records (in files).

Filing systems only re-emerged in about the thirteenth century, with the re-emergence of central registration processes. Over time these processes grew in volume and complexity, reflecting demands for more rigorous mechanisms of evidence and accountability, to the point that by the sixteenth century we see the emergence of the epoch of modern filing systems. The key features of modern systems were the separation of the files from their indexes, the preservation of drafts as well as incoming and outgoing correspondence, and the deployment of semantic categories for grouping related records. Until the seventeenth century the registry and the archive performed identical functions. However, the first Prussian archivist Christoph Schönebeck was also the last secretary of the chancery and therefore perhaps the first exponent of the 'life cycle'. According to Vismann, 'He stood at the threshold of the decoupling of archiving and administering' (p. 99). At around the same time the science of recordkeeping became part of university education.

While her focus is squarely on public administration, Vismann does not ignore the more private dimensions of recordkeeping. Our conscience demands accountability, she argues, quoting Swiss diarist Johann Kaspar Lavater's words ' ... that on my deathbed I shall be enabled, by these records, to give account of my life ...' (p. 112). 'In recordkeeping nations like Prussia, where every citizen was his own civil servant', she argues, 'public and private records became indistinguishable'. Nor is the problem of disentangling public and private records following the death or retirement of a public official anything new. The ranks of auto-archivists are swelled by Vismann's fascinating account of the construction of Goethe's literary estate (pp. 114 ff).

The book continues with an examination of the influence of modern office technologies on recordkeeping. Typewriters and carbon paper emerged, not only making the Bartlebys of this world redundant, but also greatly increasing the 'unstoppable proliferation of files'. Offices responded by adopting vertical files and ring binders. Recordkeeping became more decentralised and anarchic, a process that was to gain pace with the growth of office automation. File plans were developed as a means of achieving 'transcendental order of files prior to all content ... instead of tidying up and registering, we have advanced planning and systematizing' (p. 142). In the epoch of the modern office, with expectations of Freedom of Information, censorship occurs *before* things are put on the

record because 'everything that is put on file threatens to turn against those who keep the records ... The more transparent and accountable the records, the more reticent the officials' (p. 146).

After a short detour into the story of the Stasi Archives of the former East Germany and the ethics and implications of contingent disclosure and redaction, Vismann concludes by considering the impact of computers on filing systems, and vice versa. She sees automated offices as representing the end of the epoch of files, ironically symbolised by their reappearance as stylised icons on computer screens. Desktop computers transfer the locus of recordkeeping from absolutist administrative centres to individual desktops. The central processing unit is the new registry. Vismann views this development in largely neutral non-judgemental terms, although she does warn of the dangers inherent in a breakdown of democratic systems of accountability: 'for every civil servant left to his own devices is a potential despot' (p. 138). If the epoch of files has ended, whither records? Vismann offers no answers to this question.

Whither the double edged swords of bureaucratic control and the rule of law? How might a twenty-first-century Bartleby, one wonders, pursue a mission of passive resistance and subversion given such technological realities? Perforce, these realities enable new power dynamics and opportunities for subversion and resistance amongst the bureaucratic and information management chaos, just as they simultaneously create new (though usually under-exploited) opportunities for panoptical data gathering, notwithstanding the spread of data protection laws. Because it was originally published in 2000, this book does not address the post-9/11 war on terror and the drive to reinstate centralised control in the interests of 'security'. Yet (fortunately) such efforts often struggle to succeed in societies that lack the kind of regimes of social control that enabled the Stasi to thrive.

While this book offers no instant solutions to those looking for help with the challenges of digital recordkeeping, it provides much food for thought and a long-term historical view of how we have got to where we are now in the 'post-file epoch'. Cornelia Vismann does not tell you everything you might want to know about files and their history, management and

use, but she tells you things you need to know that you are unlikely to find in any other book I can think of.

Adrian Cunningham
National Archives of Australia

Adopting and Adapting, 25th Annual Convention of the Records Management Association of Australasia, Sydney, 7–10 September 2008.

The 2008 Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA) Convention was held in Sydney at the Exhibition Centre on Darling Harbour.

The Convention began with a series of special interest group (SIG) meetings on Sunday 7 September, and ended with cocktails on Wednesday 11 September. In between were three days absolutely packed with informative presentations, various forms of networking opportunities, and a whole lot of fun!

The main theme of the convention was 'Adopting and Adapting'. Presenters focused on the various technologies and methodologies that have been adopted or adapted across the records and information management industry. The most controversial of these presentations concerned the probable impact of Web 2.0 technologies; in particular, their impact on disposal of records. A minor theme that featured predominantly throughout the convention was the need for more collaboration and relationship building across the different areas of records and information management.

Keynote presentations were delivered by Julie McLeod of Northumbria University (UK), Tom Reding from IBM Corporation (USA), and Perla Innocenti of University of Glasgow (UK). Julie McLeod's keynote presentation shared the early findings of the AC+erm (Accelerating the rate of positive change in Electronic Records Management) project. The project will span three years, and has included assessing four international compliance toolkits using e-Delphic research methodology. Tom Reding spoke of digital preservation techniques and methodologies currently in use across the United States of America and the impact of e-

Discovery. Perla Innocenti's keynote presentation discussed the DRAMBORA project, which stands for Digital Repository Audit Method Based On Risk Assessment. The products resulting from the research conducted include a risk assessment toolkit that can be tailored to any jurisdiction.

As 2008 marked the 25th anniversary of the RMAA convention, Chris Fripp provided a reflection on the past 25 years in the records and information management industry. His presentation revealed that records in ancient times were treasures kept in palaces under the governance of kings. In the late twentieth century, records had become dusty relics kept in basements under the governance of file clerks. Education, legislation, professional bodies, standards and technological innovations have helped move records out of the basements in recent times. Remaining challenges include: a lack of qualified staff; litigation; the need for best practice standards; and the need for continual records management development.

Following the success of last year's hypothetical, which proved to be very popular, Barbara Reed chaired a hypothetical on the topic of discovery. The hypothetical served to illustrate the messages provided by Jo Sherman and Allison Stanfield in their earlier presentations on e-litigation and electronic courtrooms. The three key messages were as follows:

1. discovery should be part of your information management strategy;
2. records and information management procedures should have a history of being actioned as routine practice within organisations; and
3. having a data map containing the locations of information saves both time and money.

Other presentations of note included practical advice on developing and implementing an information management strategy, planning large-scale scanning projects, and applying the big bucket theory to retention and disposal of records. Matt O'Mara revealed that an information management strategy should begin with determining what your organisation's specific business problems were and then identifying business solutions to those problems that incorporate clear key performance indicators and specific staff accountabilities. Matthew

Lipscombe focused on the need for scanning as part of an EDRMS solution to be based around adding value to the organisation to be successful. Lori Ashley discussed the benefits of using fewer functional headings when disposing of records in accordance with the big bucket theory.

The special interest groups and numerous networking opportunities provided ample time to meet and discuss various aspects of records and information management with people from different jurisdictions, environments, and perspectives. This included the numerous vendors' stalls where visitors were enthusiastically informed of the new services they offered, and were encouraged to take part in competitions. Delegates were provided with an additional opportunity to hear about vendor products at the user group breakfast meetings.

Fun was a key element towards the success of the convention. The gala dinner provided delegates with a wonderful meal followed by hours of fun dancing to Jellybean Jam. Branch dinners enabled people from each state to catch up over more delicious food. Cocktail evenings provided an informal networking environment where people could mingle to discuss the day's presentations or share advice and practical experiences. But I think delegates would agree that the most fun event at the whole convention was the drumming workshop conducted by Human Rhythms! What a wonderful and enthusiastically received team-building session that was!

The 2008 RMAA convention was action packed, informative, and full of fun! Thanks Sydney; see you at next year's RMAA convention in Adelaide

Allison Hunter
Public Record Office Victoria

Archives: Discovery and Exploration, Australian Society of Archivists' Annual Conference, Perth, Western Australia, 6–9 August 2008.

Archives: Discovery and Exploration – a majestic title for a conference, conjuring images of sailing ships and long journeys over land and sea. And while many participants did indeed undertake the latter to reach Perth where the conference was held, there was much more intellectual endeavour to be conducted after our arrival.

Perth's sunny skies and warmer climes - despite dire pre-conference weather predictions from organisers - provided an attractive background to the venue of the Parmelia Hilton. A mixture of Australian and international delegates gathered to examine the various ways that discovery and exploration can relate to archives - from the more straightforward connections in papers on expedition records to the entire stream on exploring issues in managing digital records.

Sailing ships also managed to occupy a place in the conference. In his opening keynote address, Professor Eric Ketelaar compared archives to the Flying Dutchman. Just like the ship that can never reach journey's end, a society's archives will remain incomplete as new generations will always have more to add. Records users were deemed to be the explorers in this scenario - and this type of explorer was to be central to several other sessions in the course of the conference.

In the second keynote address Professor Tom Nesmith took up the gauntlet for the records user by pronouncing that the fourth dimension of the records continuum has been very underdeveloped by archivists. He maintained that while there is hardly a field - from literary to scientific works - where archives are not used, archivists have not made the most of this advantage. Through encouraging use, such as by highlighting records uses on archival websites or surveying internal staff to create an archives' research profile, archives would be able to experience a rediscovery and occupy a more central place in society.

Resources do, however, prohibit many archivists from making further explorations of this kind. It was therefore valuable that Anne Lyons and Maggie Shapley's joint paper on the marketing of archives reflected a diversity of experience. One articulated the perspective of a large archival institution with the ability to use large-scale online and media events to their advantage, while the other showed that a smaller archive with a more restricted budget could nonetheless publicise itself well through careful planning and contributions to promotional activities conducted by larger organisations. The lack of a common understanding of the term 'archive' in the wider community was emphasised by both speakers - indicating that the constant promotion of an archivist's work is a necessity if we wish to encourage more people to make use of archives.

New methods of attracting users were also explored in the session on building digital communities. As many users do not have an

understanding of archival terms, the introduction of user generated content to online archival systems was presented as a means for increasing user findability. Adding user material and searching methods to current archival descriptions not only enables users to better locate relevant material, but also has the unintended benefit of likely creating greater feelings of connection between the records user and the archives. Although it is important that any such user additions are placed in the appropriate context, these initiatives certainly provide new retrieval possibilities for those archival institutions with online databases.

Records users were also at the fore in the 'Discovery and Access Mechanisms' session, as large organisations reported on new methods for reducing substantial processing backlogs. The National Library of Australia's manuscripts section has introduced a new system of 'good enough access' whereby all accessions (processed and unprocessed) are now recorded briefly on the library's management system and then given a processing priority ranking – with many accessions likely never to be fully processed. Similarly, the National Archives of Australia has a plan to codify criteria for selecting records for description, which is based on identifying records that are high use or highly significant, or where descriptive work is a prerequisite for other archival work such as preservation or digitisation. While this process may result in some records being overlooked, both approaches clearly look at maximising access to users and producing a well-considered plan as a practical step in making the best use of available resources.

Exploration of a different kind was the focus of Michael Piggott's closing plenary. Taking the audience on a fascinating and insightful journey through his 37 years of experience of the Australian Archival System, we were transported to an alternate reality where an organisation known as the Council of Non-Government Archives existed, and challenged as archivists to become more cohesive as a profession. Michael's view is that it is 'time for the teenager to grow up' and have a better understanding of the 'extended archives and records family', such as through the creation of a Records and Archives Commission that is truly inclusive of all interests. And while it would be cheering if this call was heard, a thirty-plus year maturation process so far suggests that the final move to adulthood is still some time away.

Other conference highlights included the inspiring Lois Williams Lecture on the work of the Juluwarlu Group Aboriginal Corporation, the

interesting presentation on the impact of the television series *Who do you think you are?* on archival institutions and the entertaining performance of the Wadumbah Dance Group at the conference dinner.

The conference organisers did indeed produce a conference of exploration and discovery. There may have been no physical expedition (although admittedly I did not attend either the Kodja Place or the New Norcia tours), but from the internal investigations of the profession to the more external considerations of users, there was certainly sufficient journey for the mind.

Katie Bird
University of New South Wales Archives

Archives, Governance and Development: Mapping Future Society, 16th International Congress on Archives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 21–27 July 2008.

Imagine 1,200 archivists from 138 countries in one place, and you might have some idea of the International Congress on Archives which was held in Kuala Lumpur during 21–27 July (the actual conference was held on 22–24 July, the subsequent days were mainly devoted to ICA business meetings).

As the congress had around 220 sessions there was always something interesting to attend. Usually, in fact, it was a challenge to try and pick which session to attend. It was not even possible to attend all the sessions on digital preservation, let alone attend many sessions on related activities such as digitisation. One of the fantastic opportunities of the congress was to hear about work in countries that are normally not widely reported in the English-language literature.

The key message taken from the congress was that digital recordkeeping is fast becoming the normal method of keeping records in many countries. In the Netherlands, for example, the government has issued a directive that 75% of all interaction between the government and the citizens will be electronic by the end of 2007. In China digital records have almost completely replaced paper records. In South Korea 98% of new records are electronic and they are implementing a massive infrastructure where

the records of government are first harvested annually into a semi-permanent digital store, and then permanent records are extracted to the archival system.

There are many digital archives being constructed at the moment, and a number were described at the conference. The systems described at the conference were mostly still bespoke software, handcrafted for a specific archival institution. Consequently, the deployment of a digital archive still requires a substantial investment. There was one presentation on an investigation whether a cheap public domain digital archive was currently achievable. The answer given was yes, although there is still missing functionality, but one member of the audience suggested that the current public domain repositories were 'fools gold' for serious archives. Since most of the functions of a digital archive's functions are common to all archives, there would seem to be an opportunity to develop a robust, scalable public domain digital archive.

There are many interesting tools and processes being developed for digital archiving. For example, the Swiss Federal Archives is developing a tool to archive databases. As this international work bears fruit, the challenge of implementing digital archiving will change. In the past, it was necessary to research and implement digital archiving processes from scratch. In the future, the challenge will be to know what has (and has not) worked elsewhere, to be able to technically evaluate whether the approach is suitable in your circumstance, to extend or vary the approach to deal with any local issues, and to implement the solution.

Andrew Waugh
Public Record Office Victoria

Minority Reports: Indigenous and Community Voices in Archives, Fourth International Conference on the History of Records and Archives, Perth, Western Australia, 3–5 August 2008.

Four members of the Manuscripts Branch of the National Library of Australia were lucky enough to travel to Perth in August to attend one of the best conferences we've attended in years – the Fourth International

Conference on the History of Records and Archives. Previous conferences have been held in Boston (2007), Amsterdam (2005), and Toronto (2003).

The conference organisers – led by Dr Joanna Sassoon – are to be congratulated on putting together a terrific program to support the theme 'Minority Reports: Indigenous and Community Voices in Archives'.

The speaker list (27 papers and 34 speakers over two days) was truly international, with speakers from Japan, Norway, Fiji, New Zealand, Sweden, Philippines, UK, USA, Canada, Hungary, South Africa, Indonesia and indigenous communities within Australia. Speakers introduced the audience to an impressive variety of records, including carnival records, tattoos, poetry, burial grounds, wampum belts, song lyrics, rock art, oral history, evidence of land use, colonial, medical and prison records, photographs and film. As a group, the conference papers delivered a powerful and coherent message about the ways in which archival materials can empower minority groups to regain emotional connection to their history, to rekindle knowledge about rites and customs to be handed on through the generations, and to reclaim identity, land, history, heritage, social structure, language and pride. More sobering, of course, were the themes of the power of recordkeepers and archivists over what stories are told and preserved, and the ways in which history is tailored or skewed – wittingly or unwittingly – by those with the power to create records.

With an Australian location, papers on and by Indigenous Australians from many different parts of Australia were a real strength of the conference. The keynote speech by Noongar leader Glen Kelly – CEO of the South West Land Council – was an inspiring beginning to the conference. Kelly noted the delicious irony of colonial records documenting the active plotting or resigned acceptance of the demise of Indigenous peoples now being used as proof of occupation for land claims.

Other groups who had representatives speaking at the conference, or who were the subject of papers, included Maori, North American First Nations, Muslims in South African, Chinese in Indonesia, people with leprosy in the Philippines, Afro-Mexicans, Okinawan people under the US military occupation, Palestinians in Israel, the Jassic community of Hungary, Sami and Sven communities in Norway, the Timorese people,

and children separated from their families as part of the Fairbridge migration scheme.

Specific themes emerged from among the papers on a wonderful array of archival projects and services. We were challenged to think beyond traditional records, with considerable – and welcome – blurring of the traditional boundaries between galleries, libraries, archives and museums. We gained a heightened awareness of the value of enhanced interaction between communities and archivists, including deployment of sensitive protocols and a recognition that traditional archives can be alienating for many of those whose stories are held there. Several communities gave vivid demonstrations of the value of digital repatriation of records, which allow remote communities to access and use records to tell their own stories, in their own ways, and for their own people. Neparrna Gumbula, for example, shared with us photographs of his own family members – his mother and father as very young people – in Arnhem Land. He had never seen images of his parents until he began a project with the University of Sydney Archives, which holds these images as part of anthropological collections. Neparrna Gumbula also reminded us that we professional archivists have not 'invented it all' when he showed us his visual representation of levels of access to knowledge about sacred and secret knowledge, customs and rites: garma (open or public), dhuni (sheltered or needs some mediation), and narra (restricted to elders).

We were also impressed by many creative approaches to outreach programs. Taking the archives to the shopping malls was a key strategy for a project aiming to collect records of the minority Chinese in Indonesia – as were the really cool caps and t-shirts advertising the project. Travelling exhibitions of photographs – including those originally created by the NSW Aborigines Welfare Board, or those documenting the lives of French-speaking and Metis peoples in the archives of Canada's Saint-Boniface Historical Society – allow many people whose own lives or the lives of their forbears were directly affected by state intervention to connect with their past.

During the conference, we were almost overwhelmed by the passion of the speakers for their projects, and for their ability to convey the emotional dimensions of archival work. We were privileged to witness and be part of powerful and eloquent Noongar welcomes, and to experience the reciprocation of our Maori colleagues. We were saddened to listen to a

beautiful Maori song immediately after a presentation on a massacre of Maori people by colonial forces.

We all left I-CHORA 4 absolutely inspired. Back in the workplace, we feel that we have truly renewed our passion for the role and work of the archivist. We could not have asked for more.

Karen Johnson, Megan Williams,
Emma Jolley and Marie-Louise Ayres
National Library of Australia

National Archives of Australia, *Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice,* Gallery Two, National Archives of Australia, Parkes, ACT. The exhibition in Canberra ended on 27 April 2009, and will be touring nationally from June 2009. For further venue and date information visit <*http://www.naa.gov.au/whats-on/shell-shocked/index.aspx*>.

Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice was officially opened at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) in Canberra on 12 November 2008. In a press release that day, Director-General Ross Gibbs said that while 'many exhibitions have dealt with what happened during World War I, we believe this is the first time the human toll of the postwar years has been shown'.

Actually, it is not. An exhibition called *Echoes of the Guns* opened at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in November 1993, almost 15 years to the day before the opening of *Shell-shocked.* The Memorial's exhibition, which is still running, is on a theme practically identical to that of *Shell-shocked*: the cost and impact of World War I on the Australian people and its communities. In 1993 Australian scholarship in the field was in its infancy. The Memorial relied on its considerable in-house expertise and a collection that yielded much significant and poignant material on a subject which, if it had never been treated in such depth by the Memorial before, had nevertheless always been within the collecting vision of its founders.

Much has changed. A walk through *Shell-shocked* is like viewing an exhibition of scholarship in the history of commemoration in Australia in the last 15 or more years. Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees's history of

repatriation, *The Last Shilling,* was published in 1994; Stephen Garton's *The Cost of War* in 1996; Ken Inglis's *Sacred Places* in 1998; Joy Damousi's *The Labour of Loss* in 1999; Tanja Luckins's *The Gates of Memory* in 2004; Bruce Scates's *Return to Gallipoli* in 2006; and Bart Ziino's *A Distant Grief* in 2007. Histories of Australian army nursing and chaplaincy, soldier settlement, Aboriginal servicemen, and civilian internment also inform aspects of this exhibition. To have brought all of this into the net is an impressive achievement.

Shell-shocked begins with some formalities, such as the cablegram from Britain notifying the Prime Minister's Department of the signing of the armistice on 11 November 1918, and Australia's copy of the Treaty of Versailles. The exhibition continues, showing NAA's records at their best. While the AWM's *Echoes of the Guns* presents three dimensional objects that are compelling, beautiful and unusual, the really fine-grained story of the impact of war on the lives of people is documented particularly well within government records. For *Shell-shocked* NAA drew on two mighty pillars of documentary strength: the personal service records of the Australian Imperial Force, and the records of the Repatriation Department. Both of these, and especially the former, are used thoughtfully. Exhibition developers have avoided overcrowding and allowed a small group of well-chosen personal stories plenty of room.

The case of Arthur Cox is a marker for many that could be told. Cox was severely gassed in late December 1917 and returned to Australia medically unfit in March 1918. From then until his death in 1969 he needed constant medical attention for lung related illnesses. That is documented in Cox's repatriation files, and what a fine thing it is to see those files actually on display. A pile of paper inches thick sits in a showcase as silent witness to the years of pain and disruption suffered by Cox and his family. It is part of a fine piece of exhibition story-telling that blends Commonwealth records with mementos and memories contributed by the Cox family.

The exhibition shows some of the many other ways that the relationship between people and government can be played out in Commonwealth records. There is a photograph of war widows receiving training as milliners. There is a letter from the mother of three soldiers killed in the war to the prime minister, requesting financial assistance to visit her sons' graves (she was refused). Also to be seen is a memorial scroll containing a message from George V, one of thousands sent to the next-

of-kin of the dead. This one was received by Owen Gorman, the father of a soldier killed in 1917. He returned it with the words: 'By whom? For whom? – was my son led out to his martyrdom? *God will answer.*'

Gorman's words strike a bitter note not to be found elsewhere in this exhibition. Predictably, the design includes some fabricated war memorial-like elements, and evocations of Anzac and Remembrance Days. 'Abide with me' and *The Last Post* play quietly in the background. This atmosphere of hushed reverence does not allow for critical exploration of the 'Anzac spirit' – the subject of one of the final text panels. And yet war veterans have not always enjoyed the esteem almost universally granted them today. In the 1960s people wondered why veterans were being granted benefits for medical conditions that seemed to bear little relation to war service. A disillusioned repatriation doctor, John Whiting, even wrote a satirical novel about it, *Be in it, mate!* (1969). Whiting was no novelist and the work was a rattling bad yarn, but it gained serious attention in the media. It presented the repatriation system as a 'colossal example' of mass dishonesty on the part of politicians and public servants, and expressed horror that 'a man's stroke at the age of seventy-five was considered due to service in France fifty years ago', and that 'an old man's senility at eighty-two was precipitated by going to France in 1916.' Those who abused the system were 'scroungers'. It is not a coincidence that Alan Seymour's play *The One Day of the Year* was also popular at this time.

Shell-shocked safely quarantines itself from these discomforting matters by a coverage confined mainly to the 1920s and 30s ('after the Armistice'). Yet even then there was dissent. In 1931, a man too young to have fought complained (in the labour press) that he and his friends were sick of anything to do with Australian soldiers. '[C]rippled, blind and battered wrecks, with brass badges on, begging in the streets' got on their nerves. 'None of my friends like returned soldiers.'

It seems a pity that NAA has not taken advantage of its freedom from the commemorative mission that constrains the AWM. The NAA apparently sees no role for itself to use its collection to remind us of times when 'veteran' did not always mean 'hero'.

Anne-Marie Condé
National Museum of Australia