

News Notes

Edited by Helen McLaughlin

Adelaide City Council – Records and Archives

Correspondent: Robert Thornton

Work on creating a third archives storage repository has commenced in an area adjacent to the city archives on the ground floor of Topham Mall in Adelaide's CBD, the location formerly occupied by the city's car-parking administration. Stage 1 entails the internal redevelopment and fit-out of the area with compactus shelving, allowing storage of paper records for another 10 to 15 years at the current rate of intake, and longer if the creation of paper records declines as the use of wholly electronic files increases across the organisation. Stages 2 and 3, which will cover the period 2010 to 2012, will see the airconditioning, security and gaseous fire suppression systems upgraded to the same standards as the other two existing storage repositories.

Earlier this year Melbourne-based consultants Opticon Australia were commissioned to prepare a strategy for the long-term preservation of the council's electronic records. Their final report provides a roadmap supporting the development of the processes, standards, systems, knowledge and skills that are required to protect and preserve digital information resources into the future, including data currently stored in business information systems. A five-year strategy aligned to the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) standard requires adoption of HP TRIM software for capturing, converting and preserving digital records in the TRIM repository until storage warrants the implementation of a dedicated digital archive platform.

In March 2009 the *Local Government Thesaurus* was deployed across council for improved classification of business records, involving closing around 50,000 TRIM containers and reclassifying approximately another 5,000 TRIM containers used during the previous two months. New containers are created using the thesaurus, allowing more efficient titling, access and disposal (actions are applied at the time of creation, aligned directly to General Disposal Schedule 20).

Independent Stulz stand-alone airconditioning humidifier units have been installed in each of the repositories, and the plant room system which airconditions the staff and public areas was decommissioned and replaced. All units are linked into the council's BMS providing graphical data about environmental conditions online, with alerts generated via email and text messages should any conditions change. Simultaneously the security system was upgraded to include swipe card access, more camera surveillance within the repositories and external perimeters. Monitoring of all security is now integrated into the town hall security system.

The management and disposal of hard-copy source documents and their digitised versions has been mandated by State Records of South Australia (SRSA) in General Disposal Schedule 21 (GDS 21). Currently, replacing a hard-copy record with a scanned version is only permitted if a set of best practice standard operating conditions can be met. We have achieved all requirements (seven in total) to qualify for compliance including ensuring TRIM metadata schema are consistent with that promulgated by SRSA's recently revised *South Australian Record Keeping Metadata Standards* (SARKMS).

A large LCD screen has been installed in the Topham Mall search room window featuring a cycling digital image presentation about the role of the city archives and its services, along with glimpses of some of our more interesting holdings. Incremental digitisation of our physical archival collections to improve their preservation and access via our website has begun. Popular series of records held on microfilm such as rate assessment books and municipal electoral rolls are being converted directly to digital format using Scan Pro 1000 digital system hardware. Once this is completed selected series of paper records will be progressively digitised.

A series of very large portrait paintings of former nineteenth-century mayors, famous explorers and other notable colonials that hang in the council chamber are being progressively restored by Artlab Australia, together with the intricate Queen Adelaide textiles that were given to the council by Buckingham Palace in the 1950s.

Australian National University Archives Program

Correspondent: Maggie Shapley, University Archivist

We have been testing the beta version of the ICA-AtoM (Access to Memory) software which is being developed for the International Council on Archives by Artefactual Systems Inc. The software is open source and based on the ICA standards: ISAD (G), ISAAR (CPF), ISDF and ISDIAH for description of archives, creators, functions and archival institutions. As the only Australian beta testers, we (and the developers) are keen to ensure that the product suits the series system when due for release next year.

Our recent exhibition on Pacific Health included material from the papers of Sir John Gunther, Administrator and Director of Public Health in Papua New Guinea, 1960s posters about maternal health, as well as more recent material relating to the prevention of AIDS. The current exhibition of union banners, badges, certificates and photographs, *Unity is Strength: Symbols of Solidarity*, reveals the change from classical British symbolism to uniquely Australian imagery.

The extensive records of the state stock exchanges from the 1870s up to the formation of the Australian Securities Exchange in 1987 were donated by ASX to the Noel Butlin Archives Centre under the Cultural Gifts Program. We have also received the records of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows from Australian Unity Ltd, previously held in the Centre for Fraternal Studies located at the Newcastle Museum. A major acquisition for the university archives has been subject files from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*: a file for each person with a biographical entry in volumes 1 to 17 of the publication. The files include material edited out of the final entries and correspondence between authors and editors.

Our volunteer program in its first full year of operation has resulted in improved documentation for the papers of Amirah Inglis about the Spanish Civil War, and for audiovisual and photographic records of our northern campus, the North Australia Research Unit, including film of the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy. Thousands of photographs from the CSR Ltd Publicity Department and of Tooth and Company Limited hotels have been placed in archival albums and listed. More mundane jobs, but equally valuable, have involved reboxing records from cartons to acid-free boxes, improving descriptions and typing up handwritten lists.

Kimberley Language Resource Centre

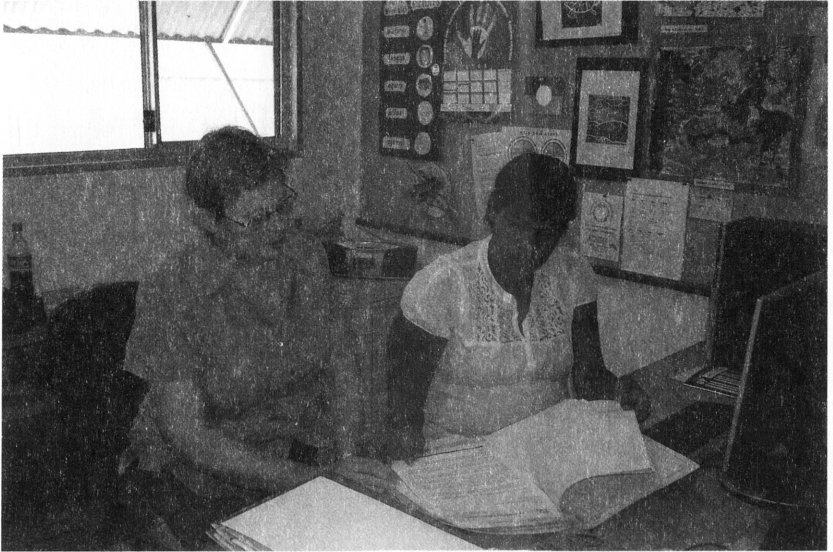
Correspondent: Siobhan Casson

Sitting in the heart of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre's (KLRC) building on Terone Street in Halls Creek is a small room which contains thousands of records from over 30 Kimberley Aboriginal language groups – tapes, videos, documents, and photos to name just a few of the formats represented. These have been collected during the 24 years the organisation has been operating (although some records are even older than that). The room was purpose-built when the Terone Street building was erected in 1995.

Previously items were stored in freezers in the old butcher's shop on Thomas Street, where the KLRC first set up an office in 1985. An attack of white ants was a reminder that special care needs to be taken of these materials in the Kimberley environment. Although most of the audio tapes and some of the other materials have been lodged for safekeeping with the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra, anything kept here in Halls Creek needs to be well looked after so it is available to community and family.

A system for organising materials in the new archive room was set up when the Terone Street building opened. Over the years the number and type of items has increased and this system is no longer effective. There is a big job ahead to organise what is there and add new material as well as keep up with modern technology. For example, a large number of digital photos need to be integrated

into the archiving system and specialist equipment is needed to systematically scan the old photos. The other growing area is the audiovisual (filmed) materials.



Jen Ford and Michelle Marting working with archive folders,
Kimberley Language Resource Centre

Loreto Sisters

Correspondents: Robin Scott and Steve Stefanopoulos

400 years of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters)

Photographic exhibition at St Francis's Catholic Church, Melbourne

In 1609, in spite of the prevailing Catholic persecution and strong opposition from within the Catholic Church, Englishwoman Mary Ward established the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her order was eschewed from the usual female enclosure from all worldly contact and male leadership. Instead, to fulfil the intent of the order, the sisters needed to be free to interact with the community, particularly in their education of girls and to be governed by a woman of their own order.

To mark 400 years since the establishment of the order, a celebratory Landing Day Mass was held at St Francis's Catholic Church, Melbourne on Sunday 19 July 2009. As part of the celebrations, a photographic exhibition featuring photographs from the Loreto Province Archive was mounted at the St Francis's Church Pastoral Centre from 10 July – 3 August 2009.

Such anniversaries and celebrations are a boon to archives, as they are placed firmly in the spotlight as a resource for many celebrations.

Our brief was to illustrate three themes: the life of Mary Ward; the development of the institute in Australia through the numerous educational institutions that had been established by the sisters; and the current progress and interaction of the institute's members worldwide with lay members of the community.

Among the 68 photographs featured in the exhibition were photographs of: the tombstone of Mary Ward; the first group of Loreto Sisters in Australia, who established their first convent and school in Ballarat, Victoria in 1875; a number of young children napping at the Loreto Free Kindergarten, South Melbourne circa 1940; the Councillors of the Central Catholic Training College, Albert Park in 1913; and the original site of St Mary's College, University of Melbourne, Parkville in 1946.

From the outset, we had wanted the panels to survive beyond the exhibition period, and be used at other events and occasions. We decided that it was best to have the panels professionally designed and printed on good quality card. Josephine Fagan, an art teacher at Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak, took the photographs and captions provided, and created a design which subtly respected the aesthetics of the historic photographs. The end result was an exhibition of over 30 framed panels which ranged in size from A2 to A0, printed in colour and mounted in re-usable black frames.

By using good quality card to print the panels on, using newly-purchased frames, the panels were warmly received by the sisters and the wider Loreto community. It is anticipated that the exhibition will travel around Australia to all our other Loreto institutions, with the first stop being Ballarat.

The exhibition was curated by Steve Stefanopoulos, Heritage Collection and Records Manager, Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak, with assistance from Robin Scott, Province Archivist, Loreto Sisters Australia. For further information see <<http://www.loreto.org.au>>.



400 years of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters), photographic exhibition at St Francis's Catholic Church, Melbourne

National Archives of Australia

Correspondent: Mark Semmler

Letters of a Nation

On 3 March 2009, with the National Archives of Australia (NAA) as the major partner, Australia Post launched a project to mark its bicentenary, *Letters of a Nation*. To launch the event, a newspaper supplement about Australia Post and the project appeared in all News Limited papers.

Letters of a Nation is a social history project in which Australians have been invited to submit, by post or electronically, copies of important, poignant and interesting letters they hold in their personal collections. The NAA also supplied 200 letters and invited all major national collecting institutions to participate by adding letters from their collections.

To learn more about this project see <<https://200years.auspost.com.au>>.

Mapping our Anzacs website

During 2009 the NAA's *Mapping our Anzacs* website won a Best Archives of the Web award presented by ArchivesNext, an archives blog site <<http://www.archivesnext.com>>.

One of the judges commented:

This site combines clean design, a wealth of archival material, and effective use of technology with the inspired idea to let members of the public contribute their own materials and tell their own stories.

The awards recognise innovation by archives utilising Web 2.0 technologies.

The *Mapping our Anzacs* website can be accessed via the NAA homepage <<http://www.naa.gov.au>>.

Information Awareness Month

Information Awareness Month (IAM) is a national initiative supported by information industry and professional bodies. The NAA is a key supporter together with other professional bodies including the Records

Management Association of Australasia, the Institute for Information Management, the Australian Society of Archivists and the Australian Library and Information Association. The theme for 2009 was diversity. On Tuesday 5 May 2009, the NAA hosted the launch of IAM at an event in Canberra. The NAA was pleased that our then Minister, Cabinet Secretary and Special Minister of State, Senator the Hon. John Faulkner, agreed to launch IAM.

The minister spoke about the challenges of managing government information today and into the future. He reiterated the government's commitment to information reform including significant amendments to freedom of information legislation, the establishment of the Office of the Information Commissioner and a new Australian Government information publication scheme. The minister acknowledged the key role that the NAA will play in this reform process in collaboration with other government agencies and the importance of the NAA's current focus on the management of government information.

Review and redevelopment of *Check-Up*

Check-Up is the NAA's information management tool that enables government agencies to perform a self-assessment of the state of their information and records management, and to plan improvements. *Check-Up* was launched in August 2007 and has since been requested by over 100 agencies.

During 2009 the NAA commissioned a consultant to review *Check-Up* to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of agencies and the NAA. Information and records management staff from 30 agencies across Australia participated in the review.

Feedback about *Check-Up* was overwhelmingly positive, with agencies finding it to be a valuable tool, particularly in identifying areas for improvement. A number of participants indicated that they would like the NAA to mandate its use on a regular basis.

Dealing with the digital deluge

The National Library of Australia (NLA) has been allocated \$805,000 for the purpose of developing a detailed joint digital collections funding

proposal for the NLA, the NAA and the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). All three national institutions are seeking substantial additional funding from the Australian Government to enable them to collect, preserve and make available digital collection material. The money will enable the three agencies to develop a detailed business case for digital collections funding.

For the NAA the business case will address the need to develop industrial scale capacity for end-to-end digital archiving. It will also enable the NAA to substantially increase the volume of existing collection material that will be digitised and made available via the NAA's website. The outcome of the business case will become clear in May 2010, with the release of the next federal budget.

Joint project with Geoscience Australia – aerial survey photographs

Geoscience Australia and the NAA have completed the first stage of a joint project to establish long-term arrangements for the management and preservation of aerial survey photography records. These records were used as the basis for the topographical mapping of Australia from the 1920s to the 1990s, and are an important resource for tracking environmental changes in the Australian landscape over time.

The first phase of the project involved identifying and appraising the records, establishing disposal coverage, and assessing their physical condition and preservation needs. Geoscience Australia and the NAA have now embarked on the second stage of the joint project to describe and physically prepare the records for transfer, and to bring them into the custody of the NAA. This phase is expected to be completed in 2011-12.

Constitution Day: 9 July 2009

Citizenship ceremonies were the cornerstone of the 2009 Constitution Day celebrations, which for the first time took place in every Australian state and territory. In partnership with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 170 people were welcomed from 40 countries as Australian citizens. At each event, a representative of the NAA delivered the Constitution Day address, emphasising the role of the Australian Constitution in setting out how the nation works, and how

Australian citizens can shape it. Each new citizen received an NAA gift bag containing a copy of the Australian Constitution.

In Canberra, the Governor-General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce AC presided at Government House. Ross Gibbs, the Director-General of the NAA, presented the Constitution Day address, and the NAA Advisory Council Chairman, Paul Santamaria, invited guests to join him in the Australian citizenship affirmation.

Data stewardship training program

In August 2009, at the request of State Records New South Wales (SRNSW), NAA staff helped facilitate a three-day training course on data stewardship for staff of SRNSW.

This pilot training program was an adaptation of a very successful five-day residential training course run by the NAA in cooperation with the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA) in November 2008. In view of the success of the 2008 program, the NAA offered to work with other CAARA institutions that were interested in running versions of the training program for their own staff and/or for agencies within their jurisdiction.

E-newsletter

To keep up to date with what is happening at the NAA, subscribe to our monthly email newsletter, *news@archives*.

It features news from our offices around the country, information on our latest events and publications, and tips for researching our collection. The monthly quiz is also very popular.

To view e-newsletters or to subscribe see <http://www.naa.gov.au>.

Parramatta City Council Archives

Correspondent: Louise Preston

The Parramatta City Council Archives maintains a two-fold repository held at the Parramatta Heritage Centre. The central archive consists of the council records dating back to the first council meeting in 1862 (soon

after council's inception in late 1861) although there is an earlier related record book. There is also a collecting archive known as the Community Archives, consisting of records from various Parramatta groups and organisations throughout Parramatta's history.

There has been sporadic custodianship of the archive over the years since it was established in 1993. Although a lot of work has been done in the archive in the past, this situation has left it with some backlog and in need of work.

We have a number of projects at present. Firstly, the draft policy has been revised in preparation to be passed and we anticipate that it will be placed in the policy register by the end of this year. Secondly, there are around 1,000 boxes of files, which have been in storage for many years and require appraisal. With the approval of the records manager and myself, a volunteer for the archives (with a wealth of records experience) is currently updating details of the contents of these boxes and appraisal/sentencing is underway. Thirdly, we are undertaking an audit of the records and recording details ready for transfer of the inventory from Word documents and paper-based records to our inchoate access database. This leads us to the fourth project of creating a database for the finding aids. Currently the access database contains the accession registers for both sets of records and the series register for council records.

The council's online system continues to operate. The TRIM Context rollout is not complete but with the appointment of a new records manager in September 2008, implementation has progressed and is likely to be completed over the next year to 18 months. The disaster management plan has been in place at the Parramatta Heritage Centre since 2004. The Civic Place project has been delayed but is still a main aim of council - to recap on Caroline Lovell's entry, this project involves a large area of land, whereby the central library, council chambers and the council's main building (but not the historic town hall) will be demolished and rebuilt. Archival records kept in the chambers building include the boxes already mentioned, among other records; storage for these is a major consideration over the next few years.

Public Record Office Victoria

Correspondent: Allison Hunter

New research resource: *Lands Guide*

In late 2009, Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) will be publishing a major new research resource, the *Lands Guide: A guide to finding records of Crown land at Public Record Office Victoria*. The *Lands Guide* builds on the work of archivist Phillippa Nelson who recently redescribed PROV's extensive holdings of land records to present a comprehensive and engaging aid to land research at all levels. Packed with illustrations, reference tables and case studies, the *Lands Guide* assists researchers through the intricacies of land legislation and compliance, helping them to explore the tragic and triumphant stories of Victorians making a living and making a home. The *Lands Guide* will be available from the PROV website <<http://www.prov.vic.gov.au>> and also Gould Genealogy and History <<http://www.gould.com.au>> as printed book, as a CD-ROM, and as a downloadable PDF. To register an expression of interest to purchase this resource when it is published in late 2009, send an email to <ask.prov@prov.vic.gov.au>.

Local Government Retention and Disposal Authority release

Following 18 months of hard work, PROS 09/05 – Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA) for Records of Local Government Functions was issued on 21 August 2009.

The new RDA is complementary to PROS 07/01 – General Retention and Disposal Authority (GDA) for Records of Common Administrative Functions. This was also varied on 21 August 2009 for use by local government in Victoria by both extending the scope of coverage and adding several new classes, primarily in the property management function.

To assist local councils to implement the new RDA and GDA, PROV have also issued Advice 22 – Linking Guidebook: PROS 98/01 General Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Local Government to PROS 09/05 and PROS 07/01.

The involvement of participants from every corner of the state was crucial to the effectiveness of the final RDA and its success led to sharing methods and ideas between PROV and several of the other state archival authorities.

Councils are no longer able to sentence records using PROS 98/01. While most records sentenced before 21 August may be destroyed according to their existing sentences, all new sentencing will need to use the new GDA and RDA - and there are also 39 classes of records in PROS 98/01 for which the new appraisal highlighted the need for these classes to be re-sentenced using the new GDAs as well (a list of these classes can be found in both PROS 09/05 and Advice 22).

PROS 09/05, PROS 07/01 and Advice 22 can all be found online at <http://prov.vic.gov.au/records/dispschl.asp>.

Queries should be directed to prov.agency.queries@prov.vic.gov.au.

Standards project update

The Recordkeeping Standards Project is a major focus of PROV's commitment to records management in Victoria. It aims to establish clear direction regarding what best practice recordkeeping is and how to achieve it. It involves:

- the development of a suite of documents that describe the activities of best practice recordkeeping, provision of a set of benchmarks for each activity, and guidance on how to achieve those benchmarks;
- consultation with stakeholders to ensure that the documents address the requirements of agencies, PROV, and the public; and
- a maintenance schedule that ensures the suite of documents, once developed, remains up to date and useful.

The focus of the first year of the project will be on the development of the standards products. The focus for the second year will be on communications and marketing.

Work undertaken so far on the standards documentation will be integrated into the future work of the standards project.

The Recordkeeping Standards Project Board was formed in August 2009, consisting of government representatives from various government sectors.

The role of the board is to examine and formally approve each stage plan of the project, including the products to be developed for each stage. The formal approval of the project board is required in order for work on each stage to commence.

For further information on the standards project, please see <<http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/records/rkstandardsproject.asp>>.

Uniform *Evidence Act* update

The *Evidence Act 2008* (the Act) is expected to come into force on 1 January 2010. The passage of the Act in Victoria changes the law of evidence with consequential effects on public recordkeeping. In particular, the Act removes limitations on what constitutes an original document. After the passage of the Act, there is no legal obstacle for authorising the retention of electronic copies of temporary and permanent public records in place of the paper original.

However, allowing an electronic copy of a document to be tendered as evidence does not in itself legitimise the blanket destruction of originals, once converted. Destruction of public records will still be subject to a disposal authority and, in some circumstances, original documents must be preserved. Consequently, the implementation and adherence to documented recordkeeping processes and procedures is paramount. Any gap in theory or practice will be the focus in a court where the authenticity of the document tendered into evidence is challenged.

PROV will support the trend toward digitisation while ensuring good recordkeeping practices by creating products that provide an adequate framework for the Victorian public sector. To ensure the successful implementation of the products related to the Act, PROV wants to effectively inform and support government agencies. Through numerous information sessions and training material, PROV will prepare agencies to use and understand the products published.