

Reformulating current recordkeeping practices in out-of-home care: recognising the centrality of the archive

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Cathy Humphreys is the Alfred Felton Chair of Child and Family Welfare, a professorship established from a collaboration between the Department of Social Work at the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Excellence for Child and Family Welfare in Victoria, the peak body for 90 child and family welfare agencies. She has developed a strand of research in the area of out-of-home care where her interest in documentary analysis continues to be explored. The ‘Who Am I?’ project is led by Cathy Humphreys and evolved to bring the highly significant but neglected area of recordkeeping in out-of-home care to the fore.

Cathy Carnovale has been working with young people in out-of-home care for the last 18 years. She is currently the State Coordinator for the CREATE Foundation in Victoria – the peak body representing the voice of children and young people in out-of-home care. CREATE’s objectives are to ensure that all children and young people in care are respected, listened to and active participants in decisions which affect their lives and work to effect systems changes for the benefit of all children and young people in care into the future by building community capacity with key stakeholders. Her previous experience has included the roles of a mentor, and various sector management roles in out-of-home care, most recently in the area of program development and innovation. Cathy is an important member of the Consumer Advisory Group and an active participant in the ‘Who Am I?’ project.

Social workers have historically had an ambivalent relationship with recordkeeping. A multi-disciplinary action research project, ‘Who am I?’, has brought together social workers, archivists and historians to investigate the role of records as a resource for identity construction for children currently in out-of-home care, and for adults who were in care as children. Maintaining a focus on children growing up in out-of-home care, their identity needs, and the way in which records can support them, this paper discusses a range of problems arising from current recordkeeping practices within the Victorian out-of-home care sector. These are examined in the light of conceptual frameworks brought by the archival and social work disciplines. While out-of-home care practitioners and their organisations have much to learn from archival methods, recordkeeping professionals also need to recognise the relevance of their role to how records are created in the first place, in order to ensure that personal records remain relevant and accessible across the lifespan of children and young people who grow up in care.

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Introduction

Growing up in care it feels like everyone knows all your personal information about your family, boyfriends and stuff, nothing is private. But when I got my file it didn't say anything about my sister or how I could contact her.¹

The young person quoted above had grown up in out-of-home care and was referring to the tendency of professional practice to adopt processes that meet the needs of professionals rather than those of their clients. This applies particularly to recording practice. Focused, as they often are, on helping people through personal relationships, social workers have historically been ambivalent about keeping records.² In a profession that has valued individual autonomy and judgement, increasing expectations relating to client information systems are often experienced as managerial interference, with few perceived direct benefits to clients or practitioners.³ Within the out-of-home care sector, practitioners, archivists and managers alike have perceived the benefits of recording to be about immediate case management accountability, and for proving statutory duty of care often, but not exclusively, to the Children's Court. Good recording practice, however, recognises that recording is much more than this – it is about building a resource for the development of a life story. Out-of-home care records are not ephemeral; they have relevance across the lifespan of children and young people who grow up in care.

The 'Who am I?' research project was developed in response to growing concerns within the Victorian out-of-home care sector about past, current and future record-keeping practices. A multi-disciplinary action research project, 'Who am I?', has brought together social workers, historians and archivists to investigate the role played by records and archives in the health, well-being and identity construction, both of children and young people currently in out-of-home care, and of adults who were in care as children.⁴ To date, Victorian record holding organisations in the out-of-home care field have generally not prioritised the allocation of specialist skills and resources to archival roles. As part of its inquiries therefore, 'Who am I?' has investigated current practices in creating records within the out-of-home care service sector.

The paper begins with a summary of the contributions made by the historical and archival professions to how social workers may think about the uses and imperatives of recording practice in the field of out-of-home care. The role of social work thought in understanding the relationship between records and the formation of a positive identity is then outlined, and the 'life story pyramid' is proposed as a model which usefully illustrates this multi-layered relationship. A range of practical issues about current recording practice have emerged during the project which are not new, but are being reformulated in light of the insights brought to the table particularly by the archival discipline. A discussion of these issues forms the main focus of the paper and points to lessons that can be learned by archivists, social work practitioners and managers alike within the sphere of out-of-home care.

A trio of Australian government inquiries over the last fifteen years broke the silence surrounding the history of institutional care in Australia. These inquiries examined the separation of Indigenous children from their families,⁵ the experiences of child migrants,⁶ and of Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children.⁷ The compelling testimony provided by past care leavers to these inquiries about how important records about their childhoods were for identity, health and well-being

played a significant role in the development of the ‘Who am I?’ project. As one care leaver expressed it:

When I read it [my file] I was crying because it felt like a story that I was reading, and I did not totally relate it to myself. It was part of my journey to search and find out if I was really the bad person that everybody said I was.⁸

Care leavers’ experiences of accessing their records have added flesh to what historians tell us about children’s experiences in growing up in Australian institutional care, and have focused our attention on the issues needing consideration when creating records which may be accessed in future years.⁹

The ‘records continuum framework’,¹⁰ introduced to the ‘Who am I?’ project by the archival discipline, has enabled social workers to conceptualise the life of records beyond the immediate imperatives of day-to-day current practice.

Records continuum thinking takes a multi-dimensional view of the creation of documents in the context of social and organisational activity (proto record-as-trace), their capture into records systems (record-as-evidence), organisation within the framework of a personal or corporate archive (record-as-personal/corporate memory), and pluralisation as collective archives (record-as-collective memory).¹¹

These multiple perspectives of the record provide a range of insights – in particular, that the future uses and users of a record cannot always be foreseen at the point of creation. When creating records, the perspectives of all stakeholders need to be included to provide a balanced and accurate record. Records are not always paper-based; digital records and physical memorabilia also form part of the record, and storage strategies need to take all media into account. Standard archival procedures, such as accessioning, have assisted organisations to manage their record holdings so that individual records can be easily located. Continuum thinking focuses our attention on the fact that the uses of a record does not cease with immediate case management accountability – records need to be created, organised, and archived with future access in mind.

Identity and recording in current out-of-home care social work practice – the contribution of social work knowledge

Developments in social work knowledge over recent decades in the areas of placement instability, trauma and issues of identity have greatly influenced out-of-home care practice. While social workers have hitherto focused largely on the immediate therapeutic needs of children in care, this development has also led to greater recognition of records as a resource for identity.

Many of those who have grown up in care miss out on the rich oral history that is available to most people through family members with whom they have ongoing connections. While some young people report positive long-term relationships with their carers, the reports of the national inquiries provide evidence of many care leavers for whom family was replaced by temporary relationships with other young people in the care system, with social workers or with professional or voluntary carers. These people rarely provided the ongoing connections experienced by those raised by their families. Members of the Stolen Generations in Australia (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people removed from their families as children) report this as a soul destroying grief.¹² Within the out-of-home care system at the present time, the loss of family connections,

compounded by placement instability, still results in a lack of ongoing relationships for some children and young people. Without the kinds of information a family can provide about the sad and happy memories, special occasions and activities of daily life, and without an understanding of the circumstances which led to children in care being separated from their families, it becomes very difficult to establish a functional identity. In their discussion of life story work, Rose and Philpot point out that ‘children in care often have a negative sense of themselves, a damaged sense of identity’.¹³ A well recorded documentary history can, to some degree, make compensation for the loss of oral history normally available through long-term supportive relationships. A number of different elements are necessary for this documentary history to be useful for supporting identity, as conceptualised in the life story pyramid in Figure 1.¹⁴

At the most fundamental level, children in care need to know who they are – they need to have a range of records with basic identity information. At another level, they also need records which provide them with their own history and preserve childhood memories. Scott and Cameron argue that:

Knowing simple things about their past – where they used to live, who looked after them, what they and their former carer(s) looked like – helps children and young people shape a history necessary for the development of a sense of identity.¹⁵

Finally, the process of helping children in care to develop a coherent narrative about who they are in the context of their personal history is a vital part of supporting them. It is something that occurs through everyday positive life experience and through explanatory and interpretive discussions between the children and their workers or carers. It is nevertheless a process that takes its own time. A child’s ability to engage in this work will vary, and it is an enterprise which continues and is revisited throughout the lifespan. It is therefore important that resources are created through the first and second levels of the life story pyramid to support this therapeutic process, and that they remain available to support identity work throughout the child’s life.

When thinking about reformulating current recordkeeping practice for identity, the records continuum becomes highly relevant. The focus for care-providing organisations

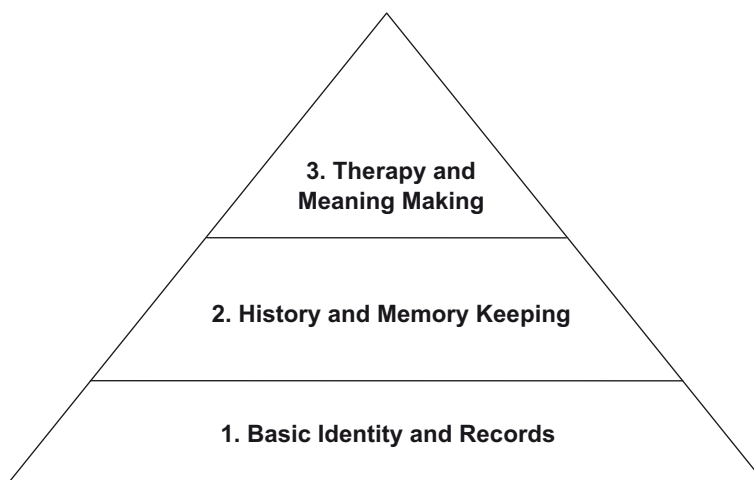


Figure 1. The life story pyramid: a conceptualisation.

and for practitioners is generally on the first two dimensions, creating the record and capturing it through records management systems. Making the record is a complex process of choosing what information to include or omit, and this involves being aware of possible future audiences for the record. The phrase ‘rubbish in – rubbish out’ applies not only to statistical data but also to details of people’s lives. Good records need to be accurate, balanced, coherent, readable, accountable and accessible.¹⁶ Equally, records need to be organised so that information can be found within them when accessed at a later date.

Reformulating current recordkeeping practices

The ‘Who am I?’ project has encompassed four different strands of investigation: the creation of a web resource bringing together historical resources relating to institutional ‘care’ in Victoria; current archival practice within the out-of-home care sector; current recordkeeping practices; and, the experiences of care leavers in obtaining and accessing their records. The investigations of the current practice strand, the findings of which form the basis of this paper, have included a number of research phases.

The first stage of the action research involved a series of scoping workshops, through which researchers, managers and policy makers, out-of-home care practitioners, archivists, care leavers and young people still in care, were brought together to gather information and conceptualise the key issues for recordkeeping in current out-of-home care practice.¹⁷ In response to the workshop discussions about recording children’s lives with them and for them, a new research project, entitled ‘100+ points of identity’, was developed within the wider project.¹⁸ The project was named to emphasise that while care leavers need to have 100 points of identity in order to open bank accounts, get drivers licences and other services normal to contemporary adult life, they also need to have access to information about their lives and their families in order to explore their identity. The project aimed to establish the extent to which a selection of personal records (covering the history of the child’s time in care) are locatable and accessible by professionals in community sector organisations which provide out-of-home care. It also aimed to identify the key components of a portable, coherent, identity-supporting personal record. University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics approval was obtained for both the workshop series and the ‘100+ points of identity’ research. Permission was also obtained from participating care organisations and from the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) for young people and professionals to be involved in the research.

For a sample of 37 young people currently in care, a questionnaire elicited information from their placement workers (case managers) about a range of record types (for example, life story material, birth certificate, reasons for placement, immunisation history, school reports, and so on) and asked what information existed for the young person, the quality of the information, its location, and how easy it was to locate or access it. The questionnaire also asked whether the young person had any of this information in his or her possession or whether he or she knew where it was. The young people concerned were invited to assist with the questionnaire, and while two thirds were willing, some lost interest along the way. The results were analysed using thematic analysis, though some simple counting techniques were used where needed.

A preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data was followed by a series of focus group consultations for workers who filled out the questionnaire (5 participants), young people in care who were involved with the questionnaire (2 participants), and young

people who had recently left care (4 participants). Young people were asked about what information they thought important and their interest in their records. Practitioners were asked about their experience in locating records for the questionnaire exercise and about issues of locating and transferring records. The contributions made by focus group participants added detail and depth to a range of themes which had emerged from the questionnaire results. Again, the focus group interviews were analysed thematically using grounded theory. Finally, the findings of the research were reported and discussed at a workshop attended by 50 professionals representing the partners of the 'Who am I?' project and other interested people. The proceedings of this workshop were incorporated into the final results of the project.

A number of themes have emerged from the research as significant issues for record creation practice in out-of-home care. These issues are not new or unknown within the out-of-home care sector, but reformulating them in the light of the continuum model and the life story pyramid can provide a fresh approach.

1. Essential identification documents

As the 'life story pyramid' suggests, proof of identity documentation forms the foundation for any record which supports identity. Such documentation might include birth certificates, Medicare or health care cards, concession cards or Keypass,¹⁹ tax file number, passport or citizenship papers, details of extended family, including contact information, and medical history. Children in care, many of whom are dislocated from their families, need to know who they are, but like the rest of us, they need to be able to prove their identity for the purpose of engaging in many normal activities of daily life, such as opening a bank account or obtaining a passport or a driver licence. 'Who am I?' investigations focused on the birth certificate as a primary form of identification.

Obtaining identity documentation is not straightforward for children in care. Identity may be difficult to determine for a range of reasons – for example, for children born overseas in refugee situations and for children whose families tell conflicting stories regarding their parentage. Furthermore, proving identity may be a complex procedure. Some families do not register the births of their children. Where births are registered, it may be impossible for any of a range of reasons to obtain the birth certificate from parents or get their permission to apply for a new one.

Significant amounts of staff time are currently expended in attempts to obtain identity documents for young people in care, because the regulations do not always allow for the particular circumstances of those in out-of-home care, and because the officials concerned appear not to understand the potential difficulties of proving the identity of some young people. While most carers have obtained a birth certificate for young people in their care, attention needs to be paid to facilitating the process, particularly for those with complex identity issues. Ensuring that *all* children in care have identity documents is a basic responsibility of the state towards children in state care.

2. Recording practice – compliance or identity?

In addition to proof of identity documents, out-of-home care provider organisations generate a range of records. To support identity, personal records are created that preserve memories and information about the child's life and relationships. These include formal recording through the 'Looking After Children' assessment and progress records (LAC), life story books and cultural plans, as well as photos, personal letters, cards, certificates, awards and valued items of memorabilia. Notes, correspondence and reports

relating to a child's medical and educational history are also kept. Alongside these personal records which have a 'history and memory keeping' role, the out-of-home care sector also generates a large body of official records. The statutory 'case file' can be seen as the sum of many different types of case notes and reports written by professionals for other professionals and for the Children's Court. Despite its intended audience at the time of creation, it contains information which can be significant if the record is used at a later time by the child, such as the reasons a child was placed in out-of-home care. However, this information can be hard to locate within the official record and may be expressed in professional jargon, rather than in language easily understood by most care leavers.

The 'Who am I?' research has highlighted the tension within the out-of-home care sector between recording for statutory purposes and recording to support identity. Current out-of-home care practice is generally crisis driven and focuses on the present and immediate future. Most practitioners view recording as an accountability task which prevents them from doing 'real' relationship-based work with the children in their care. Due to normal case management requirements and the increasing emphasis on accountability, current practitioners are expected to prioritise the making of records which meet the needs of other professionals and their respective organisations (to demonstrate, for example, that a child's immediate needs for safety, and the like, are being met). This focus on case management and on accountability creates two lacunae.

First, creation of those parts of the record which constitute a personal narrative of a child's life is not always given sufficient attention. In the 'Who am I?' workshops and in focus group consultations, young people currently or recently in care identified the information they would like to see recorded about their history. They are interested in the sort of stories that families would tell – memories, anecdotes, stories of special occasions and of day-to-day activities. They may want to see photos, personal mementos, family information, and details of people in their lives such as carers and their families. They wish to know what they were good at and what they were interested in. Many of these details simply do not get recorded, or do not get included in the official 'files'.²⁰ What is recorded is often not subject to records management and archival policies that ensure they remain easy to locate and access into the future. This particularly applies to photos and the like, which may be stored digitally or in hard copy, and to other objects such as memory boxes, stuffed toys, and other memorabilia.

Secondly, records are often created in haste by professionals without the involvement of the children or young people concerned. This effectively privileges the professional voice over that of the person most concerned in the record. Young care leavers have spoken about not recognising themselves in the statutory component of their records, where reports often focus on the client's problems with no reference to strengths or interests.²¹ Reading such negative accounts can be distressing for young people in care as well as for adult care leavers accessing their records. It is therefore vital to involve children and young people in the recording process, actively incorporating their own words and points of view. As one practitioner put it:

It is the client's own life, after all, that is being recorded and therefore it almost seems essential that they are informed and involved in the process.²²

Collaboration with the child or young person in recordkeeping rarely occurs for procedural recording and is not consistent practice even for the creation of personal

records. If accountability is seen as having a dual focus – to the client both now and in the future, and to organisational and statutory obligations – then the importance of personal records and the inclusion of children’s perspectives take their place more naturally beside the records aimed at a professional audience. However, the role of both personal and statutory records in supporting identity in the long term, and the need to consider this when creating and archiving records, is not recognised by many practitioners. While only a small proportion of care leavers wish to access their records, the message to practitioners must be that they should create records, not just for the present, but for the client in twenty or thirty years time.

3. Fragmentation of the record

Older generations of care leavers cite the fragmentation of their records – many different pieces of information stored in multiple locations – as a major barrier to access.²³ This problem continues today, compounded by a number of issues relating to the way records are ‘captured’.

As discussed in the previous section, a range of recording and reporting formats exist – some formal reporting mechanisms, some created by other professions such as medical and educational records, some seemingly ephemeral notes, such as case notes and log books, and some personal records and memorabilia. This situation is complicated by different records being created and stored in either electronic or paper form, for reasons which have little to do with creating a coherent and accessible record. The implications of the record format for storage and release strategies that connect different records are not taken into account. The ‘Who am I?’ research has also highlighted the dispersal of information in a number of locations – in the files of the governmental child protection agency, or of care-providing organisations, with carers, with children or their families. Where children experience multiple placements with different care-providing organisations, separate files exist with each organisation. When placements change, or care episodes are interspersed with periods at home, new files may be created, including new life story books. Medical records and reports are frequently only located at the relevant health service, such as a clinic or a hospital. So, for children who have experienced many disruptions in their lives, fragments of medical history may be separately located at a number of different clinics.

Viewed in the light of the records continuum, a number of problems emerge. Due to the range of different recording formats within one person’s record, information can be difficult to locate even within one file, as it may be scattered throughout a number of different sections of the file. According to a practitioner assisting a young person to access his file,

it was like trying to piece together a complex puzzle. Even if a file contains all the pieces, you can’t always work out which ones fit where to make the picture clearer.²⁴

Information, or even specific documents such as a birth certificate, may also be located in a range of different locations, depending on who was responsible for its creation or inclusion in the file. Care leavers seeking to access their records in order to gain an understanding of childhood experiences may have to apply to a number of different organisations to obtain a full picture. Apart from being time-consuming and sometimes expensive, the experience of approaching an organisation associated with traumatic memories may be emotionally gruelling. The prospect of undergoing this experience repeat-

edly can present a significant disincentive for vulnerable care leavers. At the present time, no standardised documentation procedures exist to record where information is located, so care leavers seeking specific information require sophisticated research skills.

Locating personal records may also be difficult due to the fact that the surnames of many young people in out-of-home care change as their parents separate and re-partner. While some records systems have incorporated a unique identifier code for tracking individuals, this code is not in consistent use across the sector, nor is it used by the education and health care systems.

Solutions to these problems lie partly within the gambit of organisations which create and hold these records, and partly at the level of sector-wide practices that recognise the significance of out-of-home care records beyond immediate organisational needs.

Care-providing organisations can learn much from archival practices, including accession procedures and good records management practices, which ensure that future accessibility is taken into consideration at the point of 'capture'. Files need to be structured and indexed clearly, and their relationship to records in other locations noted. While it may not be possible or practicable to have all the records relating to a person collated physically in one place, a section in every file, which notes the locations of all reports and records stored outside the file, including a way of tracking any movement of documents from one program or agency to another, would provide invaluable assistance to care leavers seeking in the future to access information about their lives.

The acceptance of a unique identifier code across the out-of-home care sector can only occur when organisations start to view records relating to out-of-home care services as belonging to the community at large, rather than narrowly the property of individual organisations. This involves recognising the right of both care leavers and young people currently in care to access their personal records, and supporting this in policy and practice.

4. The whole person – past, present, future

As has been apparent throughout this discussion, the focus of contemporary out-of-home care recording practice is on the immediate and current needs of children and young people in care. Those children whose significant relationships have been most disrupted, and therefore stand in most need of records which provide a coherent life story, are often those whose emotional and developmental difficulties absorb the energies of their carers and workers. In such a crisis-driven environment, the role of recording in supporting practice is easily lost, with the emphasis on logging the fulfilment of duty of care responsibilities, and meeting organisational accountability expectations. The past is no longer seen as relevant, the future not yet thought of.

The implications of this sort of recording practice are seen most clearly at the points of transition for children in care, such as when they move from one care placement to another, or return to care after a period of living with family. Information already obtained and recorded is not routinely transferred with the child or young person, with the result that memories are lost to both carers and young people themselves. Workers and carers taking on the care of the child in a new placement do not always know which organisation formerly had the care of the child and therefore cannot request this information. This loss of information at points of transition compromises both the immediate care of the child or young person, and any future opportunities for accessing a comprehensive and coherent life story. The 'Who am I?' project is currently undertaking further investigations of the issues surrounding the transfer of information.

While some professionals are aware of the need to pass on information, ‘Who am I?’ research findings make it clear that many have not thought about the longer term identity needs of their clients. This involves thinking about the young person in the context of his or her whole lifespan – history and future – not just about the young person in the current placement and the networks around that.²⁵ Thinking holistically also involves awareness of how the record may appear to the eyes of care leavers. Without explaining the context in which the record was created, the information contained in it is left to stand on its own, without critique. Documentation needs to be added to records to help care leavers make sense of information in the record and any jargon used.²⁶ The archive, as the link between records creation and records access, is central to this conceptualisation.

In response to the issues discussed in this paper, and in the light of both the ‘life story pyramid’ and the ‘records continuum framework’, the ‘Who am I?’ project has developed the concept of a portable personal record. Such a record would comprise basic identity documents and information such as medical and educational records, as well as the information and documents necessary for a coherent narrative of a childhood, as a function of history and memory keeping. Collated from the very beginning of a child’s pathway through care, the portable personal record would be cumulative, and would be considered as information belonging to the child, travelling with the child at placement change and other transition points. Copies of the material in the portable personal record should also be preserved by the relevant professional organisations, to ensure that the information remains available if the originals are lost. Thus, this record would be available as a critical resource for care leavers seeking to understand childhood experiences and explore their identity (therapy and meaning making).

The portable personal record takes into consideration all dimensions of the records continuum. The record is created in collaboration with children or young people in care, incorporating content that reflects their perspective and has the potential to support identity. Capture into a records system involves ensuring clear file structure, accession and tracking information, and organisational policies about the location of the different components of the record. The records are organised in the archive. Organisations need to manage storage of material in a range of formats, such as paper documents, digital records and memorabilia, as well as ensuring that records are connected across media and across locations. And the archival procedures developed to organise and manage records should influence how records are created and captured in the first place.²⁷ Finally, the dimension of pluralisation – the record as collective memory – involves establishing recordkeeping regimes that cross organisational and jurisdictional boundaries, and can carry records beyond the life of an individual or an organisation. This dimension needs to be kept in mind at all other stages of the continuum. Personal information in the record will probably be accessed by care leavers in the future, and other information will be accessed by care leavers, their relatives, genealogists, historians and others, and put to purposes we may not yet imagine.

Conclusion

‘The archive is a live thing, living in retirement for a while’²⁸ is how a ‘Who am I?’ workshop participant expressed the dynamic relationship between the stories of those growing up in care and their records. This paper has approached the issue of recordkeeping from a social work perspective, maintaining a focus on children growing up in out-of-home care, their identity needs, and the way in which records can support them.

Documents are not a replacement for the actual relationships which support a person's sense of themselves, but they function as a critical resource for identification, personal histories and memory.

While the 'Who am I?' findings suggest that care providing organisations and out-of-home care practitioners have much to learn from recordkeeping professionals about practices to ensure that records support the identity of clients throughout their lifespan, there is a lesson here for recordkeeping professionals too. Archivists have a responsibility to ensure that the policies and procedures which govern the organisation, storage and release of records are also reflected in procedures for creating them. The multiple purposes of records, both in the present and in the future, need to be recognised by all those concerned with records, from the point of creation to that of access. Above all, in the out-of-home care sector, anyone working with children in care must be constantly mindful that the records they write and read represent the lives of very real people.

Endnotes

1. CREATE Young Consultant. Young consultants are young people trained and supported by CREATE to tell others in the community what it is like to be in care. They represent CREATE and young people in care at conferences, consultations, forums and other events.
2. See for example Sue Cumming et al, 'Raising the *Titanic*: Rescuing Social Work Documentation from the Sea of Ethical Risk', *Australian Social Work*, vol. 60, no. 2, June 2007, p. 241; Natalie Ames, 'Social Work Recording: A New Look at an Old Issue', *Journal of Social Work Education*, vol. 35, no. 2, Spring/Summer 1999, pp. 227–8 ; JD Kagle, 'Record Keeping: Directions for the 1990s', *Social Work*, vol. 38, no. 2 (March 1993), p. 190; Susan Tebb, 'Client-Focused Recording: Linking Theory and Practice', *Families in Society: the Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, vol. 72, no. 7, 1991, p. 430.
3. Jan Steyaert, 'Peeling the Client Information System Onion: An International Perspective', in Nick Gould and Keith Moultrie (eds), *Effective Policy, Planning and Implementation*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1997, pp. 35–44.
4. For more details of the 'Who am I?' research project, please see Gavan J McCarthy, Shurlee Swain and Cate O'Neill, 'Archives and Identity Formation for Forgotten Australians and Other Survivors of Out-of-home Care', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 40, no. 1, March 2012, pp. 1–3.
5. Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, *Bringing them Home: The Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, Sydney, 1997.
6. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record. Report on child migration*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 2001.
7. Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians who Experienced Institutional or Out-of-home Care as Children*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 2004.
8. Care leaver's evidence, quoted in Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee, *Forgotten Australians*, p. 255.
9. These issues are further discussed in other articles in this journal issue: Cate O'Neill, Vlad Selakovic and Rachel Tropea, 'Access to Records for People who were in Out-of-home Care: Moving Beyond "Third Dimension" Archival Practice', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 40, no. 1, March 2012, pp. 29–41; Shurlee Swain and Nell Musgrove, 'We Are The Stories We Tell About Ourselves: Child Welfare Records and the Construction of Identity among Australians who, as Children, Experienced Out-of-home "Care"', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 40, no. 1, March 2012, pp. 4–14.
10. Sue McKemmish, 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A Continuum of Responsibility', *Proceedings of the Records Management Association of Australia 14th National Convention*, 15–17 September 1997, RMAA Perth 1997, available at <<http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rerg/publications/recordscontinuum-smckp2.html>>, accessed May 2011.

11. Sue McKemmish, 'Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice', *Archival Science*, vol. 1, no. 4, December 2001, p. 335.
12. Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, *Bringing them Home*.
13. Richard Rose and Terry Philpot, *The Child's Own Story: Life Story Work with Traumatized Children*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2005, p. 26.
14. This discussion of the life story pyramid draws on the paper by Lauren Cowling: 'A Collaborative Life Story Archive? Issues for Reflection and Discussion', Preliminary Discussion Paper for the 'Who am I?' Current Practice Workshop 2, June 2009, available at <<http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/know/research/sector-research-partnership/partnership-projects>>, accessed 5 May 2011. Cowling cites a range of similar models which have been proposed within the life story work literature, for example: P Baynes, 'Untold Stories: A Discussion of Life Story Work', *Adoption & Fostering*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2008, pp. 43–9; B Betts and A Ahmad, *My Life Story*, Information Plus, Orkney, 2003; V Fahlberg, *A Child's Journey Through Placement*, Perspectives Press, Indianapolis, 1991; E Nicholls, 'Model Answer', *Community Care*, no. 1479, 7 March 2003, pp. 32–4; Rose and Philpot, *The Child's Own Story*.
15. Terri Scott and Shelley Cameron, 'Identity, Self-esteem and the use of Life Books for Children and Young People in Care', *Developing Practice*, no. 10, Winter 2004, p. 59.
16. L Campbell, 'Supporting the Journey: Issues in Co-creating a Sensitive Narrative of the Child's Identity and Experience "in care"', Report of 'Who am I?' Current Practice Workshop 2, June 2009, pp. 5–6, available at <<http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/know/research/sector-research-partnership/partnership-projects>>, accessed 5 May 2011.
17. Discussion papers and reports relating to this workshop series are available on the 'Who am I?' project website, available at <<http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/know/research/sector-research-partnership/partnership-projects>>, accessed 5 May 2011.
18. Margaret Kertesz, '100+ points of identity – Gathering Young People's History for the Future: Final Report', April 2011, available at <<http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/know/research/sector-research-partnership/partnership-projects>>, accessed 5 May 2011.
19. Keypass is a validated photo identification card, with name, address, date of birth, signature and emergency contact details. See <www.keypass.com.au>.
20. Margaret Kertesz, 'The Next Steps Forward: Moving Towards Child-Focused Identity Construction', Report of 'Who am I?' Current Practice Workshop 4, December 2009, p. 2, available at <<http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/know/research/sector-research-partnership/partnership-projects>>, accessed 5 May 2011; Kertesz, '100+ points of identity', p. 17.
21. Focus group participants, during research undertaken for Kertesz, '100+ points of identity'.
22. Respondent to the data accessibility exercise, quoted in Kertesz, '100+ points of identity', p. 20.
23. Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee, *Forgotten Australians*, p. 259.
24. Respondent to the data accessibility exercise, quoted in Kertesz, '100+ points of identity', p. 23.
25. Kertesz, '100+ points of identity', p. 25.
26. For a more detailed discussion of context, see O'Neill, Selakovic and Tropea, 'Access to Records for People who were in Out-of-home Care'.
27. McKemmish, 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow', p. 9. 'What electronic recordkeeping has forced us to confront is that archival methods must be applied throughout the life of the record. Now new problems arise as records age.'
28. Participant in 'Who am I?' Workshop 2, 26 June 2009.