

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF APPRAISAL IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND THEIR APPLICATION TO BUSINESS RECORDS PART II

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Part I of this paper examined the development of the principles of appraisal within the public archives tradition. A framework in which appraisal principles operate was drawn which could be applied to any institutional setting. Part II examines the applicability of government derived appraisal principles to both in-house and collecting business archives within this broader framework. The appraisal principles of two in-house business archives are examined and serve to illustrate similarities and differences between business and government appraisal principles. Some conclusions on the future direction of business archives are also considered.

5 Appraisal principles in business archives

5.1 The development of business archives—an overview

Although there were some business archives in the medieval period, modern company archives and the collecting of business records have their beginnings at the turn of the century.¹ The collecting of business records, mainly by universities in Australia, the US, Canada and Great Britain, was instigated by academic research into business history.²

In the United States, business collections began in the 1920s. By the 1930s corporate archives were being promoted by the Business Archives Committee of the Society of American Archivists.³

In Australia, before the 1950s, there was little academic interest in business history, although some business records were collected by libraries.⁴ As in the United States, Australia's specialised business collections grew out of an academic drive in the 1950s, mainly at the Australian National University and Sydney University. By 1960 the University of Melbourne had established a repository for Victorian business records, largely as a result of the activities of the Business Council of Australia's Victorian Branch.⁵

In-house business archives developed much more slowly than collecting business archives. There were some corporate archives in the United States in the 1930s, but the acceleration occurred in the 1950s. In Australia it was only in the 1970s that large corporate archives emerged, although banks had established archives since the 1950s.⁶ Some were an outgrowth of records management, others came from businesses wishing to retain their own historical collections.⁷ In addition, many companies were reaching their centenaries in the 1970s and 1980s. This often led to the preparation of company histories which in turn led to the establishment of an archives. In Australia there are only a few large in-house business archives. Universities and libraries are still actively collecting business records.⁸

Therefore, the two strands in business archives collections are those collected by research-based institutions and those retained within the business itself. In many ways, they parallel the differences between collecting manuscript libraries and public archives. The in-house business archivist, like the government archivist, is obliged to service first those whose records he administers, while the collecting business archivist, like a manuscript librarian, services the external researcher.

Most archivists favour the establishment of in-house business archives, with records management programs or closely allied to records management, as the most effective way of ensuring the preservation of permanent business records, using similar appraisal criteria to government archives.⁹

5.2 Factors influencing appraisal criteria of business records

A *The reasons for establishing business archives*

Businesses do not have democratic/political traditions of "individual rights" to information, which in the public sector has culminated in Freedom of Information legislation, and no legal requirements to maintain records beyond specified periods. The fear of revealing information which might assist competitors or aid government investigators, the many changes of ownership or the merger of companies, with the predecessor's records often destroyed, the lack of interest in anything non-profitable to the company, particularly

in times of economic recession, all militate against the establishment of business archives.¹⁰

The idea of "corporate history" as a corporate responsibility has led to the establishment of some company/corporate archives.¹¹ However, company archives, as the main form of business archives, have arisen because they are more highly regulated than other forms of business, and are compelled to create and maintain more records. Thus legislative requirements are the main reason businesses retain records beyond normal operational use. The other determinants of retention, though not necessarily permanent retention, are fiscal (for tax purposes), financial (accounting/audit purposes), administrative (decision making), and public relations.¹²

Thus a company archive is established for the use of the company, that is, the persons responsible for the continuing operations of the company. It may provide a symbol of corporate identity or prestige.¹³ The records management point of view is: "A record is worth keeping and possibly valuable only when it is used by someone in the company."¹⁴ Corporate archival programs need to be justified within administrative needs. For example, to provide records of past decisions in order to capitalise on past insights and mistakes and therefore save time and resources, to provide legal documentation for a company, particularly for legal proceedings, and for advertising material.¹⁵

The scale and size of the firm and its operations will also influence its need for an archives.¹⁶ If business records have research values beyond their statutory limit the company must establish a retention/appraisal policy as part of either its archives or records management program. Most correspondence records, for example, are not covered by legislation and would be in danger of total destruction.

B *The place of the archives in the organisation*

The position of the archives in the organisation affects its survival. Often the archives is staffed by a sole archivist with diverse responsibilities. A central position as close as possible to the top administrative position and a close relationship with records management or those responsible for that function are necessary in order that appraisal is seen as part of the entire disposal process.¹⁷

Often business archives are established to cater for the "historical records" and may include a museum function. If they are totally divorced from records management they will have no say in what they receive.¹⁸

C *Timing and the responsibility for appraisal in a business archives*

If appraisal is defined in a business context, as we have defined it

for government, that is as part of the disposal process, and thus part of the life cycle of the record, then the business archivist must also be involved in records creation.

Jane Nokes, corporate archivist for the Bank of Nova Scotia, sees the archives program as an information management one—an involvement from the creation of the record to its end as an essential requirement of establishing its value. Particularly in a small business archives, possibly combined with a records centre, archival control must occur as soon as the records are non-current; otherwise the records management role may not always lead to archival retention, unless the archivist is also involved in appraisal.¹⁹

Personnel at all levels should be involved in determining retention periods *vis-à-vis* business records, possibly as a committee system. Appraisal criteria can best be formulated on how the information is used and what is more important for the organisation.²⁰ Canadian archivist Christopher Hives sees appraisal as a total organisational commitment:

Effective disposition of records transcends the boundaries between current, semi-current and archival needs. Archivists must participate with other managers and users of the records in the preparation of retention and disposal schedules as much as in the public sector.²¹

Appraisal as part of the life cycle of the records brings government and business appraisal closer. Although some business archivists prefer an antiquarian role, nevertheless, the need for archives to be part of records and information management seems an inevitable trend in both business and government.²²

6 The application of traditional appraisal principles to business records

6.1 In-house business archives

Government record disposition in Australia has a statutory definition in most cases. In addition, the political notion of accountability, as well as administrative reference and cultural research are part of the public archives tradition.²³ Government derived appraisal principles, that is the evidential and informational secondary values of records, satisfy the government's dual role of serving the administration and the public. In government archives where appraisal is part of the disposal process, continuing primary values of records, legal, financial and administrative, have been integrated with the secondary values. There is a parallel with a government archives which has a central service function to all government agencies and an in-house business archives which serves its parent body. Both see evidential/administrative values for the administration as their first priority, with research values as an outgrowth of the former.

It is within this framework that government appraisal principles can be applied to business records.²⁴ A contrary viewpoint emerges if Schellenberg is interpreted as over-emphasising the informational value of records. Christopher Hives applies Margaret Cross Norton's interpretation of the value of records as administrative tools for the creator as applicable in a business context. This is achieved by integrating archives with records management.²⁵

Peter Moore, a lawyer and an archivist/records manager now specialising in legal information management, challenges government appraisal terminology for business records. He believes that business records need to be retained on the basis of the continuing needs for which they were created, that is statutory requirements, accounting principles and commercial expediency. Terms such as "legal" and "financial" values as defined in the public archives sector derive from Norton's definition via Brichford. The term "legal" relates to the government and its responsibility to retain evidence of its actions and relations with its citizens. In a strict legalistic interpretation, "legal" retention in Australia refers to a basis in statutory laws, consisting of Acts of Parliament, Executive Orders, administrative regulations made under statutes or common law decisions specifying creation or maintenance of records and does not accord with the definition evolved in the public archives usage.²⁶

Norton herself considered business records of less enduring value than government records because records of government transactions may be needed in lawsuits and they affected more people. She did not apply the definition of "legal" values to private records, which she felt lost their legal values after statutes of limitations had been fulfilled.²⁷

Moore claims that financial records which involve fiscal responsibility need not be retained permanently once the legislative, common law and audit requirements have been fulfilled, unless required for litigation purposes. Therefore, for Moore, "financial values", as a category for permanent retention, does not apply to business records.²⁸

Businesses, particularly companies, are regulated by many statutes. These include both statutes of general applications such as Income Tax and Sales Tax Assessment Acts as well as statutes of particular application such as the Companies Code. The legislation makes no reference to correspondence or other documentation of the firm. Expediency suggests destroying these records once their administrative usefulness has gone. Common law allows a person to destroy a record he/she has created if no statute law overrides it. However, malpractice, negligence and tort liability require records to be retained for long periods as, in some cases, legal proceedings may be possible even by heirs. Statutes of limitation affect the retention of these records.²⁹

For Moore, the combination of consumers' rights regarding company

products and company legislation regarding accountability of the directors, shareholders and contractors are the main “legal” values of business records.³⁰

Retention of records on the basis of possible litigation is not a true legal requirement. In fact, administrative values are the strongest inducement for the retention of business records. If records are seen as a useful basis for future action, even certain accounting records which help formulate policies and procedures may be retained.³¹

As in the public sector, administrative/evidential/informational values overlap. Consultant archivist Barbara Reeds’ checklist for appraising business records and the uses to which company records can be put illustrates the value of the records to the company. Many of these uses have both informational/administrative uses, for example product lines.³²

The Society of American Archivists, in its manual *Business Archives*, recommends the retention of records about employee relations and civic involvement as well as biographical data about major personalities.³³ The evidential records, such as why the organisation was formed and how it developed, are considered useful for historians and the company alike. This is the same type of information that business historians seek.³⁴

Doreen Wheeler, the first corporate archivist of BHP archives, considered that business records were preserved for the same reasons as government records, that is as evidence of the formation, structure, functions and operations of the creating body and because they have legal, fiscal, administrative and historical value to the organisation. She saw the main difference between government and business appraisal of records in relation to the user of the “informational” value of records. The outside user was irrelevant, even if in certain circumstances he/she may have access to the archives.³⁵

The Committee on Business Archives of the International Council on Archives envisages companies retaining their own records or preserving them through records management programs which are based on a retention policy consistent with statutory requirements, company policy and practical considerations such as cost and space. The Committee also recommends that, apart from the company’s long-term requirements, consideration of public, local and national interests in the widest sense, should be included, such as the historical development of an industry or a locality, or records which relate to government functions such as health or transport.³⁶

Business archives, when considered in terms of contemporary appraisal, apply the same principles as government archives. The pure research value applies to their historic collections and is more important in the context of collecting archives.

6.2 Collecting business archives and the research point of view

Business archivists writing from a business history point of view, often concerned with retrospective appraisal of records, particularly in a collecting archives, tend to see Schellenberg as biased towards government administrative needs.³⁷ The differences between a collecting and an in-house archives diminish if the collecting archives appraises the records in their organisational context.³⁸

Francis Blouin, archivist/lecturer at the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, points out that, if the statutory requirements are uppermost in business appraisal criteria, then only the evidential/administrative side of appraisal is addressed. His appraisal framework takes into account understanding the structure of the firm, the relationship between structure and the records generated and an appreciation of the breadth of their historical uses for business and economic history. Successful retention policies require the influence of high executives in the organisation.³⁹ He does not consider past research uses of business records as a useful framework for assessing their value, as past uses often ignored particular records.⁴⁰

Blouin uses a typology of business structure based on Alfred D. Chandler Jr's *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* to evaluate the content, the use and the relationship of records. Blouin examines the variation in the accounting practice and record procedures of individual firms and the evolution of the corporate structure to be analysed to provide an explanation of the changing purpose/function of record-keeping as evidence of the structural transformations.⁴¹

David T. Merrett, a Senior Lecturer in Economic History at Monash University, believes a similar typology is valid for Australian corporate structures, by examining the timing and transition from family firms to managerial hierarchies which occurred in Australia in a different time scale to the United States or the United Kingdom.⁴²

Joanne Yates' appraisal framework for business collections, both retrospective and contemporary, is written from a user's point of view. She extends Blouin's functional/record relationship thesis to include communication, consisting of the organisational structure, communication technology and the written documents themselves. She considers Schellenberg's emphasis on retaining high level policy decisions as not applicable to the business context where decision making can occur at any level in the structure.⁴³

Yates considers retaining a good set of records from companies which represent various business structures, rather than retaining many company records which document the top structure only.⁴⁴ This view is influenced by the trend to write about an industry rather than an individual firm.⁴⁵

Collecting business archives are particularly concerned with research

trends, which affect both their appraisal of older records as well as more current records. For example, Robert Lovett, the Archivist of the Baker Library at Harvard, looks at an entire industry, rather than the individual company, and also considers his users. For example, if he chooses to document the textile industry, he selects records on the basis of a group of similar firms of a similar size, production techniques and labour conditions for a particular date range, and substitutes gaps in the records of one firm in these themes with those of another, for example one firm may have a full set of production records the other of sales records. He is concerned to find sufficient documentation to reach conclusions.⁴⁶

Collecting archives usually select a particular subject matter or an industry within a region. Some of the themes collected include business failures or business functions (for example marketing, finance). Lovett admits that business historians rarely agree on what to keep apart from key records. Routine records, such as payrolls, are often a disputed area.⁴⁷ Usually the perception of its research audience and the familiarity with current business history is reflected in the appraisal criteria of a collecting business archives.⁴⁸ However, there is a risk that future interests may not be documented if current academic research interests alone are reflected in the collection.⁴⁹

The Committee on Business Archives of the International Council on Archives suggests a representative collection built on the basis of a total industry, which looks at the position of the firm in the economic system of the industry, the country as a whole and regional differences, and possibly retaining some "museum pieces". For larger firms, records need to reflect their total activities.⁵⁰

The Business Archives Council of Australia (Victorian Branch) issued a disposal schedule in 1967 which could be adapted to individual firms. It aims at documenting all aspects of a firm's operations. Although specific classes of records are listed, correspondence series are to be retained permanently on a selected basis. It seeks to err on the side of retaining as much as possible. Like Lovett's views, many entries are based on the previous use of records by researchers, for example wages books are to be retained permanently.⁵¹

The University of Melbourne Archives carries out surveys on company premises and selects records which represent or typify a particular theme. Experience with researchers and a knowledge of current research trends are central to its appraisal approach.⁵²

Collecting archives often receive records which have been heavily culled and for which the administrative context has been lost⁵³. It is rare for them to participate in detailed systematic appraisal and scheduling. Even an in-house business archives that serves as a repository for an "historic collection" with little influence on current transfers emphasises the research

value of its records. In this context the parallel with a government archives diminishes and the archival appraisal principles differ.

Overseas studies have shown that the emphasis on the purely research/historical value of business records has not always led to business archives being established or encouraged business to retain records. The antiquarian approach to selecting records can lead to the loss of contemporary records of value.⁵⁴

The inability or unwillingness of businesses to care for their own archives will always leave a necessary role for institutions to provide that service; however, the business itself should have a systematic and consistent appraisal policy.⁵⁵

The rationale that governments retain records to give continuity and support future decision making should be emphasised in the business context also as the only pragmatic reason for a business retaining records on a permanent basis.

7 Business archives—some Australian case studies

7.1 Background

The need to study private sector institutions, what they retain and on what basis, has not been sufficiently explored.⁵⁶ There appears to be a dearth of case studies on the development of corporate archives and the direction in which they are heading, particularly their programs and goals, their successes and failures.⁵⁷

The 1986 survey, initially of one hundred and thirty companies, conducted by the Business Archives Special Interest Group of the Australian Society of Archivists and the Historic Records Search, aimed at establishing the nature and the extent of business holdings as part of the Australian Bicentennial Authority's register of paper records of historical significance.⁵⁸ The provision of records management and archival advice by the Australian Society of Archivists was an offshoot of the survey. Unfortunately only thirty-seven per cent of the one hundred and thirty companies completed their survey returns. The survey included companies with archival records but did not include those known to employ an archivist or those which have deposited records with an archival institution. The questions covered such issues as whether the company employed a records manager, whether systematic disposal of non-current records was undertaken and what happened to non-current records. A survey of this kind does not reveal the rationale behind records selected and the low return makes any trends suspect. It is of interest that, although few of the companies claimed to employ an archivist or records manager, the majority claimed to carry out systematic disposal. By whom and how are issues which need to be followed up.

In the United States, the Society of American Archivists carried out surveys of business archives in 1968 and 1975.⁵⁹ The 1968 survey was mainly concerned with the extent of record holdings. It also had a low response rate. The 1975 survey expanded on such issues as who ran the archives and the type of company with an archives. More than half the companies surveyed employed an archivist with approximately half of the remainder run by a records manager and the other half by a librarian. Smaller firms opted for the combination with the library, but the librarian was more selective in retention, with a more comprehensive selection where an archivist was employed. Where a records manager ran the archives, the destruction role was more important and the archives was underutilised. It was found that the more recent large firms employed archivists. Outside use of the archives was greater where a professional archivist was employed.

These American trends are not dissimilar to Australian developments as evidenced in the case studies of the Coles Myer Ltd Archives and the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd (BHP) Archives. These studies are based mainly on personal interview with the company archivists and some secondary source material. They are not in-depth studies. Issues covered include the rationale behind their appraisal policy and their relationship with records management. Any trends which emerge would relate only to large corporate bodies.

7.2 BHP Archives (Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd)

Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd was founded in 1885. It has transformed itself from an Australian, predominantly steel, company to an Australia-based international resources company of major proportions. BHP established its archives on a professional basis in 1976 with the appointment of a sole archivist.

The archives was established to preserve essentially Head Office records for the company's own use. Some operational site records are included as well as records of some subsidiary companies. Records are preserved which have permanent or long-term value of legal, financial, administrative or historical usage potential. Wider use by scholars or the general community is regarded as a privileged use of the records. Archives staff familiarise company staff with the contents and objectives of the archives by way of an education program which includes lectures and in-house exhibitions. The archives is also responsible for semi-current holdings.⁶⁰

From 1976 to 1979 the Corporate Archivist reported directly to the Company Secretary. An administrative tie with the Company Secretary remained until 1982. Despite several organisational changes in the 1980s, the Archives has maintained a reporting line to the General Manager, Corporate Planning, except for a period in 1982 and 1985. Since 1986 the reporting line is through the Manager, Corporate Information Services

to the General Manager Information Systems. The library is part of the corporate group. The attachment of the archives to the corporate group means that it can solicit corporate records but must depend on good will and persuasion to receive divisional records.

From a sole archivist in 1976, the professional archives staff has grown to four archivists. Since 1982 the Corporate Archivist has had a separate budget.⁶¹

The records management area of BHP came into existence in late 1983. For a brief period it formed part of the Information Communication and Services group which included archives. It is now part of BHP Information Technology which is a company in its own right. It provides a service to BHP as well as an external consultancy service regarding electronic retrieval packages and filing and disposal systems. Records management is concerned with establishing record-keeping systems, mainly for correspondence series as well as preparing schedules on a company-wide basis. Several schedules have been prepared and general housekeeping schedules are under way. Departments are charged for schedules.

Appraisal, as in the Australian Archives, is part of the disposal process leading to a schedule. Appraisal of current or non-current records in departmental custody is the responsibility of records management staff who draft a schedule. The archives staff review the draft and comment on entries. Unscheduled records in archival custody are appraised by archival staff. As a result of the updating of large parts of the archival documentation for the computerised finding aids, some records have been re-appraised in the light of the disposal of similar types of current records.

There are no formalised selection criteria as in the Australian Archives or the Public Record Office of Victoria, although the records management staff claim to apply government principles of appraisal except for individual rights issues. Schedules are based on activity/transactions; thus, the functional value of the records is addressed. Criteria are weighted towards legislative and financial requirements, particularly possible litigation as advised by the creating department. Financial records are important not only as accounting tools but also as background documentation to important deals. Records of public relations value are not specifically selected. Broad issues such as BHP's involvement in community interest topics such as pollution are retained permanently. Thus, the informational value of records is also addressed. The original policy of retaining only Head Office records was based on the assumption that all policy documents should be preserved, and Head Office was the seat of policy making. However, since 1985, decision making has devolved to the divisional level as a result of organisational changes so that records at these levels of the hierarchy are now appraised in the light of recording policy documentation.

The appraisal of records in archival custody relates to the objectives of the archives, that is documenting the policies and decisions of the company rather than operational information, retaining records required by law or statute (often beyond the legal limits) and vital or enduring historical records such as contracts with outside organisations which led to some particular BHP venture, or records of defunct BHP subsidiaries. Recall by the company is an added factor in determining the length of time records should be kept.

The cost factor of storing records is important. The charging of departments for surveys and schedules reflects the cost component of appraisal also.

Contact with other business archives is informal. Model schedules such as that of the Business Council of Australia Victorian Branch are considered outdated. There does not seem to be an awareness of the direction that other business archives are moving towards.⁶²

7.3 Coles Myer Ltd Archives

The parent company G. J. Coles dates back to 1914. The proprietary company G. J. Coles & Coy Pty Ltd was formed in 1921 and became a public company in 1927. During the late 1940s and early 1950s it took over many variety chains and moved into the food retailing field. It has since moved into supermarkets, discount departments stores and speciality retailing. The merger with Myer (itself formed in 1901) in 1985 was a significant move by the company.

An archivist was appointed in 1985 before the merger took place, primarily to research a history of G. J. Coles, by assisting the author in the production of a history to be published in 1989 for Coles' seventy-fifth anniversary. The Myer Emporium was acquired shortly after the appointment and its historic collection was inherited.

The archives was initially established so that the company history could be researched. The archives is now seen as a means of preserving key documents and artefacts on a continuing basis as a resource for the company, as well as limited external users (usually at postgraduate level or for publication purposes). The archivist maintains the archives of Coles Myer Ltd and all its present and past subsidiaries, carries out oral history projects of past and present management and staff, assists with the design and production of displays and exhibitions, assists records management to ensure appropriate disposition of records, prepares historical publications on a regular and occasional basis, and provides advice on conservation.

The archivist has a combined archivist/museum role and is part of the Corporate Affairs Department which has a public relations/media role. She reports to the Director of Corporate Affairs, who, in turn, reports

to the Chairman and Chief Executive, which are key reporting positions. There is also an archives officer and an archives assistant.

The initiative for a records management program came from the archivist. It functions as an in-house committee consisting of a records management consultant, representatives from key areas of the organisation and the archivist. The committee oversees the production of disposal schedules. All corporate records of Coles Myer Ltd from 1985 are now scheduled. The schedules have been devised so that non-current records can be transferred out of offices and into intermediate storage after one to two years. Therefore housekeeping records have been high on the agenda of disposal schedules.

The responsibility for appraisal of records not in archival custody is a joint archives/records management responsibility. Pre-1985 records which have not been scheduled and are in archival custody are appraised by the archivist. Usually when a store closes the archivist appraises records that are extant. The archivist can veto any records that staff wish to destroy.

Formal selection criteria have not been established. However, the current archivist, partly as a result of her previous employment in a government archives, applies the same general criteria of administrative/evidential and informational values which have been derived from the public archives tradition. Schedules devised for post-1985 records are heavily based on legal/statutory requirements of record retention. However, many records which may have historical significance are listed for review at a later date. Disposal classes which are based on the informational/research value of the records have been devised by the archivist on the basis of her historical knowledge of the company. The archivist is considered the expert in regard to historical values. Records which are retained permanently are those of Head Office and the trading companies, and include Board minutes, staff magazines, product lines, budget planning, a file on each store, news bulletins, press releases, selected correspondence and staff club records.

Space for storing records is a key issue, particularly when a store closes. The records must be appraised immediately. The archives is at an embryonic stage, and therefore much of the rationale for procedures followed has not been formalised.

Contact with other business archives is very limited; however, the archivist gives talks on request, for example to the Australian Institute of Management. There does not appear to be an awareness of the direction in which business archives in general are moving; however, the archivist believes that most businesses are preserving very little. An exemplary role to other businesses is not actively pursued.⁶³

7.4 A comparative analysis of the case studies

The business case studies indicate the same factors which affect appraisal criteria in a government context apply in the corporate sector. These include the position of the archives in the organisation, how and when appraisal takes place, who applies the criteria, the role of the archivist in vetoing appraisal decisions, cost factors and specific record evaluation factors. Although administrative/legal/evidential values tend to override informational values in the appraisal of current records, the informational values are provided by the archivist. Their historical collections are viewed more highly for their informational values. Both of the corporate organisations studied have less-formalised appraisal criteria than the kind applied by government archives, particularly the Australian Archives.⁶⁴

The need to destroy as much as possible is felt strongly by BHP records management staff. The archival training of BHP's records management staff has assisted in the cooperation between archives and records management.

The establishment of a business archives following the writing of a company history is a common origin of a company archives. The Coles Myer archivist, because of her research and museum role and her position in the Public Relations Department, has a bias in her collection of records relating to publicity. She has a good reporting line to top management which BHP has partly lost as a result of its integration with the information services area.

The appraisal veto by the archivist in the appraisal process is an important factor in both organisations. Any further comparisons are not warranted as both of these archives are at different stages of development. BHP has moved from being run by a sole archivist to an archives cell of four plus two clerical assistants, while the Coles Myer archivist has a dual researcher/archivist role and commenced only in 1985.

Although trends cannot easily be drawn from the case studies chosen, they do fit into a pattern of business archives as discussed in other studies. These include the need for a business archives to offer a service to the company first, interaction with all levels of the organisation when appraising records, a closer relationship with records management as a move from a purely historical collection to a more recent collection of records, confidentiality of holdings and appraisal weighted to internal users. BHP archives also has a progressive view of its obligation to utilise the archives as an administrative support service for the managers and thus providing an essential service to the organisation. Further in-depth studies of business archives' appraisal policies are needed before any more definite conclusions can be drawn.

8 Conclusion

Major Australian public archival institutions adopted and modified

American appraisal principles as a result of appraising both continuing agency administrative needs and the government's accountability to the public. Apart from the rights of the individual as a component of government appraisal policy, in-house business archives apply similar appraisal principles to Australian public archival institutions in which the evidential/administrative value of records dominates.

The same factors which affect government appraisal affect business records appraisal. These include the institutional objectives, the timing and responsibility for appraisal in the life cycle of the records and cost factors. A formalised set of criteria applied consistently and documented is essential if business archives are to be accountable to their own organisation for what records they retain. Ideally, businesses should establish their own archives, but evidence in the United States and Australia indicates that only large companies need and can afford them. Small businesses need to have a records management program with an appraisal component as part of their scheduling, possibly seeking advice from the Business Archives Special Interest Group of the Australian Society of Archivists.

Collecting business archives have a role to play in providing advice and storage. However, their emphasis on subject specialisation should be integrated with traditional administrative/evidential and informational values.

A fine balance between records management and archival considerations of appraisal are as necessary in business as in government, if administrative values alone are not to dominate, although they are the only basis of convincing cost-efficient organisations to accept archival programs. Perhaps a final review by the archivist, before any material for destruction is implemented, can assure that research values are given a final consideration.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Business archives: studies in international practice*, Committee on Business Archives of the International Council on Archives, München: Saur, 1983, pp. 3-4, 72-3, 79. Although business archives refer to free enterprise private records, trade union, economic organisations and industry records are usually included under the umbrella of business archives. They are all collected on a voluntary basis.
2. For the history of the development of business archives, see
for Australia, Great Britain, and the United States.

Macmillan, David. "Business archives: a survey of developments in Great Britain, the United States of America and Australia" in Hollaender, Albert E. J. (ed), *Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, Chichester, Sussex: 1962, pp.108-27.

For the United States.

Lovett, Robert W. "Business history and business archives: an overview" *Bulletin of the Committee on Business Archives*. International Council on Archives, Brussels: 1978, pp. 15-21.

Blouin, Francis X. "An agenda for the appraisal of business records" in Peace, Nancy E. (ed), *Archival choices: managing the historical record in an age of abundance*, Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1984, pp. 61-80.

For Canada.

Archer, John Hall. "Business records: the Canadian scene". *American Archivist* Vol. 32, No. 3, July 1969, pp. 251-59.

Hives, Christopher L. "History, business records, and corporate archives in North America". *Archivaria* Vol. 22, Summer 1986, pp. 40-57.

3. Hedlin, Edie. *Business archives: an introduction*, SAA Basic Manual Series. Society of American Archivists, Chicago: 1978, p. 5
4. Fischer, Gerald L. "Book review: Essays in memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson". *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol. 2, No. 6, April 1964, p. 8.
5. University of Melbourne. *Records management manual*, University of Melbourne, 1984, s.5.11.1.
6. Orlovich, Peter. "Some basic assumptions underlying the education and training of archivists". *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol. 6, No. 6, Feb. 1976, p. 209.
Burke, J. L. and Shergold, C. M. "What are archives?" *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol. 6, No. 6, Feb. 1976, p. 238.
7. *Ibid.*
Hives, *History, op. cit.*, p. 42.
Saretzky, Gary, D. "North American business archives: results of a survey". *American Archivist* Vol. 40, No. 4, Oct 1977, p. 414.
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