



*“ . . . in the Agora ”*

### **Recycled Paper and Disposal Schedules**

The evidence coming forward so far suggests that recycled paper with a content of up to 100% recycled fibre can and should be used for purposes which do not require records to be kept for greater than 10 years.

This therefore means in theory that up to 90% of all records could be kept on recycled paper.

Records managers will have to become much more knowledgeable about the ramifications of using certain types of paper. Most organisations in the public sector have records managers but few have specialist archives staff so that it is logical that records managers will fill the gap.

The consequences are serious for records managers and, more importantly, for archivists, if incorrect paper is used for the creating of documents, especially if they are to be retained for the long term or permanently.

The solution would be to improve records disposal techniques. Disposal schedules may now have to indicate what type of paper should be used **BEFORE** the record is created.

The advantages of such a system would be to promote records disposal schedules as an important management tool, to control records throughout their life span and not just at the end, as has been traditionally thought.

It will also mean that the identification of record series and their relationship to a disposal authority will need to be undertaken at the beginning of the process rather than at the end. This could mean functional disposal schedules (schedules for records not covered by the relevant G.D.S.) would be written earlier, rather than when we run out of storage space.

With a need to determine, at the time of creation of a file, how long particular classes of records will need to be kept and also the type of paper which needs to be used, disposal schedules should be changed to indicate what type of paper is to be used before the record is created.

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### **Chris Hurley**

Chris Hurley was removed from the statutory position of Keeper of Public Records for Victoria on 5 October 1990. He will continue at the Public Record Office Victoria as Chief Archivist.

Chris Hurley came to Victoria in 1981 to take over from foundation Keeper Harry Nunn. He brought to the position ten years of experience with Australian Archives, including extensive involvement in the development of archives legislation for the Commonwealth of Australia, and a prodigious knowledge of public recordkeeping.

Under his leadership, the Public Record Office has developed on the foundations established during its early years into an organisation which is in the forefront of the records management and archival profession.

Constantly battling the mismatch between the responsibilities set down in the Public Records Act and the resources allocated to the public records program in Victoria, the Public Record Office has nevertheless under Chris Hurley's management been able to achieve maximum impact with the resources available to it, and to establish a significant role for the office in both the archival heritage and management of Government assets programs. Most recently it has proposed changes to the way Victoria manages its records and records-related resources which could, linked with charging for Public Record Office secondary storage and disposal consultancy services, demonstrably result in a much more cost-effective result for the Government.

Guided by Chris Hurley's vision, the Public Record Office has engaged in pioneering work in the areas of general scheduling and archival system development. Its Local Government General Disposal Schedule was a

first in Australia; and its work with the Victorian Department of Health on the disposal of public hospital patient records has received international attention. The development in Victoria of a Group-modified series system for the documentation of the history of the Government in Victoria and its records, and the control of Public Record Office holdings, is breaking new ground.

Another major achievement under Chris Hurley's Keepership has been the adoption in principle by the Victorian Government of a new archival access policy for the State, as recommended by the Legal and Constitutional Committee of the Victorian Parliament. Currently there is no system of access by law to non-personal records created before 1978 and held outside the Public Record Office or an approved place of deposit. The new policy, providing a 30 year-rule, statutory criteria for closure of public records, review rights for closed records, linked to Freedom of Information legislation, and mandatory transfer requirements, would for the first time provide a right of public access to all public records in Victoria.

Chris Hurley has steadfastly upheld the role of a government archival authority in a modern democratic state, underpinning the integrity of the public record and the community's right to access and freedom of information by the implementation of disposal programs which ensure that public records are not destroyed without proper evaluation and authorisation.

As Keeper of Public Records Chris Hurley has conscientiously and with integrity fulfilled his responsibilities to the public record and the people of Victoria.

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