Reviews

Edited by Adrian Cunningham

Peter Cochrane (ed.), *Remarkable Occurrences: The National Library of Australia's First 100 Years 1901–2001*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2001. xiii + 283pp. ISBN 0 642 10730 0. $59.95 + $5.00 postage and handling. Available from the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

We should feel twice privileged to have this sumptuous volume, highly satisfying to eye and mind alike.

Privileged firstly to be able to afford it. As one might expect, it is expensive even with a staff or Friends discount, yet its price probably is not a true reflection of its cost. The funds devoted to illustrations and design signal a purpose to celebrate and make a statement. Many important visitors will also leave the Library well rewarded.

Privileged too because we have a centenary anniversary volume fifty-nine years early! The National Library was established by legislation in 1960, not 1901. True, within the minds of certain parliamentarians (and to a lesser extent of some early Commonwealth government ministers) there did develop the vision of an additional (ie national library) role for the new Parliamentary Library, and over the next 60 years an informal and then a more explicit role did in fact develop. Thus any number of pretext start dates can be found (eg 1902 when the first books for non-parliamentary purposes were purchased, 1909 with the securing of EA Petherick's collection or 1912 with the passage of a revised *Copyright Act*) and with more justification, 1919 with the creation of the Australian Section or 1935 when funds were first explicitly allocated for national activities. Yet even these latter milestones frame what one former NLA Director-General has termed 'at best a *sub rosa* National Library', thus dismissing the first eighteen years. The opportunities aligning with federation's centenary makes 1901 too tempting to miss of course, and a yearlong program of events are currently underway.

The key to *Remarkable Occurrences'* appeal is its use of a mixed group of academic and freelance writers and (interestingly, only two) staff who blend

lavish illustration with descriptions of and commentary on various collections and related 'acquisition narratives' covering their journey to the Library. It is the 'History Today' formula the Library adopted long ago for its monthly *National Library of Australia News* and has repeated in publications such as *The People's Treasures: Collections in the National Library of Australia* (NLA, 1993) and *Paradise Possessed: The Rex Nan Kivell Collection* (NLA, 1998).

In no sense do the fifteen chapters amount to an official institutional history. However, the editor's Introduction and oddly positioned second chapter summarising the 1901–60 years, combined with Paul Turnbull's final chapter on a century of national bibliographical developments form a rough chronological account. The remaining thirteen chapters incorporate historical aspects and thus add up to a history of collection building. Thereby the somewhat painful divorces of ScreenSound Australia and the National Archives of Australia are covered and, to my mind, in a mature and objective way. The archival readership in particular might thus start with chapters on
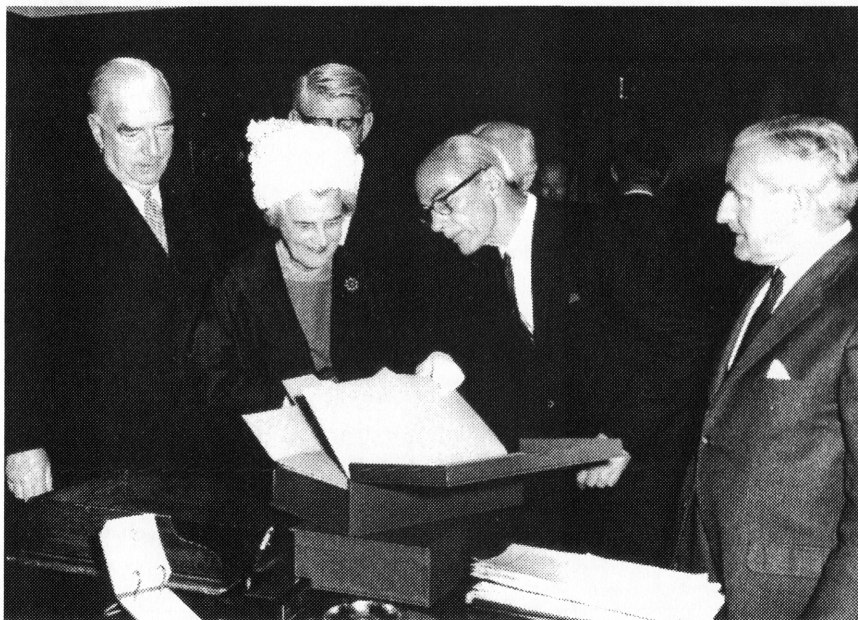
Sir Robert Menzies, Dame Pattie Menzies, Professor JA La Nauze and Harold White at the presentation of the Deakin papers to the National Library in 1965 (NLA: MS1540/19/604), reproduced in *Remarkable Occurrences*, p. 128.

politicians' papers by Stuart Macintyre, and those on film, music, sound and oral history by the editor (again!), Robyn Holmes and Barry York.

These and indeed all the chapters are self-contained. If there is a coherent linking idea, what these core chapters say is that over the years some very fine research materials were acquired, largely thanks to the persistence of collectors who formed them and then to the librarians who convinced them to favour the National. Their authors tell how· this happened, note what the guiding acquisition vision was and how it evolved, and assess the resultant material's relative cultural significance. On this latter score, Nicholas Thomas's piece on Pacificana collected by Rex Nan Kivell is one of the few to specify clearly how the peculiar combinations of the items collected have advanced scholarly knowledge. Some contributions span an entire collection format (music, maps, oral history recordings, objects) although most look at broad subject themes, a collector or two, or as in Greg Dening's gem of a chapter, simply the holograph journal of Cook's *Endeavour* voyage. The overall effect is highly readable, and makes collectors and librarians alike appear anything but one-dimensional, and amply counter the lapses into a self-congratulatory tone and 'prized treasure' style of collection description.

The structure of the book almost guarantees imbalance. Australiana, Pacificana, and the efforts of collectors such as EA Petherick, Sir John Ferguson and Rex Nan Kivell and 'documenters' such as Hardy Wilson, John Meredith and Keast Burke take precedence over material built incrementally by traditional library methods, and inevitably some areas of the collection such as newspapers and rare books are barely mentioned. Against particularly the latter, the decision to devote an entire chapter to the library's 7–800 objects is strange, particularly as they have never been a priority collecting area. Accordingly, acknowledgement of the Library's leading staff also varies. Despite the ostensible 100-year coverage, Kenneth Binns' and Sir Harold White's years (1928–70) dominate the book. Perhaps factors such as their more direct involvement in collection building, fewer available formed collections now and skewed internal documentation explain why. One ends up with the impression that hardly any issues of collecting strategy arose and nothing worth a chapter was acquired during the reign of Library heads George Chandler, Harrison Bryan and Warren Horton from the last twenty-five years.

To focus finally on the purely archival aspects, the book has much food for thought and would support several case studies for archival studies students. For one, it highlights some of the challenges operating a 'total archives' brings. These range from attracting competition from more specialist competitors to ensuring the intellectual integrity of a body of records of mixed format especially when traditional library practice, user expectation and curatorial

and preservation specialisations point to separate format departments (manuscripts, pictorial, maps, music and so on), and all of which embrace artificial and archival collections. Secondly, we have yet another reminder (via John Thompson's chapter '"Let time and chance decide": Deliberation and fate in the collecting of personal papers') that the collecting of archives, particularly when focused on individuals, has its own special realities. Personal attitudes and practices relating to record making, keeping, collecting and destroying all come into play. One is left doubting whether everything is so simple as to mean that mere exhortation to 'intervene earlier' is the answer.

There are very few slips in *Remarkable Occurrences*: though not especially looking for them, I noticed only two problems (in captioning: Fa(n)com, p. 263 and indexing: Nicol Smith, p. 172/3). A more unfortunate feature was the clarity of the captions overall, where presumably the aim was to avoid overwhelming the illustrations. Even for young eyes, the print is simply too faint. But the balancing compensations are many. We say our work is vital for supporting understandings of Australian life through the management and retention of its personal, corporate and social memory. The National Library and its predecessors have also done much to further that important end, as this justifiably celebratory volume shows.

Michael Piggott
University of Melbourne Archives

Convergence, The Joint National Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists and the Records Management Association of Australia, Hobart, 2–5 September 2001

The inaugural joint conference Convergence 2001 represented the commitment by both ASA and RMAA professional societies to work together to enhance professional development of their members. Convergence was also used to bring together theory and practice, cultural heritage and technology and the larger interests of society with the profession of recordkeeping. The conference succeeded in raising some of the issues inherent in these convergences.

Verne Harris began the conference presentations with an intellectually stimulating keynote address. He encouraged us to extend or look outside the usual concept of what 'the record' is and to recognise it as a construct dependent on the particular time, place and social and political dynamics of its existence. Harris deconstructed the concept of text and context of the creation and use of a record and then its presumed use as reliable and authentic

evidence. While admitting that we are reliant on text and context, he suggested we should recognise that the meanings of these concepts are 'blurred and porous'. He also invited us to consider the role of storytelling in recordkeeping – to be aware that narrative plays a part in the construction of context for our texts. Using Latour's account of the importance of the file and Derrida's description of an archive as a trace being consigned to a place, Harris characterised the power inherent in recordkeeping and the struggle to use that power constructively. He concluded by enjoining us, as we work within the confines of 'neat' theories, to be aware of the complexity of 'the record' and of the encompassing power dynamics within recordkeeping.

Several presentations addressed the question of online access to records. Anne Gilliland-Swetland discussed the use of eXtensible Markup Language (XML) in enabling online access to electronic records. She stressed the need for standardisation of recordkeeping or archival descriptive practices to provide interoperativity between different information sources. After describing the potential of XML to address many access requirements, Gilliland-Swetland admitted that practical implementation lags behind theory. Limitations include the lack of available software to support access requirements and the lack of consistency in managing hierarchy in records description. She called for greater dialogue within the recordkeeping community on these matters, but admitted that she was pleased to be on the academic or theory side and was thus happy to leave the challenge of implementation to others.

Implementation challenges were also featured in the presentation by Justine Heazlewood and Howard Quenault. Heazlewood stated that the implementation of the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy at the Department of Infrastructure – where theory is being implemented into practice – is a learning situation, and it is important to have an open and flexible framework. She said that some assumptions about electronic records were being questioned and therefore theories were being reassessed and amended. It would seem that theory and practice are indeed converging, but not linearly.

Mike Steemson, MC for the conference, described the development of the International Standards Organisation Records Management Standard ISO 15489 – and he did it to music! To the tune of 'Frosty the Snowman' we were indelibly imprinted with ISO 15-4-8-9. Steemson told the story of Australia's participation and influence (Australian Standard 4390 was the inspiration for ISO 15489) and of rewrites, criticism and more rewrites. It would have been nice to have had the differences between AS 4390 and ISO 15489 fully described, but the standard is not yet published. As a presentation, this was most definitely one of note.

Allan Connelly-Hansen presented some of the difficulties of implementing best practice recordkeeping, guided by AS 4390 and the DIRKS (Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems) methodology, in an environment where infrastructure is poor. He described the development of a recordkeeping framework for the International Criminal Tribunal established to prosecute those responsible for genocide in Rwanda. His story of Rwanda's laid-back culture, ad hoc practices and recent improvements to the recordkeeping system was arresting, and had elements that most records professionals could appreciate, but unfortunately there was insufficient time for his complete presentation. Connelly-Hansen recommended the Tribunal's internship program to postgraduate students.

The convergence of cultural heritage resources and the 'small world effect' was the topic of a joint presentation by Gavan McCarthy and Bruce Smith. McCarthy presented the theory of the small world effect, or 'six degrees of separation', in the context of the World Wide Web. He used examples from science for a schematic representation of sustainable networks and structures, and he called on archivists to help develop the 'who, what, where and when' structure of public information available on the Web. Smith presented two examples of implementation of the small world theory – the *Guide to Australian Business Records* and the Australian Trade Union Heritage Resource Gateway project. Both projects present summary information from the viewpoint of each community and are guides to additional online and conventional information which may be found in multiple and sometimes unrelated repositories. This presentation was a good exploration of how theory and practice can converge.

Jackie Bettington and Sally Algate very cleverly presented the Ying (theory) and Yang (practice) of the development of the Queensland Government Recordkeeping Framework and its implementation in Education Queensland. They cited e-government initiatives as well as accountability failures as the impetus for putting recordkeeping on the government policy agenda. The actual implementation is in the embryonic stage and is expected to progress over the next three to five years. The strategies required for implementation are still being developed. The take-home message was that communication and collaboration between various stakeholders is essential.

After a moving presentation on recordkeeping responsibilities and reconciliation by Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott, the presenters put to the audience a motion that ASA and RMAA endorse all recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report and ask Australian governments and other relevant bodies to double funding for such recordkeeping activities as archives

scholarships for Indigenous students, Link-up Centres and return of relevant documentation to communities. After much discussion from the floor regarding the motion and protocol, it was decided that a proposal would be put to the ASA Council and RMAA Board recommending such a motion. When asked to provide a show of hands, all participants either indicated agreement or refrained from voting. Subsequently, RMAA President Chris Fripp announced that the proposal put without notice contravened the rules of RMAA protocol. Convergence seemed remote until ASA President Gavan McCarthy announced that the Memorandum of Understanding between ASA and RMAA provides a means by which the ASA can present the motion to the RMAA Board. Hopefully, recognition of, and commitment to, recordkeeping issues that affect the larger interests of society may further catalyse convergence by archives and records professionals.

Brenda Le Grand
Department of Human Services Victoria

European Union, Interchange of Data Between Administrators Program, *MoReq Specification – Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records,* European Union, Brussels, 2001. Available online at *147.29.81.19/ Indis35Prod/doc/310.*

In today's business environment we have an increasing need for electronic systems capable of managing records in their variety of forms. We also have a significant need to incorporate recordkeeping requirements into an endless array of business systems that should be making and managing records of the activities they conduct. To enable these requirements to be met we, as a profession, have to specify the functionality we expect from systems that make and manage records. Essentially, we have to identify what a records system is and what it should be capable of doing.

Numerous recent projects have sought to identify this functionality. For example, *Functional Requirements for Electronic Recordkeeping,* Department of Public Works and Services Request for Tender No. ITS 2323 for the Supply of Records and Information Management Systems (March 2001), is accessible in the short term through the Department of Public Works and Services website at *www.dpws.nsw.gov.au* and Public Record Office UK, *Functional Requirements for Electronic Records Management Systems* (November 1999) is accessible via the PRO website at *www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/eros/ invest/sorcontents.htm.* Drawing quite significantly from the PRO document, a noteworthy addition to this work is the European Commission's *Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records* or 'MoReq'.

MoReq specifies the functional requirements for an electronic records management system (ERMS). It outlines the functionality an ERMS should possess – the activities it should perform, the controls it should have in place and the services it should provide. The development of the MoReq was commissioned by the European Commission's Interchange of Data Between Administrators (IDA) program. It was compiled by a group of specialised consultants, Cornwell Affiliates, who were supported by a small international team of experts including Luciana Duranti and Nils Bruebach. Once completed, the MoReq was validated by a group of public and private sector organisations and officially launched in March 2001. It is a European specification but, being a model rather than a prescriptive standard, is intended to be internationally applicable in public or private sector organisations.

I believe the MoReq is an exceptionally useful model of ERMS functionality. It appears very thorough in its identification of the rules and functions an electronic system should be able to deploy in relation to record control, security, retention, disposal, capture, searching, retrieval, rendering etc. An impressive amount of detail is provided for each of these requirements. As an example of the detail, the section which outlines the administrative functions an ERMS should perform includes a very snazzy requirement at section 9.3 which states systems should be capable of imposing 'opaque rectangles to obscure sensitive names or words' on records that need redaction before they can be accessed!

In addition to managing these more traditional recordkeeping requirements, the specification recommends that record systems include other functionality which will enable them to manage hybrid files (records containing paper and electronic components), workflow operations, electronic signatures and encrypted records. It also provides a range of general issues to consider in relation to system implementation, such as the required technical standards the system should comply with, legislative requirements that should be considered, outsourcing considerations and issues to be addressed in relation to long-term preservation and technology obsolescence. In these and other ways MoReq attempts to push records management systems beyond their traditional capacities to enable them to serve as significant business tools in the contemporary environment.

In addition to its system functionality, MoReq also outlines the metadata elements that should be used to populate a records system. The specification does not try to outline all possible elements as business requirements that can be satisfied by metadata will differ from implementation to implementation. The metadata specification, which incorporates all standard recordkeeping metadata requirements, outlines the metadata elements necessary for the

description of classification schemes, classes, files and individual records. Crucially, MoReq states that a system's capacity to document the recommended metadata is in itself insufficient. Records systems must also use the metadata elements to enable and support the functionality defined in the remainder of this specification and incorporate metadata validation, inheritance and default values into their structure (section 12.1).

MoReq metadata requirements are not limited to record descriptions but also extend to descriptions of users and roles performed by users within the organisation. The latter could be seen as a more granular form of functional metadata. The user-specific metadata is limited to information that helps determine user permissions and authentication and therefore may be of limited contextual use through time. In fact, it could be argued that this is perhaps the one area of limitation in the MoReq specification. It presents a record-centric view that may not fully describe people, organisations or business functions through time. MoReq does recommend that a classification structure based on business functions be used as the core foundation of an ERMS, but it is not mandatory to use business activity as the basis of this classification. If functions are not documented in this way and if a functional thesaurus is not used for titling purposes, then it is possible that much of the broader business conducted by an organisation will be undocumented and not linked to the records to which it is related.

It is clearly stated that the system envisaged by MoReq is designed to operate in a contemporary business environment and the specification is focused on meeting business needs, rather than archival requirements. That said, a MoReq compliant system would be well placed to manage records for long-term retention and use. No such information is provided, but it would be good to see within the specification a statement about the long-term or archival use of the metadata managed by the system and to know whether work to develop interfaces between MoReq compliant systems and archival control systems is underway.

In conclusion, while MoReq deals with quite technical subject matter, this is explained in a clear and concise manner that facilitates understanding and an appreciation of the functionality recommended. I believe it is an excellent specification for use by recordkeepers but which can also act as a mechanism to communicate the requirements of records management and records systems to non-records personnel.

Kate Cumming
State Records Authority of New South Wales

Randall C Jimerson (ed.), *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2000. vii + 657pp. ISBN 0 931828 41 4. US$44.95. Available from the Society of American Archivists, 527 S. Wells Street, 5ᵗʰ Floor, Chicago, IL 60607-3922, USA.

This collection of articles is portrayed by its editor as his personal selection of the 'greatest hits of the 80s and 90s' of North American archival writings. By reprinting in one volume the most significant recent articles from journals such as the *American Archivist*, the SAA has done us a great service indeed. This volume follows in the grand tradition of *A Modern Archives Reader*, edited by Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch in 1984, and *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*, edited by Tom Nesmith in 1993. Closer to home, it is not unlike our own *Debates and Discourses*, which was published by the ASA in 1995.

Inevitably, many will quibble over the exclusion of one or other favourite article from the collection. That said, it seems to me that there are no glaring omissions from this collection. All the articles from the 80s or 90s that might generally be regarded as seminal have been given a guernsey. James O'Toole has the most articles, with three – all of them must-reads. Paul Conway, Margaret Hedstrom and David Bearman chip in with two each. While one might have expected more than one contribution from Richard Cox, the Cox piece that has been selected, 'The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective', is the one that I too would have chosen.

The volume is arranged into sections that reflect traditional conceptual divisions within the field: Understanding Archives and Archivists, Archival History, Selection and Documentation, Appraisal, Arrangement and Description, Reference and Use of Archives, Preservation, Electronic Records, and Management.

What impression is left by this Cook's tour of twenty years of American archival discourse? Overall, one is struck by a profession growing in maturity while at the same time struggling to cope with the impact of challenges such as electronic records, post-modernism and funding cutbacks – challenges that have caused some at least to question the seemingly implacable certainties that characterised the earlier Schellenbergian generation.

This is not, of course, to suggest that the profession in the United States has shifted from a position of unity to one of fragmentation. As Luke Gilliland-Swetland's article, 'The Provenance of a Profession' demonstrates, the American archival scene has long been divided along the public archives/historical manuscripts tradition fault-line. Still today the fault-line slips at regular intervals revealing a debilitating polarisation of opinion that very often sheds

more heat than light on the topic at hand. The most recent manifestation of this tendency has been the unseemly dispute between archival traditionalists and advocates of the so-called 'new paradigm'. Witness here Linda Henry's polemic dismissal of Cox, Bearman, et al in her article 'Schellenberg in Cyberspace'. While she makes many cogent and necessary corrective observations, Henry undermines her own thesis by the 'take no prisoners' tone of her writing – a trait that is readily apparent on both sides of the divide. Lively and passionate debate is of course to be encouraged, but one cannot help but wonder about the harm that is done to a small profession when one half of it can barely stand the sight of the other half.

In the growth of the archives profession as a broad church, many of the other selections in this volume demonstrate how we can accommodate in a harmonious manner a multiplicity of perspectives and ontologies. Ironically, this plurality of viewpoints may be just the antidote that is needed to encourage North American archivists to move on from the sterile battles of the old public archives/historical manuscripts schism. Perhaps the nearest thing that the United States has to a Terry Cook-type figure who can demonstrate the counterproductivity of the old schism is James O'Toole. His articles on the symbolic significance of archives, on the idea of uniqueness, and on the idea of permanence have more than anything helped to move archival thinking into the 21st century – a time when, hopefully, ideological wars between public and private archives will come to be regarded by all of us as nothing more than an idiotic waste of energy.

Other must-reads here include Judith Panitch's consideration of some archival lessons from the French Revolution – a masterful demonstration of the fact that the archival endeavour is not so much a universal truth as a mutable social construct. Likewise, John Fleckner's 'Dear Mary Jane: Some Reflections on Being an Archivist' is a guaranteed morale booster for those days when you start to wonder why you ever became an archivist in the first place – much better than Prozac, possibly even better than old Clare Valley Riesling!

Perhaps the two weakest sections of this volume are those on Appraisal and Electronic Records, the former contrasting markedly with the Selection and Documentation section which consists of three landmark articles by Tim Ericson, Helen Samuels and Richard Cox. The Arrangement and Description section includes Bearman and Lytle's essential reading, 'The Power of the Principle of Provenance' – wherein the Americans finally discovered Peter Scott some 25 years after he was first published in the *American Archivist*. Also included here are Hedstrom on describing electronic records and Daniel Pitti on Encoded Archival Description.

Unless you already own a complete set of the past 20 years of the *American Archivist*, this volume is an essential addition to your professional library. Even if you do have a full set of the *American Archivist*, it is probably worth buying this in order to have so many important articles together in one handy, well-indexed volume – moreover, some of the articles have been reproduced from other sources such as *Archivaria, Archival Issues* and *Archives and Museum Informatics*. While not as impressive overall as Tom Nesmith's 1993 Canadian collection, the Society of American Archivists and Randall Jimerson nevertheless deserve to be congratulated for compiling a monograph that I am confident you will refer back to time and time again for guidance, sustenance and reaffirmation.

Adrian Cunningham
National Archives of Australia

Margaret Procter and Michael Cook, *Manual of Archival Description*, 3rd edition, Gower Publishing Limited, Hampshire, England, 2000. 300 pp. Hardback. ISBN 0 566 08258 6. £60.00.

The *Manual of Archival Description* (referred to as MAD 3) is a manual for the description of fonds, record groups, series, sub-series, files and units within a repository. It is also a manual for the accessioning of individual records, that is, how a record is brought into archival custody and controlled. Once properly housed and controlled, the manual contains extensive advice on how to develop and present paper and online finding aids to provide access to the records.

The model for archival control in the manual follows the descriptive standards published by the International Council of Archives, *General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD (G))*, Ottawa, 1994, and *International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families, (ISAAR (CPF))*, Ottawa, 1996.

The manual discusses the 1999 draft of the revised ISAD (G) in at least two chapters, but it was felt that there were not going to be enough changes to ISAD to warrant incorporation of the 2000 edition into MAD 3. I think it was unfortunate timing (or perhaps a missed opportunity) that MAD 3 did not include the most recent edition of ISAD (G). The preface to the appendix containing the 1994 edition of ISAD (G) includes a brief development and revision history. It could have alerted readers to the 1999 draft, as it does in two earlier chapters. While the overall structure of the 2000 edition of ISAD (G) did not change from 1994, the references to description of electronic

records and the extensive examples in all areas significantly enrich the new edition. Readers not aware of the new edition of ISAD (G) might continue to rely on what is contained in MAD 3, and not take advantage of the more current edition.

The manual covers the full range of descriptive and physical control procedures. It explains the hierarchical structure of archival description, covering the several layers of description for repository, management group, group, sub-group, series and sub-series, item and piece. It explores relationships with other descriptive rules such as the Encoded Archival Description (EAD), ISAD (G), ISAAR (CPF), American-Anglo Cataloguing Rules (2) and the Dublin Core metadata standard. The 1994 edition of ISAD (G) is reproduced in full as an appendix and there is also a comparative table for ISAD (G), EAD and MAD 3 sub-area/data elements.

For each control element, there are tables of sub-elements for the different levels, followed by detailed explanations and examples. As well as general descriptive and accessioning rules there are chapters on describing specific formats, covering title deeds, letters and correspondence, photographs, cartographic records, architectural and other plans, sound archives, film and video archives and electronic records. For all formats there are exhaustive lists of data elements and recommendations for authority lists.

There is extensive advice on the preparation of structured models or templates for internal documentation and external finding aids. The templates provide a point of reference for developing paper and online finding aids. However, users of structured templates must recognise that online finding aids are increasingly being dominated by dynamic presentation of information and user profiles to select individual fields for reports and therefore need to ensure that templates are not the only option available.

The focus of the third edition is on describing and managing the records that have come into archival custody, not so much on current records being created in the business environment. The chapter on electronic records briefly discussed principles of the Continuum Model with archival metadata being embedded in the record as it is created. However, even the chapter on electronic records seems to focus on what was received into custody and therefore how to store and preserve the physical object. Explanations are provided for recording the extent of the object in anticipation of files being downloaded, how to describe previous operating systems and discussing which web browser versions can be used to view the record.

The third edition also includes a short discussion about the effects of administrative change and how the Australian series system separates 'agency

creating' to form an authority record separate from the agency that controlled the series at point of transfer. However, this approach does not appear to have been recommended, as it is considered that successive transfer lists would make unwieldy paper finding aids. Instead it is recommended that paper-based finding aids should be revised in such circumstances. With the expansion of electronic finding aids and even very basic electronic transfer lists, the inventory prepared for control can be rearranged in a number of ways for user-friendly finding aids. It is not clear to me why transfer lists would be considered the primary finding aid of an archives institution and why the concept of the one series number controlling successive transfers would be discounted on the basis of the structure of annual paper-based transfer lists.

Before recommending the purchase of any new edition, it is essential to examine the previous edition and assess the extent of change. In the Introduction the authors explain the extent of changes to the previous edition (Michael Cook and Margaret Procter, *Manual of Archival Description,* 2nd edition (MAD 2), Hampshire, 1989). These changes include:

- discussion on the Australian series system and the Continuum Model

- many more examples in all chapters

- mapping between MAD 3, ISAD (G) (although it is the 1994 superseded edition) and EAD

- update of terminology, such as references to 'series' instead of 'class'

- advice on development of online finding aids

- chapter on electronic records has been totally rewritten, with examples from an operational archive of electronic records

- chapters on video and sound archives have been substantially revised, and

- layout is easier to read, with examples in shaded boxes.

Those who have worked with MAD 2 will still find the same chapter structure and use of numbers for specific levels such as Level 0 for repository, Level 1 for Management Group, Level 2 Fonds, and Level 3 for Series. The section headings within each chapter are also very similar. For example, the section in MAD 2 on 'loan record' can be found under the same section in MAD 3.

For organisations which have used MAD 2 as their core set of procedures for archival control and managing records in custody or developing finding aids, I would recommend an upgrade to this third edition. The fundamental

approach to description, accessioning, physical control and finding aids has not changed. It is however, much easier to read, the examples are clearly labelled and the references to the online environment brings the publication into the 21st century.

MAD 3 is a very specific set of rules, and the hierarchical levels may suit organisations describing and managing their records in accordance with the 'fonds' system. As a complete model, it would not be easy to adapt for the Australian series system, however, any archival institution that is seeking to develop a set of descriptive rules for the special formats mentioned above could examine the exhaustive lists for each format and determine what was appropriate for their records. I would recommend any library that has MAD 2 to upgrade to MAD 3 and any library supporting archivists to purchase MAD 3. It can support the work of practising archivists and students studying archival control.

Marian Hoy
National Archives of Australia

Western Australia, *State Records Act 2000 (No. 52 of 2000),* Parliament of Western Australia, Perth, 2000. Available online at *www.slp.wa.gov.au.*

Recent reviews of archives legislation in this journal have taken very much a strategic view of the Act and analysed it in terms of its typology. I have chosen instead to focus on how it is likely to work in practice.

The Act establishes recordkeeping arrangements for government organisations (central and local government, the courts, the Governor and Executive Council, Royal and other commissions), Parliamentary departments (but not Parliament itself) and two state corporations. It also provides for the preservation of records of enduring value as archives in the State Records Office. One of the interesting features of the Act is that it draws such a clear distinction between records and archives, unlike its NSW counterpart.

These arrangements are to work through plans – recordkeeping plans in the case of records, and an archives keeping plan in the case of the holdings of the State Records Office, also referred to as the State archives collection. There are slight differences in the recordkeeping plans provisions for government and parliamentary bodies, but these relate mainly to the question of what is mandatory and what is optional. The plans are expected to specify what records will be created; how they will be kept; for how long they will be kept and whether they will become State archives; whether and when they will be

transferred to the State archives collection; and when public access to them can be granted. They are also to set out systems to ensure security of the records and compliance with the plan. The plans are to comply with principles and standards issued by the State Records Commission.

The term 'plan' therefore embraces the full range of policies, procedures, and disposal authorities that one would expect a department seeking to comply with AS 4390 to put in place, together with provision for release dates after transfer to the State Records Office. I suspect government bodies will eagerly await completion and approval of the first recordkeeping plan so that they have a model to follow. Perhaps the State Records Office, which is required to produce one also, could take a lead here, produce one and make it available to the other bodies covered by the Act?

The Act does not specify what the archives keeping plan should cover, only that it must 'set out how the State archives in the State archives collection are to be kept by the Director' (section 39(2)) and that it may provide for preservation of surrogates (section 39(3)). It is probably reasonable to assume that they should cover the Director's functions set out at section 73(1) (c)–(d). The problem is the plans as described in the Act are incomplete – for example no reference is made to preservation. The only reference to preservation is in section 3(2), in the context of records of which archives are a sub-set – this is not entirely satisfactory. I see this lack of specificity as one of the weaknesses of the Act, opening up the prospect of difficulties being encountered in obtaining funding for unspecified archives activities.

All of this work takes place under the supervision of the State Records Commission, which has lead responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Act. It issues principles and standards relating to all aspects of the Act, approves recordkeeping plans and the archives keeping plan, oversees access to archives and monitors and reports to Parliament on compliance with the Act.

The Commission is composed of the Auditor General, the Information Commissioner, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations and another person appointed by the Governor who has experience in recordkeeping. The first three will carry weight in the corridors of power – not only are they allocated serious power in the Act but while exercising their primary functions they all have the opportunity to contribute to enforcement, given the close connection between recordkeeping and audit, access to information and the conduct of investigations. I do wonder, however, how interested they will be in the operations of the State Records Office.

The role of the expert recordkeeper Commission member will be critical, especially when professional issues and matters are involved. The balance of

power is such that the expert will have to be able and willing to represent professionalism from very much a minority position.

Balance of power is a real issue under this Act. The Director of the State Records Office seems to me to be rather underpowered and quite what 'control' (a term that appears in several places) will mean in practice is rather unclear. One issue of particular concern is that the Commission need not consult the Director before issuing principles and standards – quite apart from other directives – although the Director is empowered to provide advice and assistance to the Commission on request and to report to it on the operation and effectiveness of the Act. The worst-case scenario is that the Director finds himself obliged to promote standards on which he has not been consulted before issue and with which he disagrees, but worst-case scenarios should not prevail in assessing an Act.

One provision struck me as odd. Section 3(6) says that the age of a record is to be determined from the date at which it first became a State record. That is all very well when the record is created by a body covered by the Act, but what happens when a fifteen-year-old record comes into the possession of a government body as a result of a function becoming a State government responsibility. Will there not be a distortion of age-related provisions such as transfer to the State archives collection (section 32) and access to a medical record (section 49(2)) to give two examples?

It is a pleasing coincidence that proclamation of the Act preceded the deadline for submission of this review by just a few days. I wish those responsible for implementing the Act well in their endeavours, especially Chris Coggin and the first expert member of the State Records Commission, Kandy-Jane Henderson.

Susan Healy
Public Record Office, UK