

Editorial

The General Assembly of the International Council of Archives at its meeting in Seville in September 2000 decided to 'establish a body focusing on the essential role of the archivist in outreach and user services'. The Committee on Outreach and User Services (ICA-COU) has now formed, many years after committees on such issues as archival description and electronic records have been in existence. Was it the case that this aspect of the archivist's role is so fundamental as to be invisible and not seen as requiring special consideration?

In August this year at the Australian Society of Archivists' conference in Sydney it is proposed that a Special Interest Group on Reference and Outreach be formed. Current special interest groups relate to types of records or archives (electronic, local government, school, etc) rather than to functions performed by archivists. Both developments suggest that archivists are looking outward to their audience, and it is this general theme that this issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* explores.

Paul Macpherson argues in his article about access to non-current government records that although use of archives is fundamental to the records continuum model, in practice it is excluded from the Australian Standard on Recordkeeping (AS 4390), and as a consequence, functional disposal authorities do not take full account of the future public use of archives.

The Standard does refer to 'community expectations'. The issue of community consultation, or the absence of it, features in two case studies. Ray Edmondson explores the background and consequences of an archives changing its name as the National Film and Sound Archive did, becoming ScreenSound Australia. The recent move by the Adelaide office of the National Archives is the focus of Ian Sutherland's article. Both highlight the importance of knowing your audience and responding to its expectations and concerns.

Gabrielle Hyslop writes about the development of public programs at the National Archives and explores the relevance of museum practices and methodologies to archival practice in this area. One of these practices, the use of evaluation strategies, is the subject of Esther Robinson's article which provides an inside view of developing services for a particular market segment. Paul Turnbull's article about the South Seas Project explores the intersection between traditional historical methodology and the online environment, and how to meet the expectations of new audiences, seeking instant but accurate information.