Reviews

Edited by Adrian Cunningham

Bruce I Ambacher (ed.), *Thirty Years of Electronic Records*, The Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2003. xix + 190pp. ISBN 0 8108 4769 8. A$61.49, available in Australia and New Zealand through DA Information Services at *www.dadirect.com.*

Electronic recordkeeping has spawned a great deal of analysis and debate within our profession over recent decades. This abundance of ideas in seminar, journal article and monograph has, however, resulted in fewer enduring solutions in practice than one might expect. Rather, it has been a period marked by the development, testing and refining of a range of different approaches; in some cases resulting in a return to the drawing board. This is certainly reflected in this collection of tales from the electronic records coalface at the United States' National Records and Archives Administration (NARA) and its predecessors over the past thirty years.

Thirty Years of Electronic Records takes a combined chronological and thematic approach to its overview of NARA's archival electronic records program and, to a lesser extent, other electronic recordkeeping strategies implemented in the US Government during this period. Commencing with Meyer H Fishbein's reflections on the efforts by the National Archives and the international archival community to come to grips with recordkeeping in the embryonic computing world of the 1960s and 1970s, it goes on to provide an overview of NARA's custodial program for electronic records, from 1968 to 1998. In his overview of this period, Thomas E Brown charts a series of highs and lows during which the turbulent fortunes of the Data Archives Branch, the Center for Electronic Records and other programs are linked to changes in management structures, the political environment and the impact of

the infamous PROFS case. Through the late 1980s and into the 1990s this case swallowed up a vast portion of the resources that had formerly been dedicated to the development of NARA's electronic records and archives programs. The impact of this case on NARA's work is alluded to by other authors in the volume, including Margaret O'Neill Adams in her overview of description and reference services for electronic records and by Linda J Henry in her discussion of NARA's approaches to the appraisal of electronic records.

The PROFS case, or Armstrong vs the Executive Office of the President (EOP), and subsequent legal actions are rightly given a chapter of their own in this volume, given their impact on both NARA's concepts of electronic records and the resources that were available to dedicate to work in this area during the 1990s. Jason R Baron, NARA's Director of Litigation, makes a robust attempt to guide the reader through the complexities of these cases and succeeds in drawing out a number of important themes. Foremost of these was the failure of the Archivist and indeed of the wider archival community of the day to present the judges, politicians and bureaucrats involved with a clear and consistent statement of the nature of electronic records within the larger universe of records and information, and of the role of the archivist in their management over time. Confidence in NARA's abilities to guide and assist government in keeping an adequate record of its electronic business appeared, at certain points, to be lost. In one instance, in considering a 1993 appeal by the Justice Department against a ban on any deletion of White House email, Judge Charles Richey called on the Archivist to explain his solution for management of email as a record in electronic form, but found the response 'incomprehensible' and upheld the ban (p. 111).

Several authors conclude their chapters with expressions of confidence in the future direction of NARA's electronic archives activities, now directed through the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) program. Initiatives of particular note in this context are the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) project, which is working towards offering online record-level access to electronic records, involvement in the InterPARES project on permanent, authentic electronic records and the collaboration with the National Partnership for Advanced Computational Infrastructure (NPACI), which is working on an architecture for persistent electronic archives. In advocating its involvement in these

projects to stakeholders, NARA is promoting heavily its role as a key support to the Bush administration's 'e-government' initiatives. This being the case, I was surprised not to find more explanation from the authors on NARA's past work in establishing standards for the creation of quality electronic records and the use of recordkeeping metadata standards. These subjects receive only glancing attention in this volume. Surely there have been achievements in these areas that are worth reporting on in the way they have contributed to the quality and management of electronic archives? It is difficult to tell based on a reading of the contributions in this collection. Perhaps the focus on electronic archives 'at the end of the life cycle' is merely indicative of the theoretical differences between American and Australian approaches. Nonetheless these topics seem to me to be significant omissions, particularly given the questions about electronic record integrity raised by the PROFs case and discussed in depth in this collection.

This series of descriptions of the evolution of NARA's program for the accessioning, processing and delivery of electronic archives will undoubtedly be of greatest immediate interest to those involved in electronic archives programs themselves. Given the density of the information in parts and the vast number of people, organisations and occasions described, this reader would have appreciated an index. Overall, however, it is an interesting slice of the history of electronic records and archives management in the US Government. *Thirty Years of Electronic Records* does not instruct the reader in the development of failsafe electronic archives regimes, but rather serves as a set of cautionary tales. By tracing the evolution of NARA's electronic records strategies it is possible to learn a number of valuable lessons that will assist us as we move into the next phase of the electronic recordkeeping theory and practice in Australia.

Cassie Findlay
State Records New South Wales

Jeanette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean community lost its archives and found its history,* Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, No. 99, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. xi + 106pp. ISBN 0 313 32008 X. Hardcover. US$59.00.

Jeannette Bastian was director of the Territorial Libraries and Archives of the United States Virgin Islands from 1987 to 1998. Her book gave this antipodean archivist a fascinating glimpse of Caribbean colonial history and archives administration. *Owning Memory* is a case study of the removal of archives from the US Virgin Islands, formerly the Danish West Indies, to Denmark and the United States and the consequences for the Islanders' perceptions of their history. The study derives from the author's recognition that 'ownership of history (and therefore memory) is often obtained through hard fought battles with uncertain outcomes for small disenfranchised societies or groups' (p. ix).

Columbus is said to have named the Virgin Islands archipelago in 1493 after a crusade of 11 000 virgins led by St Ursula. The indigenous inhabitants of St Croix, St Thomas and St John, the main islands in the US Virgin Islands, had disappeared by 1625 when Dutch settlers first occupied St Croix. Danish planters settled St Thomas in 1665, claimed St John in 1683 and purchased St Croix from the French in 1733. The Danish West India and Guinea Company, a combination of planters and West African slave traders, ruled the Danish West Indies until 1754 when administration of the colony was transferred to the Danish government. West African slaves fuelled the plantation economy and made up the bulk of the population. The Danish slave trade was abolished in 1803 but it was not until the slaves on St Croix rebelled in 1848 that they were finally emancipated. A further rebellion in 1878 led to the introduction of protective labour legislation, the decline of plantation economy and the sale of the Danish West Indies to the United States in 1917.

The US Virgin Islands is now an unincorporated territory of the United States. Locally elected municipal government was established in 1936, a local legislative body set up in 1954 and the citizens have elected a Governor since 1968. Responsibility for records retention was given to the Virgin Islands after the 1950s, but before then all administration archives, except survey, land and other property records, had been systematically transferred to the colonial powers. The records of the

Danish West India and Guinea Company (200 shelf feet) were shipped to the Danish Royal Archives following the dissolution of the Company in 1754. Between 1893 and 1921 Danish colonial administration records were transferred from the Virgin Islands to the Danish National Archives in successive batches (2 000 shelf feet). This was followed by successive surveys and transfers to the US National Archives in 1936–7 (1 260 shelf feet), 1942 (404 cubic feet), 1953 and 1959 (204 cubic feet).

Bastian points out that there was a paragraph on archives in the agreement to transfer the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States, 1916–17, which protected the reciprocal access rights of the colonial powers to Virgin Islands archives in each other's custody. However until 1999, when the Virgin Islands government struck an agreement with the Danish Ministry of Culture for preserving and sharing historical records, there has been no arrangement to give Virgin Islanders access to the documents and no systematic program of copying and translating from the Danish language originals. This has resulted in a paucity of histories of the US Virgin Islands based on the primary records leading to some possible misconceptions about Virgin Islands history. For example, it is not clear whether Buddhoe, the popular hero of the 1848 rebellion on St Croix, is an historically accurate or a mythical figure.

Bastian explores the extent of alternative forms of collective historical memory developed by the Virgin Islanders in the absence of administrative archives and histories derived from them. In particular she cites newspapers, oral culture, festivals and public holidays as examples of the community's commemoration of its rich heritage. Bastian is ambivalent about the ultimate value of the official records for popular memory. She emphasises that the colonial archives were accumulated from the point of view of the administrators and planters. She suggests that the archives of the Danish administration are not only alienated from the community by distance and language, but also by substance in that they leave only vague traces of the individual lives of the West African populace.

This need not necessarily be the case – the records of the masters can be informative. Witness, in the Australian context, the elaborate guides to records relating to Aborigines in the National and State archives in Australia. Most recently George Morgan's article in *Comma* (2003:1), 'Decolonising the Archives – Who Owns the Documents?', reports that

Tenancy Files of the NSW Housing Commission include detailed inspectors' reports on Aboriginal families applying for public housing which are useful for establishing kinship links and restoring rights to communities. Bastian notes that Virgin islanders have a growing interest in their genealogy but does not address the availability of vital records, such as births, deaths and marriage registers, census records and musters, or legal records, such as bills of sale for slaves, indentures and probate documents. Nor is it made clear in *Owning Memory* whether there are accessible records of any of the Christian missions operating in the Virgin Islands.

The clear case for successor nations retaining the records of local colonial governments is questioned in *Owning Memory*. Instead Bastion mounts a tentative argument for recognition of Virgin Islanders' interest in their colonial archives. Her argument is based on a broad interpretation of provenance (drawing on the Canadian archivists, Hugh Taylor and Terry Cook) which is extended to include the total social context of record production. Bastian refers to UNESCO and ICA protocols for retention of colonial archives by post-colonial governments, but argues diffidently for a concept of shared custody. She ignores the consistent implementation of these protocols in the Commonwealth where the records of the local colonial administrations have been retained by or returned to the successor governments. (Although there are exceptions - for example, the records of the New Hebrides British Service have not yet been returned to Vanuatu.) Various archival arrangements in US Territories have been reached, but the United States National Archives and Records Administration remains the central repository for many of its territorial administrations. For example, the archives of the unincorporated territory of American Samoa are routinely transferred to Washington for long-term retention. Perhaps Bastian's diffidence reflects US archival policy?

Ewan Maidment
Pacific Manuscripts Bureau

Karen Benedict, *Ethics and the Archival Profession: Introduction and Case Studies*, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2003, 91pp. ISBN 1 931666 05 9. US$34.95.

'In the 1990s, archivists around the world addressed the importance of ethics to the profession, and during this time, many archival associations developed their own codes of ethics' writes Karen Benedict in the opening sentence of the Society of American Archivist's (SAA) new publication. The Australian Society of Archivists was among those associations, with the Society's code adopted in June 1993. The SAA has been a leader in this field, adopting a code of ethics in 1980, and subsequently revising it in 1992. This volume represents another stage on the development of the SAA's position on ethical matters, in part reflecting advice that the 1992 code's approach of providing commentary on the principles may present legal liabilities, and that case studies separate to the code may be a better approach (p. 5).

Benedict's introduction to archival ethics gives a brief overview of the place of professional ethics, distinguishing ethics from professional conduct, institutional practices, and the law. This short opening section of the volume outlines the development of codes of ethics, and explores the interaction of ethical considerations with other factors determining practice and conduct, such as legal obligations. This background nicely frames the space within which the following case studies take place.

Around three quarters of the volume is dedicated to forty short hypothetical case studies, each of one to two pages in length. These cover the full range of provisions in the SAA Code of Ethics, grouped under 17 issue areas, though appraisal and collection policy matters dominate the selection. These case studies are designed as a teaching resource 'to promote discussion in classrooms and in workshops about the profession's ethical principles, rules of professional conduct, and suggested institutional best practices'.

The case studies will undoubtedly be useful in their intended role, although they do have some shortcomings. For example, the 'model answers' are rather too black and white in their advice for this reviewer's liking. In the introduction to this section of the book, Benedict notes that 'as in real life, the case studies do not have single, simple answers that can be applied to all situations'. Unfortunately many of the case studies can give the impression that a legalistic application of the SAA

Code of Ethics is called for. This raises a second quibble, in that the analysis often relates specifically to the SAA code. While not unexpected in an SAA publication, a broader consideration of the ethical issues raised would have been of greater value to an international audience. That said, Benedict points out (pp. 4–5) that many principles are common to most codes accepted within the profession globally, and the provision of a wide range of scenarios illustrates that ethical questions will be confronted directly by many, perhaps most, archivists in the course of their work.

The case studies are predominantly set in the milieu of university archives with a lesser number in local historical society archives. While reflecting the United States environment, they remain accessible and relevant to practitioners in many other settings. Having distinguished ethical issues from legal issues in the introduction, the case studies' authors generally avoid confusing the two, even in areas of copyright and privacy. In other scenarios though (for example in the area of appraisal and acquisition) it does not appear that the distinction between ethical considerations and professional practices is clearly maintained.

A good bibliography does not claim to be comprehensive, but nevertheless provides the opportunity to pursue the literature on ethics further. From a local perspective it is pleasing to see a number of *Archives and Manuscripts* articles included, though the ASA's 1993 *Ethics, Lies and Archives* proceedings do not get a mention.

From the bibliography it would appear that there has been little attention placed on ethics in our professional writing since the early 1990s. Perhaps we have tended to consider that the adoption of codes of ethics has dealt with such matters. This book is a timely reminder that such codes are merely guidance in responding to situations which we will all continue to confront.

John Roberts
Archives New Zealand

Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds (eds), *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A Taylor*, Association of Canadian Archivists and Society of American Archivists, Lanham, Maryland and Oxford, 2003. 254pp. ISBN 0 810 84771 X. US$35.00.

Collections of previously published essays always beg the question 'why re-publish?' The scattered contents can be found in their original sources with a little effort. The value of this volume is not only that it gathers together a selection of Hugh Taylor's writing in a handy single volume, but that it adds his reflections on the essays made in the year 2000. Not all the essays have appeared in print before. While almost half appeared in *Archivaria* (or its predecessor publication, *Canadian Archivist*), the remainder come from a range of journals, monographs and conference proceedings, published and unpublished.

The fifteen essays date from 1969 to 1997 and show the development of one archivist's thinking in a working lifetime. The range of topics covered includes administrative history, the role of the profession and education, inclusion of non-textual media in archives, user studies and the use of archives, appraisal, the impact of technology and the social meaning of archives. In all, Taylor brings a broad range of interests to what he writes about archives. Presented in chronological order, the reader sees Taylor's ideas evolve as a result of experiences and exposure to contemporary ideas. Clear influences are communications theory, through the writings of Marshall McLuhan and others, ecology, art and philosophy.

The other question a publication such as this must answer is 'what does it contribute that is new?' This will be seen as a companion to the 1992 publication *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A Taylor* edited by Barbara L Craig. As such, this selection of essays gives us the departure points for the thinking of writers in that *festschrift* such as Terry Cook, Terry Eastwood and Kent Haworth. It shows us the impact Taylor's writings had on Canadian archival thinking. Taylor is revealed as someone who from an early stage was alert to changes in the creation of records, their use and the symbolic place of the record in society. In all these essays he approaches his topic with a discursive and engaging style that provokes new thinking rather than giving definitive argument.

As well as the reflections following each essay and a concluding essay by Hugh Taylor, the publication contains an introductory section with articles by each editor, Gordon Dodds and Terry Cook. Each is written

from a very personal perspective and, as well as giving insights into the impact of Taylor's ideas, they introduce us to Hugh Taylor the warm and engaging person.

A biographical sketch appears at the end of the volume and personal reflections appear in several essays. Starting with the first in the volume, 'Archives in Britain and Canada: Impressions of an immigrant' and concluding with the penultimate essay, 'A life in archives: Retrospect and prospect', we learn of Taylor's working life as a 'moving generalist' in United Kingdom county records offices, Canadian provincial archives and the National Archives of Canada.

A bibliography of Taylor's writing would have been a useful addition. For information on Taylor's writings, at least up to 1991, the reader must refer to *The Archival Imagination* for the bibliography and bibliographic review by James K Burrows and Mary Ann Pylypchuk.

I appreciated the essays in this volume for Hugh Taylor's evident wonder in exploring the meaning of archives and archives work through patterns of images drawn from fields of ecology, communications theory, oral culture, philosophy, myth and spirituality. This collection shows us a working archivist who has influenced the direction and perspective of many significant Canadian archival thinkers through his spirited, holistic and imaginative approach to archives.

Kathryn Dan
Monash University

Roger H Ellis and Peter Walne (eds), *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson,* Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2003 reprint with a new introduction by Terence Eastwood, xx + 380pp. ISBN 1 931666 03 2. US$45.00.

Archivists should not be indifferent to Sir Hilary, and for those yet to meet or make up their minds about this important figure in things archival, this reprint is an excellent omnibus. The contents broadly represent Jenkinson's lifelong personal and professional interests. Essays can be grouped into matters medieval (paleography and seals); theoretical (classification, diplomatics, appraisal, choice and

impartiality); national (United States and British archives); and occupational (archival training).

The 'medieval' essays attest to Jenkinson's scholarship in the classics and expertise in English paleography. Although many of us have not experienced first-hand the frustrations of the major and minor Court Hands, we all have struggled through enough difficult handwriting, notations and marginalia to appreciate the complexities Sir Hilary describes.

In the 'occupational' essays we are perhaps relieved in our studies now to be spared medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman French and formularies, but we cannot shy away from the influence Jenkinson has exerted on the development of our profession. The several essays directly or indirectly addressing archival science and its practitioners have distinct parallels in the modern syllabus: the importance of context, of relationships; the role of the uses and users of archives; the maintenance of custody, of provenance; and, more recently, the reintroduction (and reinterpretation) of diplomatics.

The 'national' essays cover mainly the British efforts towards a national classification of English archives and survey the situation pre- and post-World War II. Other essays in this group describe the difficult situation facing national archives in times of war and in doing so find contemporary resonance.

It is in the 'theoretical' essays that the fireworks begin. Full credit to the Society of American Archivists for reprinting Jenkinson's review of Schellenberg's *Modern Archives: Principals and Techniques.* It's good to know that Sir Hilary let T.R. off lightly in damning with faint praise the techniques side of the equation, whatever we might feel about the 'principals'.

This is where the great divide comes in. For some, Jenkinson's idea that the selection of records for permanent retention for historical, cultural or other reasons impairs the integrity and impartiality of archives is anathema. Others may sympathise with or understand this view. A careful reading of the essays in this reprint reveal Jenkinson was more accommodating and flexible in matters of appraisal, accepting that there is 'much work for the archivist to do in the way of encouraging intelligent elimination, as well as preservation' (p. 228).

The points elucidated on the qualities of archives should be required musing for us all. We may not agree with what Sir Hilary has to say or how he says it, but we should all consider his characterisations: that archives are accumulations, they are organic, natural and grow like Topsy; they were not created for posterity, for us; that their several parts are inter-related; and that custody somehow has an influence on impartiality and authenticity. And, his emphasis on the importance of the context of the records is so fundamental to us now as to be banal.

In his concise yet comprehensive introduction, Terry Eastwood advises that the modern reader may find Sir Hilary 'difficult'. Yes, he does use Initial Capitals on Words we don't now capitalise. Yes, his punctuation is eccentric, but not to followers of H.W. Fowler. Do not be put off! You may also find, as Terry says, that Jenkinson is 'unfailingly clear'. If not, well, you are just not a 'Jenkinsonian'.

The *Selected Writings* is a worthy addition to your bookshelf. If only to learn of Miss Mills (of whom some of us would be insanely jealous). And for that, you must buy or borrow the book!

Karen Friedl
Queensland State Archives

Verne Harris and Adrian Cunningham (eds), *Comma: International Journal on Archives*, 2003.1, theme issue on Archives and Indigenous Peoples, Paris, 2003. 183pp. ISSN 1680-1865. Free of charge to members of the International Council on Archives.

It was a pleasure to read the first issue for 2003 of the International Council of Archives' journal *Comma* 'Archives and Indigenous Peoples'. Editors Verne Harris and Adrian Cunningham have done a commendable job in opening an international dialogue about Indigenous people's relationship with archives.

Harris and Cunningham invited authors to challenge the dominant discourses which prevail in the archival profession and invited Indigenous people to have their voices heard within the debate. The result is an inspiring and refreshing look at challenging contemporary issues such as: intellectual and cultural property rights, the role of

archives in redressing injustices, notions of power and ownership of the past, strategies for engaging Indigenous perspectives and staffing within archives, Indigenous concepts of 'archive', problematic relationships between oral and Eurocentric notions of the archive, and finally, the possibility of archives assisting with the recovery and reconstruction of Indigenous identity.

The ten articles that make up this theme issue come from contributors in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The authors contribute to the debate on 'Archives and Indigenous Peoples' by focusing on issues affecting their own countries and jurisdictions.

From Canada Robin and Jillian Riddington provide an inspirational article on their work with First Nation people of British Columbia, the Dane-zaa. Thousands of photographs and hundreds of hours of video footage have been compiled over the last forty years to create the Dane-zaa Archive. The article illustrates how collaborations can lead to important cultural renewal.

Three articles focus on South African issues and perspectives. Ruth Morgan discusses work carried out by the South African Gay and Lesbian Archive (GALA) to record the stories of same-sex Sangomas (traditional healers). GALA recognise the importance of recording stories of Indigenous people that have been marginalised in the past.

Phaswane Mpe raises issues concerning the processes involved in archiving stories and histories of oral cultures. Mpe explores the layers that are involved in creating a record and discusses the role of agendas, rights and responsibilities in shaping the 'record'.

Shadrack Katuu challenges the reader to question the role, and cultural bias, of dominant discourses within the archival profession by looking specifically at orality. Katuu also explores the role of dominant discourses in archival education and training and the subsequent promotion of Western belief systems.

All of the South African articles touch on oral history and its relationship with recording Indigenous histories in archives. The work being carried out in South Africa highlights the universal challenge of integrating the use of oral traditions in the preservation of knowledge and culture and the dominant archival discourses that concentrate on the written record.

From New Zealand, Tracy Jacobs and Sandra Falconer discuss efforts made by the National Archives of New Zealand in engaging Maori perspectives and management. Their experience provides for an exploration of the very important issues of biculturalism, consultation and ownership.

From Australia, we see the largest contribution of articles with five authors discussing issues from around the country. Danielle Wickman looks at the failure of the Commonwealth government in keeping records on the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Emma Toon outlines work carried out by the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce in connecting Aboriginal people of the Stolen Generations with their families. Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, Jim Stokes and Paul Macpherson discuss the ethics of creating databases and indexes to records affecting Indigenous people. George Morgan explores the question of ownership of records, in his paper on recovering housing files for Aboriginal people. And finally, Wendy Borchers writes of the significant work done in 1991–92 by a joint audiovisual preservation project between the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

In many ways the journal tells two stories. Firstly, it brings us into contact with authors who are passionately devoted to inviting Indigenous people and their perspectives into the archives and the archival profession. It illustrates the meaningful work that is being carried out internationally which recognises Indigenous culture, storage and the transmission of knowledge and history.

Secondly, the journal illustrates, as Harris and Cunningham acknowledge, the need for further debate on Indigenous issues. It raises awareness of the further commitments that need to be made by archival institutions in establishing relationships with Indigenous people and communities. And importantly, it raises the question, why did the editors find it a challenge to find more Indigenous voices within the debate?

Archivists around the world will find this issue of *Comma* on 'Archives and Indigenous Peoples' stimulating. Hopefully it will encourage us to engage with Indigenous people on a local level and be involved in debate on a national and international level. The articles provide us with insight into where we are up to and what further work needs to be done to have Indigenous perspectives form part of the archival profession.

Thank you to the editors for encouraging debate and bringing together some stimulating articles. I hope that this issue will be the first of many international discussions on Indigenous issues.

Kirsten Thorpe
Archivist - Aboriginal Liaison
State Records NSW

Paul Hetherington (ed.), *The Diaries of Donald Friend, Volume 2*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2003. xxxviii + 697pp. ISBN 0 642 10765 3 (v.2). $59.95. Available from the National Library of Australia.

This book is the second part of the National Library of Australia's major project to publish the 44 Donald Friend diaries. Volume 1 of the diaries, edited by Dr Anne Gray, eminent art historian and curator, was released in 2001 and Volume 2, edited by Paul Hetherington, Director of Publications at the National Library of Australia, writer and poet, appeared in October 2003. This wonderfully presented and edited print volume of the diaries is a treasure for the community. As interpreter, Paul Hetherington has managed to transfer in this volume many of the subtleties and complexities presented to readers who use the original documents in the Library's Manuscript Reading Room in Canberra, or who view exhibitions held in cultural institutions.

The author of these beautifully illustrated diaries, Donald Friend (1915–1989) is acknowledged as one of Australia's finest creative artists and writers. Born in Sydney, he lived and worked in many different parts of the world, including formal art studies both in Sydney and London and a period of war service. Friend also lived in Nigeria, Italy, Sri Lanka and Bali as well as spending time in the Torres Strait Islands. This well-structured volume reflects the period between January 1944 and March 1949 and brings to life major figures in the Australian visual arts, public and political domain. It reveals enduring friendships and a commentary on Friend's family ties. The text divides into five periods of Friend's life and work: his last year as a gunner, his promotion to official war artist, his life and work at Merioola, revisiting his islander friends in Torres Strait and returning to Merioola, and finally, his life in Hill End.

There are a number of editorial features which transport the reader back in time to share the experiences of Friend. The introduction provides

useful information about his work if this book is a first encounter with the diaries. It also whets the appetite by setting the writings in context, that is, describing the attitudes of an Australian society undergoing rapid changes because of the war. The index is a valuable aid for the reader to search by person or subject. Another excellent feature is the information about relationship context and who's who in the List of Principal Figures. Similarly, the Chronology of the Life of Donald Friend that appears after the main text where the reader is given a timeline of life events during the period these diaries were written. For ease of reading (it's a large work) the reader will appreciate (as I did) endnotes for each main section. The Editor's Note provides a good insight into the editing process and the effort to preserve the integrity of the narrative. In all, the fine editorial work has illuminated the record, contributed to its integrity, and given the reader an understanding of context and the author's life.

How aware was Friend, the diarist, that his writing would be preserved? Was this a conscious recording to publicly bequeath his personal account of a collective history to those that follow? Early on, there is little doubt that the author used journalling in part as therapy and a means to voice inner fears and anxieties. In his diary of 1943 Friend wrote of his diary habit that 'its essential function is an escape from reality, so that when I am well content and have nothing to escape from, there doesn't seem much to say' (p. xxii). Friend also denied writing for a wider audience but Paul Hetherington comments 'as he grew older, the sense that he was addressing a wider audience is everywhere present in the diaries' (p. xxxiii). The author's increasing 'awareness' does not detract from the value of this work but rather enhances Friend's role as witness and commentator. As a record this volume represents a footprint in time capturing the experiences, emotions and culture of a prolific writer and observer of Australian society and art. The book chronicles relationships of the diarist on his journey in life and allows the reader to share these not merely as an observer, but as a participant. Friend communicates through drawings as well as words, mostly with eloquence, and occasionally in drunkenness. Together with the first volume this is a tantalising insight into a famous Australian life. Get hold of it – you'll love it!

Shirley Sullivan
National Archives of Australia

First International Conference on the History of Records and Archives, Faulty of Information Studies, University of Toronto, 2–3 October 2003.

Eleven years after the landmark visit of Dr TR Schellenberg in 1954, Jim Gibbney wistfully recalled that Schellenberg's seminars provided the only chance he ever had 'to ventilate thoroughly a wide range of professional questions in company with a wide variety of people who knew what I was talking about'. The experience, he said, reminded him of an essay by Oliver La Farge called 'Scientists are lonely men', in which La Farge described 'the holy joy which fills the mind of the specialised research worker when he finds the only other man on earth that he can talk to'.

In turn, I was reminded of this piece of local archives-history trivia while attending in October last year the International Conference on the History of Records and Archives. It was not nearly as bad as for the lonely scientist. In fact there was no more appropriate place to have held it, and indeed we should not be surprised that the initiative for it came out of Canada, and in particular from Barbara Craig's Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto. She and her co-hosts Heather MacNeal and Philip Eppard were considerate and generous, offered help for people to attend, encouraged their own students and others undertaking new research to participate, and provided social and cultural opportunities as well. The only blemish concerned the distribution of papers (of various lengths, despite strict stipulations), which were distributed at registration. Inevitably, some speakers read them rather than spoke to them, and the audience dutifully followed on like keen music students with the score at a symphony concert.

My response was a mixture of joy and gloom. On the one hand, it was depressing to reflect that it has taken so long for our own corner of historical inquiry to attract organised international attention. On the other hand, here were two and a half days of seriously interesting presentations and discussions by archival scholars from around the world. They included many leading writers familiar to us: Terry Cook, Peter Horsman, James O'Toole, Tom Nesmith, Richard Cox and Eric Ketelaar. They and many others offered thirty papers as well as panel discussions and session introductions. But, reverting to gloom, all this is recent and the canvas is large, as Terry Cook explained in the day one keynote paper, 'The Archive is a Foreign Country: Rediscovering Records in History'. Both historians and archivists, he explained, have

failed 'to appreciate the significance that records have, and reflect, their own histories'. It was a perfect scene-setting presentation, stressing too that our multiple interventions were part of records-archives history (we 'co-create the archive'), and acknowledging the pioneering advocacy by Hugh Taylor for a social historiography of how and why records were created.

Clearly, the initiative will bear fruit. There were too many papers by talented postgraduates and people in mid-career from allied professions exploring aspects of recordkeeping for it not to. The organisers had structured the program into three themes: the nature of records and documents; the nature of recordkeeping; and sources, methods, theories and philosophies for research. Within these, we heard papers on topics such as indigenous ways of knowing, the Hudson Bay company archives, Padua municipal archives, Sir John Soane, picture postcards, canonisation evidence, WWI United States army recordkeeping, the history of email, and Tang dynasty epigraphs; and speakers from North America, the Netherlands, Botswana, Italy, the United Kingdom and Spain.

There were two special moments for this reviewer. Being in Toronto to speak on issues facing the writing of a history of diaries in Australia, I was delighted to find others equally interested: Sandra Ferguson seeing constructed aggregations of postcards functioning as 'mini diaries', and Elizabeth Yakel researching the role and history of diaries within the religious community, the Maryknoll Sisters. Secondly there were papers which seemed to illustrate effortlessly the insights which accrue from a history of the record: Jane Zhang on recordkeeping processes and the act of handwriting signatures ('The Lingering of Handwritten Records') and Ala Rekrut on documents as artifacts ('Material Literacy: Reading Records as Material Culture').

I can no more sum up the conference findings than did the final session panel. Here keynote speakers and other renowned archival scholars who had supported the conference such as Gordon Dodds and Joan Schwartz reflected on what it all meant. Each spoke of particular aspects which they found important, best epitomised by Tom Nesmith, who despite great erudition signalled that it is all right, indeed expected, not to have neat final answers. What mattered was that all knew the Toronto conference represented a maturing of the archival profession's acceptance that the history of archives and records is a legitimate and

rich inter-disciplinary field for research, a development which parallels the emergence of the 'history of the book' movement a generation ago. The scope of our field is enormous, and just as book history embraces the rise of print culture as well as reading and authorship, so this conference ranged wide. It will be followed by a published volume of selected rewritten papers, and has already prompted the start to a second conference planned for Amsterdam in September 2005.

One hopes this, like so much else here which has developed from or been stimulated by trends initiated overseas, will lead to a renewed interest in our own records and archives histories. The signs are hopeful, if – as we must – we look beyond our narrow professional confines, and convince allied researchers to help tackle our questions. One could be Western Australian academic Dr Joanna Sassoon on convict records (unfortunately scheduled but unable to speak in Toronto) and Professor Bill Russell who has produced the new history of the Public Record Office Victoria. Does our own history encourage us to be optimistic? Perhaps it will be Toronto, Amsterdam, Canberra.

Michael Piggott
University of Melbourne Archives

Robert Manne (ed.), *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History,* Black Inc. Agenda, Melbourne, 2003. 385pp. ISBN 0 9750769 0 6. $29.95.

Whitewash is a collection of essays written in response to Keith Windschuttle's *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History: Volume One, Van Diemen's Land 1803–1847.*[1]

There are 17 essays and an introduction written by Robert Manne which makes the purpose of the collection explicit: 'This book is aimed at readers who are interested in the early history of Australia and in a

1 I have not read the whole of Windschuttle's opus. I have read large sections of it, prompted by the need to understand the arguments made by his critics in *Whitewash.* I found *Fabrication* hard to read because it is not a coherent, alternative account of the period but is itself a series of essays attacking his various targets, because I found the tone of his writing unpleasant, and because his style is turgid.

thorough, expert discussion of Windschuttle's case' (p. 11). To make clear the context in which Manne and his contributors see themselves writing I quote Manne again: 'What is even more alarming in the reception of *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* is the way so many prominent Australian conservatives have been so easily misled by so ignorant, so polemical and so pitiless a book' (ibid.).

So this is a rebuttal. There is an overview by James Boyce refuting the majority of *Fabrication*'s claims, five general essays dealing with the book and ten shorter pieces with a narrower focus and a conclusion which attempts to place Windschuttle in a broader context of opposition to political correctness and of historical revisionism. Several of the essays review in detail the use Windschuttle has made of original records held by the Archives Office of Tasmania, providing a rare spotlight on archives.

There are many things to say about this book, so that it is hard to choose what should be the priority. Two key issues for recordkeepers which *Whitewash* raises have already been identified by Michael Piggott in his review of *The History Wars*.[2] The questions those issues raise deserve a broader response than another review, so I offer my comments on *Whitewash* as one contribution to a general discussion recordkeepers need to have, especially in the public archival institutions.

There is an ideological battle raging in Aboriginal history which reverberates as far as the Prime Minister's office. Readers are no doubt aware of the controversy surrounding the exhibitions of the National Museum of Australia[3] and the fate of its first (Aboriginal) Director. The questions which Windschuttle has pursued in early Tasmanian history are very much part of current politics, especially around the reconciliation movement's call for an apology and a treaty with Aboriginal people and the continuing contesting of native title rights. The response of some sections of the mainstream media to *Fabrication* make clear that Windschuttle's interpretation of what happened in Van Diemen's Land in the 1820s and 1830s is a salvo for their side against land rights and calls for Aboriginal self-determination.

2 *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 31, no. 2, November 2003, pp. 73 6.
3 ibid., p. 75.

Whitewash identifies the contemporary historical debates - was there a war in Van Diemen's Land between British settlers and the indigenous people (the Tasmanians), what were the motives of the Tasmanians who attacked the settlers, did the settlers massacre the Tasmanians, can we estimate with any exactitude how many people on either side were killed, and what can be inferred about the nature of the Tasmanian Aboriginal society?

It is remarkable that for 200 years no one has questioned the fact that there was war between settlers and the colonial government, and the indigenous people of Tasmania in the years 1826-35. Most interpretation located the cause of the war in the Aborigines' loss of land and livelihood as commercial wool farming expanded in the central plains of the island. Nearly all accounts, no matter which side they favoured in the contest, regarded the outcome, the destruction of a whole society, as tragic - until now. Windschuttle's arguments, that the Tasmanians had no concept of property in land and were a dysfunctional society, have real significance in the national debate about land rights and reconciliation.

Given the attacks on the competence and integrity of the historians in Windschuttle's sights, the essays refuting his claims necessarily deal with the use made of the records. What interpretations can be supported by the evidence in the records, what sources are reliable and how can that be assessed, which sources are preferred over others as authoritative, how is evidence in original records, public and private, tested? These are debates in which archivists have something distinctive to offer.

As Michael Piggott commented after observing our profession's silence in the midst of these debates, '... it is difficult to see, if we did start passing comment on researchers' varied use of 'our' records, where we should draw the line'.[4] Should archivists join such debates? Is there a place for archival intervention, either for the relatively minor purpose of correcting citations or, on a larger scale, to amplify the range of sources pertinent to a major historical debate? Do we have any responsibility from our expert vantage point, to point out the failings of a work so publicly celebrated as *Fabrication*, or are we there simply to serve the historians who take up the arguments as they have in *Whitewash*?

4 ibid.

It could be argued archivists don't write history but in fact we do - from small-scale administrative histories of record-creating agencies for finding aids to major institutional guides and essays introducing exhibitions. We are not separate from the historical debates of our day. They will influence both the selection of records we consider worthy of preservation, and they will flavour the administrative histories and guides we write. A brief example in the negative from some research for this review - Peter Eldershaw's classic guides to the records of the Van Diemen's Land Governor's Office and the Colonial Secretary's Office[5] written in the mid-1950s have only scant references to Aboriginal matters and make none to the 'file' in 17 volumes from the Colonial Secretary's Office which seems to be Windschuttle's principal source (CSO1/316/7578 - 1/332/7578). That reflects the lack of attention paid to Aboriginal history in Eldershaw's day. By contrast today, most public archives have made some attempt to identify and provide guides to the records most relevant to Aboriginal history and needs.

Eldershaw's guides need no apology. The gap has been covered by the guides of a later era. The context of the later guides - the issues of the day which prompted their preparation - should be explained as part of their content. It is inevitable that such guides reflect the political and historical debates of the day. The obligation on archivists is to make the issues and controversies visible so the context of the guides, their interpretation of the meaning of the records they point to, can be understood. The other obligation is indeed to provide such guides and bring our expertise to bear on making the widest range of relevant sources accessible.

The other issue which Michael Piggott raised is the tension between the ideal of public cultural institutions' independence and the political reality that public funding puts political limits on that independence. What do archivists need to do to ensure their independence? There is a temptation to retreat from the politically unpalatable *raison d'etre* of accountability for public recordkeeping and emphasise the cultural and heritage aspects of archival institutions. The lessons of *Fabrication* and *Whitewash* as well as *The History Wars* are that this aspect of public archives is just as politically fraught as pursuit of the virtue of accountability.

5 Available from the website of the Archives Office of Tasmania: *www.archives.tas.gov.au/publications/guides.htm*

On the contrary it would be better to nail the ensign of accountability to the archival masthead as the best means of avoiding embroilment in the immediate, politicised debates and providing a non-partisan vantage point. The aim is surely not to avoid the political debates so much as to avoid taking sides in them and doing as much as possible to provide the public with the means of judging for themselves. This does not preclude any individual archivist from giving expert comment on the use of original records by an historian. Nor should it mean that the guides we provide must retreat to an (impossible) objective recital of the 'facts'. We point to all the evidence which can be made available and provide some explanation to support interpretation and understanding of the gaps as transparently as possible.

Reading the essays in *Whitewash* is an instruction in the arguments of interpretation and a lesson in the variety of sources available for early colonial Tasmanian history despite the known *lacunae.* Whether *Whitewash* succeeds in refuting the arguments made by Windschuttle will be the subject of endless discussion in part because there are genuine, factual gaps in the record, and in part because this argument is less about history than about the balance of political power today. This is not a problem that archivists can pretend to solve over and above than any other section of the community.

Anne Picot
University of Sydney

Andrea T Merrill (ed.), *The Strategic Stewardship of Cultural Resources: To Preserve and Protect,* Haworth, New York, 2003. 237pp. ISBN 0 7890 2090 4 (hard cover) US$59.95 and ISBN 0 7890 2091 2 (soft cover) US$39.95.

This book is a collection of papers presented at a Library of Congress symposium in October 2000 and examines the challenges in preserving and safeguarding library (and archives) resources. Twenty-two library and archival professionals look at critical issues on the preservation and security of collections in cultural property institutions, including libraries, museums and archives. There are eight sections with a varying

number of chapters in each section and an introduction by Winston Tabb.

In the first section *Cultural Heritage At Risk: Today's Stewardship Challenge* there are two chapters - Stewardship: The Janus Factor by Nancy Cline and Learning to Blush: Librarians and the Embarrassment of Experience by Werner Gundersheimer.

In the section *As Strong As Its Weakest Link: Developing Strategies For A Security Program* there are three chapters - As Strong as Its Weakest Link: The Human Element by Laurie Sowd; Developing a Plan for Collections Security: The Library of Congress Experience by Steven Herman and Creating A Culture of Security in the University of Maryland Libraries by Charles Lowry.

The section *The Big Picture: Preservation Strategies in Context* also has three chapters - Building a National Preservation Program: National Endowment for the Humanities Support by Jeffrey Field; Safeguarding Heritage Assets: The Library of Congress Planning Framework for Preservation by Doris Hamburg and Taking Care: An Informed Approach to Library Preservation by Jan Merrill-Oldham.

The next section *The Silver Lining: Coping With Theft, Vandalism, Deterioration and Bad Press* has three articles - Picking Up the Pieces: The Lengthy Saga of a Library Theft by Jean Ashton; The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Art Theft Program by Lynne Chaffinch and The Silver Lining: Recovering From The Shambles of a Disaster by Camila Alire.

The section *Building The Budget: Promoting Your Program and Meeting Funding Demands For Preservation and Security* there are three articles - Funding For Preservation: The Strengths of Our Past by Nancy Gwinn; Securing Preservation Funds: National and Institutional Requirements by Deanna Marcum and Strategies for Funding Preservation and Security by James Neal.

The section *Understanding Success: Measuring Effectiveness of Preservation and Security Programs* has two articles - Measuring the Effectiveness of Preservation and Security Programs at the Library of Congress by Francis Ponti and Measuring Environmental Quality in Preservation by James Reilly.

In the section *Electronic Information and Digitization: Preservation and Security Challenges* there are three articles - Preservation, Security and

Digital Content by Carl Fleischhauer; The Coming Crisis in Preserving Our Digital Cultural Heritage by Clifford Lynch and Electronic Information and Digitization: Preservation and Security Challenges by Maxwell Anderson.

The final section is *People, Buildings, and Collections: Innovations in Security and Preservation* with three articles - Making the Library of Congress Secure: Innovation and Collaboration by Kenneth Lopez; What Can We Afford To Lose? by Abby Smith and National Research Libraries and Protection of Cultural Resources by James Williams II.

While this book is obviously marketed to the library sector, it still has some relevance to archivists as it addresses issues such as preservation and security. It is an easy read with real-life experiences quoted in most chapters as conference speakers were talking about their own institutions. There is a lot of 'how to' information throughout the book, making it useful for people who are new to the profession and to those working on their own.

Shauna Hicks
Public Record Office Victoria

S Muller, JA Feith and R Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives: Drawn up by the direction of the Netherlands Association of Archivists,* translation of the second edition by Arthur H Leavitt, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2003, l + 225pp. ISBN 1 931666 01 6. US$45.00.

This second edition of the American translation of the 'Dutch Manual' is to be widely welcomed by English-speaking archivists. I suspect that most of us are familiar with the seminal nature of the original but have had little or no opportunity to read the first edition published in 1940. Although the Dutch authors modestly claimed that 'This is a tedious and meticulous book. The reader is warned.' (p. 9), it still proffers enough professional common sense to ignore the warning as well as a fascinating insight into how modern archival theory first came to be codified.

In the Netherlands the continuity and stability of record creation and preservation under the *ancien regime* had been shattered by the upheavals

of the Napoleonic period 1795–1813. In the nineteenth century there followed a conscious policy to create historical archives of the community where records created by cities, provinces and the state were kept in a single depository and described chronologically in a single inventory. This policy was being questioned long before the century's final decade which witnessed the establishment of the Netherlands Association of Archivists, the journal *Nederlandsch Archievenblad* and a commission comprising Muller, Feith and Fruin to draft the Manual.

This last process seems to have been planned and accomplished amicably enough. Each of the authors contributed to the composition of 100 brief sections or rules and provided examples to more lengthy commentaries on each section. Some editorial meetings were held in Utrecht but most of the discussions were conducted in writing as the manuscript was circulated among the three of them. The manuscript was finished in 1897 and published the following year. The methodology and time scale compares favourably with my own experience in the United Kingdom in compiling descriptive standards a century later.

Samuel Muller emerges as the most influential of the three. First appointed city archivist at Utrecht in 1874, he was of his age in espousing a form of archival Darwinism. 'An archival collection is an organic whole, a living organism, which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules' (p. 19). The Manual advises archivists to 'study the organism and ascertain the rules under which it was formed' (p. 19), rather than advocating a fixed model structure to be slavishly applied. 'The archivist deals with the archival collection just as the palaeontologist does with the bones of a prehistoric animal: he tries from these bones to put the skeleton of animal together again' (pp. 70–1).

We can still recognise and applaud these concepts that offer archivists the freedom to study and interpret the functions and structure of record creating bodies. This freedom is to be cherished when modern descriptive standards, data exchange DTDs and centralised networking entities tend more towards prescription than permission. Some of the Manual may strike us as anachronistic. Archives are narrowly defined, restricted to governments and associations, foundations and companies. Private, family and personal archives are excluded. This certainly makes life considerably easier.

The Society of American Archivists is to be applauded for this reissue. It is not a 'tedious and meticulous book'. It retains a fascination and value.

Dick Sargent
United Kingdom

Old Parliament House, *The People's Procession: Popular Australian Movements 1880–1950s,* exhibition at Old Parliament House, Canberra, December 2003 - July 2004, featuring items from the Noel Butlin Archives Centre.

For someone with leftish leanings there could not be a more interesting and stimulating exhibition to review. In fact it might be difficult to view it objectively and to do it justice, as it recalls what really was a way of life for many people in Australia and indeed around the world.

The People's Procession opened in December 2003 in the newly refurbished offices in the east corridor leading to the Prime Minister's suite. It draws from the extensive collection of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre and is aimed in part to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its establishment. It brings to the modern observer a way of life that to all intents and purposes is dead. That might be a long bow to draw, but I think it is fair to say that the causes that impassioned so many people for so long no longer stir the blood of activists to the extent they once did. It is only on really extraordinary occasions that public opinion is moved enough to express itself on the streets.

The exhibition follows a number of themes that take the observer through the awakening and growth of popular movements, but more importantly through a window into the lives of the people involved.

At the entrance to the exhibition there is one of the real treasures of the Noel Butlin: one of those large, beautifully detailed banners designed to highlight the cause of the people who marched behind it. In this case it is a banner of the Sheet Metal Workers Union (NSW Branch) and was used in the fight for the 8-hour day. This is the first theme which is

called '888', standing for 8 hours of work, 8 hours of recreation and 8 hours of rest.

The other themes are the emergence of trade unions, the Common Cause - popular movements of the 1920s and 1930s, Agitprop - agitation and propaganda of the 1930s, class war in postwar Australia, and the Cold War and the peace movement.

The thing that strikes you most about the exhibition is that on the whole it is not an exhibition of pretty things. The majority of items are paper-based, such as letters, notebooks, pamphlets and newspapers. This reflects to a large extent the philosophy of the people who collected this material in the first place. These were people involved in the movements they were documenting and reflect what they felt was important to recall and preserve. As a result we have pamphlets, newsletters, newspaper cuttings, photographs and my personal favourites, the fabulous modernist magazine covers of the 1920s and 30s. These covers derive directly from the proletarian art coming out of the Soviet Union at the time extolling the virtues of the heroic working classes. Steaming chimneys of steel plants mirrored by the steely stares and iron jaws. Extremely corny when looked at in hindsight, but still a fabulous insight into how they viewed themselves and their struggle for justice.

This exhibition enables you to look through a window to a way of life. These people were impassioned and in this day of superficiality, reality TV and blandishments, it does the heart good to see that the cause of justice can move humanity beyond the mundane. It would be nice to see it again. So go and see *The People's Procession* if you're in Canberra. It may make you sit up and take notice of the next protest and make you think.

Matthew Lyons
National Archives of Australia

Standards Australia, Australian Standard AS 5090: 2003 - Work process analysis for recordkeeping, *Standards Australia International, Sydney, 2003. 24pp. ISBN 0 7337 5463 5. $34.16.*

AS 5090 was developed by the Standards Australia IT-021 Records Management Committee as a complement to *AS ISO 15489 - Records Management Standard.* The *Work Process Standard* was developed for any organisation that wants to use an understanding of their work processes for recordkeeping purposes from large-scale functional analysis such as DIRKS to micro, transactional analysis of a single business unit. It is intended to lessen confusion about what work process analysis means in the context of recordkeeping analysis as opposed to workflow (p. 5).

The Standard is structured on the premise of a non-linear approach to analysis featuring two types of analysis - functional and sequential. These analyses (and their components) can be undertaken in various combinations depending on the nature of the project. It also acknowledges the importance of context for recordkeeping issues - that is the socio-legal and business framework that records are created within.

Functional analysis is defined as 'top-down decomposition' which identifies broad organisation goals and the functions, activities and transactions that support them (p. 7). The steps recommended include:

- identifying the goals and strategies of the organisation;
- determining the broad functions of the organisation by which these goals and strategies are undertaken;
- identifying the activities of the organisation which constitute these functions; and
- analysing all the constituent steps of the activity to identify the groups of actions or recurring transactions which constitute each activity (p. 11).

The final step in functional analysis - that is, defining transactions - can be further supported through sequential analysis. Sequential analysis is defined as identification and mapping of sequences of actions

of a work process including variations and their linkages and dependencies.

The steps recommended include:

- identifying the sequence of actions within a process;
- identifying and analysing variations to the process;
- establishing the rules base for the identified constituent actions; and
- identifying links to other systems [ie functions/activities] (p. 12).

The Standard also has useful appendixes that give examples of how to conduct both types of analysis.

The *Work Process Standard* has the following strengths:

- it is concisely and purposefully written and very easy to read, use and apply;
- it explicitly states how functional or sequential work process analysis can be flexibly applied;
- it fills a much needed gap in explicitly stating what is meant by sequential (or transactional) analysis, and more importantly, the non-linear approach ensures a practical means by which to address variations and linkages between business transactions;
- it provides useful explanation of what it means to undertake functional analysis - for example the purpose for which you are undertaking the analysis defines the level to which you go in decomposition; and
- it provides specific and useful questions as a starting point, as well as other advice on validating analysis through techniques like workplace observance.

So, who should use the standard?

- it is a must-read for anyone working in an information management area, but also for anyone undertaking projects such as system design;

- it is particularly recommended for people who want additional details on undertaking a functions-based analysis to those provided in the *AS ISO 15489 - Records Management Standard* (or those jurisdictions using the DIRKS methodology); and
- those who realise that some form of business analysis, either on a small or larger scale would help them address a recordkeeping problem.

Application of AS 5090 may also be enhanced by using it in conjunction with *AS NZS 4360:1999 Risk Management Standard.* For example, overlaying a risk analysis to the functional analysis mentioned in AS 5090 could be used to determine whether, and to what degree, sequential analysis could be applied. This is particularly relevant for highly regulated, high-risk areas of business where detailed sequential analysis could mitigate risk.

AS 5090 and the DIRKS methodology

For those familiar with the DIRKS methodology, AS 5090 has strong similarities with the first stages. It broadly covers Steps A and B and assists in identifying recordkeeping requirements for Step C. AS 5090 outlines essentially the same steps for undertaking business analysis as the DIRKS Manual Step B does - that is - functional or hierarchical (the top-down approach) and process analysis (bottom-up), but provides more detail on how to undertake a detailed process analysis of the transaction level.[1]

The National Archives' Information Management section is conducting a DIRKS project to establish a compliant recordkeeping system for the

1 National Archives of Australia, *DIRKS: A Strategic Approach to Managing Business Information (DIRKS Manual) Step B: Analysis of business activity*, Canberra, 2001, B.4, p. 6 at *www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/dirks/dirksman/dirks.html.* It should also be noted that the State Records Authority of New South Wales has advocated use of sequential analysis as part of its 2003 release of *Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual* based on an earlier draft of AS5090 (State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Step B: Analysis of Business Activity: Sequential Analysis in Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, June 2003, at *www.records.nsw.gov.au/publicsector/DIRKS/final/step_b/stepb4.htm.*

organisation. In trying to undertake detailed transactional analysis for high-risk and complex business areas, the section encountered the following issues:

- a complex transaction pattern – that is, a number of different, divergent steps within business activities and linkages with legislation and other activities (a scenario which is more complicated than that implied by the linear focus of the Archives' DIRKS Manual);
- inadequate documentary sources for writing detailed transaction flows – often procedures either don't exist or are scenario-based; and
- inadequate interview sources for writing detailed transaction flows – staff are often too close to their work to recognise important transaction steps in an interview setting.

This moves the burden of discerning business transactions from evidence to supposition, thereby risking the quality of the analysis by potentially missing important transactions. AS 5090, in acknowledging the importance of variations in complex transaction flows, provided the guidance needed to undertake a detailed analysis of high risk or complex activities. It also provided useful techniques for making source gathering more efficient such as through the use of direct questions to pinpoint triggers for divergent transaction sets.

This experience also reiterated one of the strengths of AS 5090 – that is, work process analysis is *scaleable* to the organisation or identified recordkeeping problem – the context in which it operates, and the nature of the business activities. It does not need to be applied to every aspect of business. Indeed, it works best with intent – determining what areas of business warrant such decomposition, and to what degree. The Information Management section have determined that for the duration of the DIRKS project, it will utilise work process analysis for:

- high-risk, unique business activities;
- areas that are primarily process driven, but with multiple or complex variations, linkages and triggers that may lead to important decisions and therefore records; and

- areas with potential source gathering issues (such as poor procedural documentation) where techniques like workplace observance could offer substantial source gathering efficiencies.

The outcome of this approach is a justifiable and planned allocation of resources and a detailed transactional analysis sourced with sufficient rigour to satisfy risk needs where it is most needed.

In summary, as a complement to functional analysis, the Information Management section of the National Archives, have found work process analysis and the methodology set out in the Standard very useful, particularly when a 'bottom-up' approach is needed to identify the sequence of steps carried out to document the Archives' most high-risk and complex areas of work. In utilising the strengths of AS 5090 for its particular requirements, we are confident the Standard will assist the section to identify a sound recordkeeping framework and contribute to the Archives' corporate governance and accountability.

Anne Liddell and Colleen McEwen
National Archives of Australia