

RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

NO. 3

SEPTEMBER 1993

ISSN 1039-5180

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Records Territory* reflects our continuing efforts to deliver a full range of services to our clients while looking to the future.

During recent months we have been preparing for a resumption of the government records transfer program. With a full complement of staff, backlogs and projects in the areas of records services, oral history and public reference have been addressed and significant progress has been made in developing a records management strategy for the Territory Government.

As always, we welcome comments on archives and records issues from our clients and any individuals or organisations with an interest in these areas.

Greg Coleman

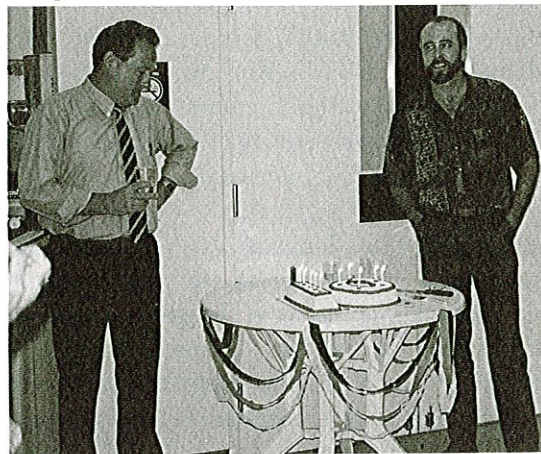
* * *

10TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The Hon Daryl Manzie, MLA, Minister for Conservation, and over 60 invited guests helped NTAS celebrate its 10th anniversary on 7 July 1993 at our Darwin Repository.

Greg Coleman, Principal Archivist, and the Minister spoke briefly of the achievements of the first 10 years and of future directions before jointly extinguishing the candles on the birthday cake in the traditional manner. Short speeches ensured sufficient reserves of air!

The anniversary was well covered by the local media. For a week either side of the event, the Principal



'Cut the speech, mate, this cake's melting!'

L-R: Daryl Manzie, MLA, and Greg Coleman

Archivist was to be found hurrying from studio to phone as members of the fourth estate vied for interviews. Party-goers were not left out, featuring on the social pages of *The Sunday Territorian*.

CONTENTS

Aboriginal Research Workshop	8
Darwin Heritage Study	7
Editorial	1
History Awards	6
Leased Records Storage	2
NTACs	4
Oral History	4 - 5
Recent Accessions	4
Recycled Paper	4
Records Lending Service	3
Records Management	2, 6 - 7
Research in Progress	7 - 8
RMAA Conference	6 - 7
School Records	2 - 3
Staff Notes	5
Statistics	8
Strategic Planning	2
10th Birthday Celebration	1

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR NTAS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE NT GOVERNMENT

A report is due to Cabinet by December this year concerning the future requirements of NTAS and the key issues for records management throughout the NT Government.

A strategic planning group has been convened comprising **Don Brech**, **Linda Bell** and **Greg Coleman** from NTAS, **Ron Hooper**, Assistant Director, Conservation Commission, and **Roger Brailsford**, Department of Education, who is acting in a consulting capacity.

The group is looking at the strategic requirements of the NTAS and Government-wide records management in general. Issues under review are records storage, disposal of government records, the impact and use of micrographic and imaging technologies on records management, the costs of records services, education and training for records management personnel, automation and the need for regional services.

A small reference group of officers from Government agencies has also been convened to provide feedback to the strategic planning group about the issues being addressed. This group comprises **Gloria Corliss**, Department of Health and Community Services, **Kay Moody**, Department of Lands and Housing, **Colette McCool**, Northern Territory Library Service, and **Robyn Ford**, NCOM Services, NT Treasury. NTAS staff will be consulting records managers and IT managers throughout Government during the course of this exercise.

The planning exercise is enjoying considerable support and we hope that the results and recommendations will engender a fresh and economic approach to records management in the NT Government and provide NTAS with a clear focus for the future.

Greg Coleman

LEASED RECORDS STORAGE

Additional space for records storage is now available at the Australian Archives repository at Nightcliff. Transfers of records from agencies will re-start in September.

Both NTAS repositories at Darwin and Winnellie have been at full capacity since 1991. As a result, NTAS has been unable to accept transfers for the past 18 months.

Arrangements to lease space from Australian Archives were completed in August. Earlier this year (*Records Territory*, No. 1, January 1993) we announced that we expected to recommence transfers in March. A fair statement at the time but we clearly underestimated the length of this particular piece of red tape.



Staff from the Australian and Northern Territory Archives marked the successful outcome of this initiative in traditional Territory style.

* * *

SCHOOL RECORDS DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

NTAS issued its second General Disposal Schedule in August.

The Schedule covers records created by public sector primary and secondary schools in the Territory and was compiled in consultation with the Department of Education.

General disposal schedules are being prepared by the Archives to help agencies manage their records and related staff and storage resources more effectively, and to reduce costs.

The schedules are aimed at:

- * Ensuring records that may be required for financial, legal or administrative purposes are retained for as long as necessary and not carelessly destroyed.
- * Encouraging the timely destruction of records which are no longer of financial, legal or administrative value.
- * Identifying records of long-term continuing value in order to ensure their retention and preservation.

Four major categories of records are included in the Schedule: individual student records, general student records, school council records and general administrative records. Audio-visual records and records of auxiliary bodies, such as parents and teachers associations, are also mentioned.



The Schedule is being distributed to all public schools in the Territory. Copies are available from the Archives.

* * *

RECORDS LENDING SERVICE DATABASE

The Records Lending Service provides a file issue and retrieval service for NT Government agencies with records stored at the Northern Territory Archives Service.

The Lending Service, which is operated by two staff members, performed 104,952 transactions between 1 July 1992 and 30 June 1993.

The efficiency of the file retrieval and issue process is essential for the operation of many government agencies.

Last year there were 242 requests for records which had not been returned to NTAS i.e. had been previously issued back to the agency. Substantial staff time both at NTAS and at the agency is wasted when each of these requests is made.

NTAS has purchased a custom-made database program to manage the issue and return of records through the Lending Service. The Lending Service Database records the issue and return of records to an agency through the Lending Service.

The database operates in dBase IV and was designed to specifically meet the needs of NTAS (based on a system that has been operating interstate).

The new database system's main benefits will be the increased speed and accuracy of providing reports, in particular lists of overdue files. The current process of identifying overdue files and notifying agencies about their records is performed manually and takes up a considerable amount of staff time. For this reason, lists of overdue files are generated once a year.

The new database system will enable NTAS to generate this list on demand, and will hopefully ensure that agencies are kept up-to-date about outstanding records. It is anticipated that data input will be complete by the end of the year, and the first database generated reports will be available January 1994.

*Linda Bell
Archivist (Records Services)*

NTACs CONVERTED

No, this was not a spiritual experience of some obscure archives cult although **Neville Horrocks**, who undertook the project, no doubt felt so from time to time.

Among the records transferred from the Commonwealth Government in 1984 were 230 consignments carrying Australian Archives' NTAC accession numbers. Early in 1992 the Archives began the task of converting these to Northern Territory Records Series (NTRS).

The project, involving 275 metres of records, was completed in August this year. The registration of these series, complete with consignment lists, will provide easier and more effective records retrieval and control.

* * *

RECENT ACCESSIONS

Owing to the agreement for the lease of additional storage space having only recently been concluded, few accessions have been received to date. These were:

GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Administrator of the Northern Territory: Correspondence, diaries and scrapbook of Commodore Johnston and Justice Muirhead, 1980-1992.

Women's Advisory Council: Women in Remote Areas (WIRA) Report and questionnaires, 1990-1991.

* * *

RECYCLED PAPER

In the first issue of *Records Territory* we drew attention to an Australian Standard for permanent paper, the focus being on a product to meet the needs of records requiring long-term retention.

Recycled paper addresses needs at the other end of the scale.

Given that generally up to 95% of records are not required for permanent retention and may be destroyed within 15 years of creation, there is considerable scope for the use of recycled paper.

As yet, there are no Australian standards for the production of recycled paper. Both 100% recycled paper and mixes of new and used papers are currently available.

Their limited durability results from the recycling process. Each time paper is reprocessed, the lengths of the fibres making up the paper are shortened, thereby weakening the paper.

Also, the consequences of residual inks and of eliminating the bleaching process in the production of recycled papers are unknown.

In deciding when to use recycled paper these points should be kept in mind.

Organisations with comprehensive and up to date disposal schedules will be best placed to make these decisions and achieve cost benefits from the use of appropriate papers for short and long-term records.

* * *

ORAL HISTORY

The oral history collection has recently benefited from the work of private researchers, who have lodged interview recordings with the Northern Territory Archives in greater numbers than at any time in the past.

Ironically, this has allowed the Archivist (Oral Records), **Francis Good**, the necessary time to produce some edited extracts of interviews for a number of special projects.

Interview extracts from the NT Archives' oral history collection will be heard at visitor-operated listening posts in a forthcoming

travelling exhibition prepared by Australian Archives. Titled *Between Two Worlds*, the exhibition deals with the experience of people removed from the custody of their Aboriginal parents by Welfare authorities in the 1930s. It will be shown nationally at venues which will include Alice Springs and Darwin.

In August, the NT Branch of the National Trust launched a schools curriculum kit developed with the assistance of the Oral History Unit. The kit includes a 30 minute cassette tape of selections from 8 interviews on Territory life in the 1950s. With the tape are full verbatim transcripts of the interview excerpts from the Archives' oral history collection.

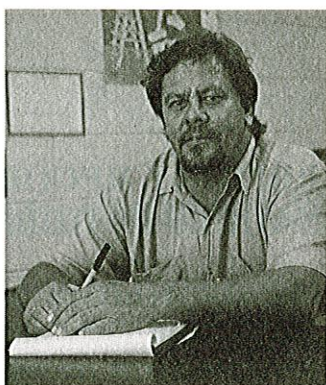
Using newly acquired equipment, the Oral History Unit is planning similar releases of cassettes with compilations of material on various themes such as Aboriginal life, Cyclone Tracy and World War II.

It is pleasing to end this column by reporting Francis' highly successful presentation at the recent Biennial Conference of the Oral History Association of Australia held in Sydney. His 'paper' was a mixed media presentation of recorded interviews, photos and movie film on the Darwin bombings during World War II.

* * *

STAFF NOTES

More changes but, happily, 'comings' rather than 'goings'.



CHRIS SPICER

Storeman/ Courier

Chris joined NTAS in June 1993 after a 7 year spell with the Berry Springs Nature Reserve and the Territory Wildlife Park. He misses the flora and fauna but admits that their absence here makes the job easier!

A Territorian, Chris has lived in the Top End all his life. He started work in the building industry after Cyclone Tracy in 1975 and worked on sites around Darwin until moving to the Conservation Commission in 1983.

Of all his hobbies, he reckons the only one worth a mention is his family. Welcome, Chris.



MAUREEN WILKINS

Archives Assistant

Maureen re-joined NTAS in July after a 5 year break and assists with the documentation and processing of records in the Records Services Section. A foundation member of the Archives, she joined the first permanent staff as Secretarial Assistant in 1984.

Originally from South Australia, Maureen came to the Territory in 1980 looking for a warmer climate. She found it – and stayed.

Leading a busy life at work and home she is also a keen 'fisher person'. And 'she's been to Bali too!'. Welcome back, Maureen.

Sue Harlow has moved across to the Oral History Unit as a transcriber assisting with the preparation and documentation of oral history transcripts. She is now located at Winnellie.

1993 HISTORY AWARDS

The Hon **Daryl Manzie**, MLA, Minister for Conservation, announced the recipients of the NT History Awards for 1993 in June.

The Awards are recommended by the History Awards Committee which, this year, had faced a difficult task of selection from a total of 35 applications which were generally of a high standard.

The annual allocation of \$30,000 was divided among and awarded for the following 14 projects:

Suzanne Parry, \$1,500, for a study of Lutheran experience at Hermannsburg with regard to mission education in the NT.

Angelica Herzog, \$1,000, for work on the history of the Tennant Creek Scouting and Guiding Association.

Fiona Darcy, \$2,000, for a biographical work about Sam Calder.

Max Cartwright, \$3,000, for a history of the south-western region of Central Australia, including Docker River.

Margaret Clinch, \$2,000, for preparation of an overview of the maritime history of the NT.

Janet Dickinson, \$2,500, for a study of the evacuation of women and children from Darwin, 1941-1942.

Robert Gosford, \$2,000, for a compilation of oral histories of the Beswick/Wugularr Community.

Tony Austin, \$1,500, for a history of the Croker Island Home for Aboriginal children of mixed descent.

Robyn Lindsay, \$1,000, for a history of the Pang Quee family and its contribution to the NT.

Mickey Dewar, \$2,200, for a study of the life and imaginative legacy of explorer Ludwig Leichhardt.

Samantha Wells, \$3,000, for work on a social and natural history of Kulaluk.

Jack Gibbs, \$3,000, for an autobiography of his life and time at St Vidgeon.



L-R: Jack Gibbs, History Award recipient, and Harry Giese, founder of the NT History Awards Scheme.

Helen Wilson, \$3,000, for work on the recording and documentation of the town allotments of Darwin.

Phillip Batty, \$2,300, for a history of the first encounters between the Pintupi people of Central Australia and Europeans, 1957-1984.

The purpose of the Awards is to encourage and support the work of researchers in recording and writing about Territory history. They are aimed at assisting with the basic research component of historical projects.

The NT History Awards are administered by the NT Archives Service. Information about the Awards scheme and about past Awards is available from the Principal Archivist.

* * *

TERRITORY RECORDS MANAGERS IN HOBART

The NT was well represented at the 10th National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA) in Hobart which was attended by over 400 delegates from around Australia and overseas.



NT delegates to Hobart, L-R: Murray Maynard, Greg Coleman, Don Brech, Judy Watts and Ray Holswich.

Seven information and records managers and archivists from the NT took an active part in the proceedings held from 5-8 September. Among these was **Ray Holswich**, Records Manager at NT University, who was elected for a third term as Federal President of RMAA.

With 'Records - The Heart of Management' as its theme, the Convention offered some 20 sessions and workshops highlighting the role of records managers and records management in a changing corporate and technological environment.

Sub-themes that emerged from the papers and discussions included:

- * The importance of people and professional knowledge to the new information and records environment.
- * The need for positive management of new technology in records management.
- * The records manager's role in the process of change.
- * A shift in records management orientation to a function and business focus.

* * *

DARWIN HERITAGE STUDY

A heritage study of Darwin's central area has recently been completed by **Adrian Welke** of Troppo Architects, Darwin, and **Helen Wilson**, a local historian.

The project, funded through the NT Heritage Program 1992-93, was commissioned by the National Trust of Australia (NT) and jointly administered by the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory.

Detailing the architectural landscape of the central Darwin area, and relating climatic and social factors and the phases of Darwin's development to architectural styles, the study provides a valuable documentary basis for future policy decisions by the National Trust and the Conservation Commission on Darwin's heritage.

Research for the project made extensive use of the archival resources of the Australian Archives (NT Region), the NT Archives Service and State Records South Australia. This was complemented by on-site inspection and photographic coverage of the 147 buildings recorded by the study.

An historical overview by **Helen Wilson** and an architectural overview by **Adrian Welke** introduce the results of the study which are contained in a 323 page report, illustrated with maps, plans and photographs. Entries are arranged by Lot number and include an historical and architectural description, the extent of the area of significance, a comparative analysis and details of information sources.

The original report was submitted to the Conservation Commission. Copies are held by Australian Archives and the NT Archives Service and are available for consultation by members of the public.

* * *

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

In recent months the following research projects have been making use of the Archives:

- * Aboriginal children at The Bungalow, Alice Springs and at Kahlin Compound, Darwin (**Rowena McDonald**, Australian Archives, research for an exhibition titled *Between*

Two Worlds to be shown around Australia)

- * Cyclone Tracy (script for a play or performance, **Kim Gleeson**, Writer-in-Residence, Darwin Theatre Company)
- * History of the south-west region of Central Australia, Ayers Rock and the Petermann Ranges (for publication of a sequel to *Ayers Rock to the Petermanns. The Legend of Lasseter*, **Max Cartwright**, Alice Springs)
- * History of Nightcliff and Rapid Creek (**Leith Barter**, Darwin)
- * Buildings in the Central Business District of Darwin (**Helen Wilson**, Department of History, NT University)

* * *

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH WORKSHOP

A workshop will be held in Darwin in November aimed at improving the skills of Aboriginal researchers in using archival resources and, in particular, those of the NT Regional Branch of the Australian Archives and the NT Archives Service.

The idea was first put forward at an informal meeting of Territory members of the Australian Society of Archivists in Darwin in February. Since then the Australian Archives and the NT Archives Service, in co-operation with representatives of a number of Aboriginal organisations and agencies concerned with Aboriginal affairs, have developed a workshop programme.

The objective is 'to instruct the instructors'. participants in the workshop are being drawn from among the more experienced Aboriginal researchers whose employment involves the use of archives. Their continuing role at the conclusion of the workshop will be to impart to potential Aboriginal researchers in various jurisdictions and areas of interest a better understanding of the complexities of archival research and the skills required.

The provisional programme covers archives in the context of other resources, background on the archival resource providers, types of records, types of research and researchers, research problems and successes, handling problems, access routines and finding aids and keeping references.

The workshop will be held at Australian Archives on 5 November. Further information can be obtained from **Judy Watts**, Regional Director of Australian Archives (NT) on 85 2222, or **Greg Coleman** at NTAS on 89 5190.

* * *

STATISTICS 1992-93

Just in case you were wondering what the activities at the Archives added up to during the past year...

Our **holdings** totalled 9,154 shelf metres.

The **Lending Service** issued 52,497 records and returned 52,035. The total number of transactions increased by 9% compared with 1991-92.

There were 351 visitors to the **Search Room**, a rise of 46%. They were issued with 6,823 record items, an increase of 49% on the previous year. In addition, the **Information Services Section** answered 257 telephone and written inquiries, 64% higher than 1991-92.

In the **Oral History Unit** 91 interviews were recorded, totalling 96 recorded hours.

NT ARCHIVES SERVICE

An agency of the Conservation Commission of the NT.

Postal Address : GPO Box 874
DARWIN NT 0801

Telephone: (089) 89 5188

Facsimile: (089 41 1458



Northern Territory Government