

RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

A happy new year to all our clients and colleagues!

The new year brings promise of a time for consolidation and progress for the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS). Now that we have relocated all our services to the refurbished office and archives repository at Cavenagh Street in Darwin we are planning to advance our public programs. Work has commenced on producing and improving guides to our archival collection (now also relocated to the Cavenagh Street building). We are also planning displays and exhibitions for the year and the issue of a new set of information leaflets.

The NTAS is also eager to see developments take place this year in relation to records storage and other records management strategies to improve services and in-house efficiencies for its Government clients.

Please refer to the back page of this edition of *Records Territory* for information about Who's Who at the NTAS and for our new contact details.

Greg Coleman
Principal Archivist

SEASONS GREETINGS



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Northern Territory Government

Department of Transport and Works

STAFF NOTES

The latest addition to the staff at NTAS is Cheryl Phillips who commenced with us in December as the Archives Officer.



CHERYL PHILLIPS
Archives Officer

Cheryl comes to NTAS after a long and varied career with Territory Health Services and says she is looking forward to the challenge of her new position. Cheryl is a long term Darwin resident who enjoys sailing and the outdoor attractions Darwin has to offer.

Paul Mortimer recently left NTAS after his contract finished and returned to his familiar environment of NCOM (computer services). We wish Paul success in his new adventure.

SK

RECORDS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

As advised in the last edition of *Records Territory*, a consultancy has been let by the Strategic Services Branch of the NT Treasury for the drawing up of a recommended strategy for records management in the NT public sector.

Melbourne based company, Archival Systems, commenced the detailed interview and survey work with agencies throughout the Territory in November. Consultants, Judith Ellis, David Brown and Mary Griffiths, have now completed this task and are analysing the masses of material

collected. It is planned that the consultants will provide feedback about their analysis of the information in February 1997 prior to compiling reports about their findings and a high level strategy for consideration in March 1997.

GC

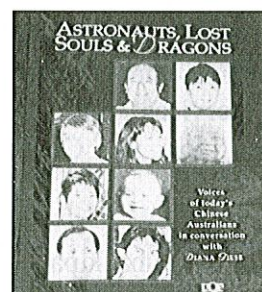
NT HISTORY AWARDS



It is expected that the NT History Awards for 1997 will be issued in July 1997.

The NTAS will be calling for applications for the 1997 Awards probably in early March. Potential applicants should keep an eye out for an advertisement in weekend editions of major Territory newspapers or the *Weekend Australian* around this time.

Numerous reports have been flowing in about progress with the current year's and previous years' Awards indicating that there are several books, papers and theses about Territory history nearing completion. A project recently completed is Keith Hart's collation and recording on CD of a large collection of historic photographs of Oenpelli in western Arnhem Land. The photographs, now held at the NTAS, were originally taken by members of the Church Missionary Society.



Another former History Award recipient, Diana Giese, has furthered her oral history work with the Chinese community in the Territory and elsewhere in Australia with the recent publication of her book, *Astronauts, Lost Souls and Dragons*, published by the University of Queensland Press. The book is a collection of stories of the struggles, hopes and successes of Chinese Australians as told by these people, and features significant Territory content.

Greg Coleman



COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Many readers will be aware that the National Records and Archives Competency Standards Project is currently underway.

Funding has been secured by the Finance and Administration Industry Training Body from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the steering committee has appointed Susan Henry of Melbourne to coordinate the project.

Industry involvement has been taking place from all levels with industry mapping and workshops around Australia being attended by representatives of the Records Management Association of Australia, the Australian Society of Archivists, the Health Information Management Association of Australia, the Australian Council of Archives, the Association of Information and Image Management, the Australian Service Union, the Financial Services Union, and the Community and Public Sector Union.

The Competency Standards will become the foundation upon which future formal training and certification will be built. National Competency Standards for the Records and Archives industry will deal with such categories as:

- * Records survey/business process analysis/resource management.
- * Records appraisal and disposal authority development.
- * Record keeping system design, development and implementation.
- * Documentation of Record keeping systems and their context.
- * Records creation, capture, retrieval, disposition and control.
- * Storage of current and non-current records.
- * Records and archives conservation.
- * Records and archives reference services.
- * Records and archives consulting services.

At a recent meeting of South Australian and Northern Territory representatives in Adelaide, Nancye Douglas of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries represented the Northern Territory Branch of the Records Management Association of Australia. Greg Coleman of the NTAS represented the Australian Society of Archivists and the Australian Council of Archives. For further information about progress with the Standards, please contact Nancye, Greg or the chairperson of the National Steering Committee, Ray Holswich, at the NT University.

Greg Coleman

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS



Research projects that have recently utilised the resources available in the NTAS Search Room include:

- Study on Edwin Verburg / Kay Goon (NTU)
- History of Fannie Bay Gaol / Dr Mickey Dewar (NTU)
- Interpretation of the Northern Goldfields Loop for the Northern Territory Heritage Trail / Barbara James
- Germans in Darwin / Ursula Klein.
- PhD thesis on history of trade unions in the N.T. Bernie Brian (NTU).
- History of employment & labour relations of Aborigines 1788 - 1988 / Prof. Jim Hagan (University of Wollongong) & Bernie Brian (NTU)



Andrew Pitt

ARCHIVAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

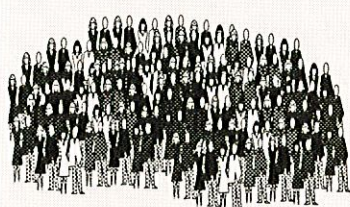
The Australian Council of Archives is aiming to assist the development of Australia's archival resources by providing support to small archives projects.

Organisations such as small archives, historical societies, heritage organisations and other community-based or special interest groups are eligible to apply for the support.

Financial support up to \$500 is available as well as acid free archives boxes. Support will be given to projects such as preparation of reports on establishing an archives program, the publication of finding-aids, purchase of software, and oral history projects.

For more detailed information and an application kit contact Ms Judith Ellis, Executive Officer, Australian Council of Archives, Suite 4, 12 Ellingworth Parade, Box Hill, Victoria, 3128, telephone (03) 9890 3530, fax (03) 9890 3150. The closing date for applications is 28 March 1997.

Greg Coleman



TOURS

Since opening in August 1996, the new search room has been servicing quite a range of clients including groups interested in seeing how the search room operates. Among these were students from the Ranger Training Program, Kakadu National Park and the Northern Territory University.



Tours included learning how to search and request records and to gain an overview of the types of information NTAS holds. This also included familiarisation with the new finding aids.

THE NEW FINDING AIDS include editions of the Photograph Catalogue and Oral History Catalogue which have now been completed and are available for use in the Search Room. A List of holdings relating to Aboriginal people will be available shortly.

AP



Normal Administrative Practice Leaflet

Part of the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS) responsibilities under Cabinet Decision No. 3035 is the promotion of efficient and economic management of Northern Territory Government records which includes establishing guidelines for **Normal administrative practice (NAP)**.

NAP provides for the routine permissible destruction of non essential material to be carried out by officers in the course of day to day business. The main emphasis here concerns **destruction**, that is, what types of information can be destroyed on a day to day basis without authorisation from the NT Archives Service.

NAP is designed to avoid the situation where every administrative action affecting government records would require the formal approval of NTAS or a specific law. It is intended to permit the normal conduct of public administration without undermining the proper conservation and preservation of government records.

NTAS has recently created and released its normal administrative practice leaflet to assist officers of the NT Public Service. The leaflet outlines what NAP is and gives easy to follow guidelines in point form. These guidelines briefly state what an officer can destroy without seeking permission from NTAS - *it also points out what cannot be destroyed.*

The leaflet is available by contacting NTAS, refer back cover for details.

Sharon Keay

Reunited



Between 22 November and 5 December, the permanent or historical records holdings of the Northern Territory Archives Service were relocated from their temporary home at Australian Archives, Millner to the newly renovated Cavenagh Court. This concludes a period of two years during which the archival collection has been located apart from the office and public search room.



In September 1994, when the NTAS building at the corner of Carey and McMinn Streets was sold, we were unable to arrange for a suitable building to move into immediately. At this time, we found office accommodation for the staff and most functions of the Archives (at the Myilly Point Campus of the Northern Territory University) and Australian Archives offered us the lease of some of its storage facility at Millner for the short term storage of our archival records.

Unfortunately this arrangement was not as brief as originally thought, as the search for a suitable building to meet the storage requirements for archival records was not easily accomplished.

Cavenagh Court was chosen as the site for the archives repository, and extensive renovations were commenced in order to provide the required storage conditions for the archival records.

The building has been redesigned to provide two storage areas or repositories on the ground and first floors. The top floor has been renovated to provide offices incorporating the oral history unit, a public search room, lending service, exhibition room, and conference room.

The storage areas have twenty-four hour airconditioning which strictly controls the temperature and humidity.

While the staff and services were relocated from Capricornia House in August, the repository area, including the compactus shelving, was not made ready for the holdings until mid-November.

Once the repository was ready for the archival records to be relocated, preparations were made for the move.

Grace removal won the job of removing the records from Australian Archives at Millner to Cavenagh Court. Due to the need to maintain control of the records throughout the move, it was decided that only one truck and one team of men should be used for the move. It was estimated that under these conditions, the move would take approximately three to four weeks.

The move commenced on Friday 22 November, and took exactly ten days. The team from Grace learnt the requirements for the order and handling of the records, thus ensuring control of the collection was maintained at all stages of the move.



Slightly different methods were investigated in order to improve the efficiency of the move, and an average of 1,800 type 1 archive boxes were moved each day. Due to efficiency, the speed of the move was halved whilst still maintaining control of the holdings.

The records which were removed from Australian Archives had been stored in four different areas inside the building, and only particular records from these areas were removed. A total of almost 16,000 type 1 archive boxes (and their equivalent in size) were relocated from Australian Archives.

The access arrangements at Cavenagh Court, via Austin Lane, meant that the move could only be undertaken during clear weather, to avoid any water damage.



The gods were clearly on our side, because the unusual weather which had given Darwin several storms and showers in November, graced us with a day-time storm two days before the move, but graciously kept all rain away from our move for the duration.

The heat and humidity, however, did not ease, and for nearly every day of the move it was more than thirty-three degrees and over seventy percent humidity.



The men from Grace certainly earned their money on this job, and we were grateful for their energy and care.

The move was completed by Thursday 5 December, and the holdings have all been successfully relocated, and their new locations (which were recorded as they were moved) have been listed, and control of the holdings has been maintained.

Now that our archival holdings are located once again with our office and search room facilities, services which have previously been restricted will return to normal. The time delays which have been caused by the need to travel to various different facilities for large portions of our holdings should now be eliminated. Other functions which have been difficult or impossible to perform due to our physical separation from the collection, such as preservation and processing, we will be able to recommence.

While work has not ceased in the management of our holdings, it is a relief to have the most valuable records housed with

us. Enabling us to once again offer the range of services we have been unable to provide for the past two years.

Cavenagh Court offers us the space to store archival records for the Northern Territory for years to come. We are currently seeking funding to construct shelving for the remaining space on the ground floor repository and for the first floor repository. Until this shelving can be provided we are unable to accept transfers of archival records, which is the sole focus of Cavenagh Court due to its specialised storage conditions.

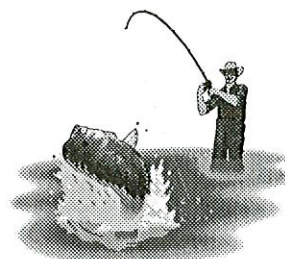
Agencies which are currently on the waiting list for transfers will be contacted when space becomes available. We are unable to give a specific time frame at the moment, but are very aware of the urgent needs and will endeavour to assist as quickly as possible.

Linda Bell



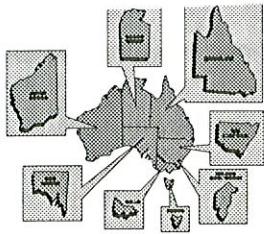
The NT Archives Service's new premises includes an exhibition room on the second floor. We intend putting this to good use by mounting displays and exhibits that reflect public interest, issues and our holdings.

The first exhibition will be open for public viewing in the early months of 1997 (we hope). The theme is 'Darwin at Play Before TV' drawing from a cross section of photographs and memorabilia from a wide variety of series held in the Archives.



We hope the exhibit will bring back memories for some and provide interest and inspiration to others.

SK



COUNCIL OF FEDERAL STATE AND TERRITORY ARCHIVES

The Council of Federal, State and Territory Archives held its six monthly meeting in Hobart recently. Attended by NTAS Principal Archivist, Greg Coleman, the aims of the Council are to represent each of the government archives in Australia and to foster cooperation between these governments.

Issues addressed at the Hobart meeting which involve continuing cooperation include a joint archives residential school; staff exchanges between organisations; developments in common public access and records disposal services; management of electronic records; review of archives legislation; and the national guide to archival records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders sponsored by the Archives Working Group of the Cultural Ministers Council.

The NTAS can learn a great deal from its larger and older government neighbours and it is becoming more apparent just how much we have in common and how much duplication can be saved by such coordination.

GC

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP



The inaugural meeting of the Northern Territory Government Records Management Advisory Group took place on 7 November 1996 and a subsequent meeting was held on 3 December 1996.



The focus of these meetings was to introduce nominated agency representatives to some of the records

management issues facing the NT public sector. Particular emphasis was placed on the records management strategy currently being investigated. See page 2 of this newsletter for details about the strategy.

The Group, which reports to the Information Management Advisory Committee, has adopted its terms of reference and working charter. For further information contact Jeanette Collins of the Strategic Services Branch, NT Treasury, on telephone 89 993865, or Greg Coleman, Convenor of the Group, on telephone 8924 7677.

Greg Coleman

GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULE For HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RECORDS

The General Disposal Schedule for Human Resource Management Records has recently been updated by NTAS in conjunction with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment. The original schedule was compiled in 1990. Since then many of the NT Public Sector practices have changed causing the schedule to grow from seven functional categories to thirteen.

Staff from all agencies and a wide range of job levels were consulted in the update which commenced in September 1996. The schedule is now in its completed draft form awaiting its final approval. We are envisaging its issue in early 1997.

It has been an arduous task attempting a fine balance between legal, financial and administrative requirements with agencies' practices and preferences. Some challenging issues involved electronic records and applying politically correct terms!

We are confident the schedule will meet and suit the requirements of its NT Public Sector users.

Sharon Keay

E L E C T R O N I C RECORDS



In early 1996 the NTAS distributed its first leaflet in the Electronic Records Series entitled 'A Current Management Issue for the NT Government'. The first leaflet was aimed at increasing the awareness of the creators of electronic information. The second leaflet in the series distributed in September 1996 was designed to further assist in the decision making process required for the effective management of electronic records.

The second leaflet aids the user in identifying the types of documents created and received. This is useful when deciding upon appropriate records disposal policies and the most viable storage media for information to be kept.

The third leaflet in the series (available Feb 1997) takes the theme of storage media a step further by looking at the issues to be addressed when choosing an appropriate storage medium for your electronic records.

On the face of it, choosing a storage medium may seem quite a straight forward process but once cost effectiveness, retention periods, accessibility, reliability, a records life cycle and legalities are considered, then issues of responsibility, who is going to bear the long term cost, and avoidance of obsolescence take on new meaning.

There are no cut and dry solutions, each case is different and needs to be assessed individually. By raising the awareness of users and creators of electronic records the task becomes less formidable and takes us one step further to a more unified approach and solution.

This series does not profess to provide all the answers to the intricacies and complexities arising from the impact of technology, rather our intention is to assist the end-user in keeping abreast of issues and developments as they arise.

For copies of the leaflet or any further information or suggestions please contact Sharon Keay, Archivist (Records Policy), on (08) 89247 650.

SK

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