RECORDS TERRITORY

Northern Territory Archives Service Newsletter

A Branch of the Department of Corporate and Information Services

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Welcome to Records Territory no. 21.

In this edition, we share with you some of our experiences early in 2000. The Northern Territory Archives Services (NTAS) has been focussing on bedding down various records management initiatives for the NT Government such as the establishment of a unit to manage and support the corporate records management system. Another key focus has involved enhancing the promotion of our services to the community.

During this period, the NTAS has assumed administrative responsibility for the records management units of its parent department, the Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS). We welcome DCIS Records Management to the Branch and look forward to keeping the customers satisfied.

Greg Coleman
Director NTAS

CONTENTS

FOUNDING DOCUMENTS WEBSITE

Documenting Democracy - Australia's story

By the time this goes to print, we will have had the launch on Monday 19 June of this major national collaborative project which has been outlined in earlier issues of this newsletter. Our Minister, the Hon Peter Adamson, will be officiating at our launch and similar arrangements have been made at all the other participating government archives throughout Australia. Overall, approximately 80 people were directly involved in project teams around Australia, in the research, writing, conservation, photography, proofing, digitisation and the design and build of this website. The fact that the text on the website would fill at least two encyclopaedic-size volumes is indicative of the size of this project that has produced a valuable resource for students, researchers and historians.

The images below are extracts from a flyer produced by the National Archives of Australia which provides background information about the website. These flyers are available from NTAS.

Northern Territory Government

RECORDS STORAGE CONTRACTS

In our previous newsletter (February 2000), we mentioned that Pickfords Records Management, the Darwin contractor for storage of secondary NT Government records, had almost completed the construction of its purpose-built facility at Berrimah. This facility is now open and procedures have been distributed to enable agencies to transfer their secondary records to Pickfords (records assessed for permanent retention as archives are still to be transferred to the NT Archives Service).

Business has been slow thus far (as it was for the contractor in Alice Springs, Centralian Records Management). Action is being taken to promote the services of the contractors and to encourage agencies to utilise the services offered. The benefits will be in overall cost savings to the government and, the knowledge that valuable recorded information is being stored in a secure facility with optimal environmental conditions for the storage of secondary records.

NT Government records, which in the past have been transferred to storage companies other than the contractors, will be withdrawn from those companies and deposited with the authorised government contractors.

Contact details for the respective contractors are:

Alice Springs –

Mr Drury Pyper
Centralian Records Management
12 Hele Crescent
Alice Springs NT 0870

Phone: 8953 3566   Fax: 8953 4474
Email: centralian records@bigpond.com

Darwin –

Mr Les Bullard
Pickfords Records Management
889 Stuart Highway
Berrimah NT 0828

Phone: 8931 1262   Fax: 8931 0069
Email: les.bullard@pickfords.com.au

For any general queries relating to the storage contracts, or for copies of procedures, please contact the Records Standards Coordinator, Mr Barry Garside.

Pickfords Records Management building, Darwin

Mezzanine storage and shelving, Pickfords, Darwin

DCIS RECORDS MANAGEMENT

In recent months, the NTAS has assumed administrative responsibility for the records management function of its parent department, the Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS).

This function is broadly organised in the two areas of Darwin Records Management and Regional Records Management.

Darwin Records Management is responsible for providing the DCIS strategic direction in records management and for providing records services from Harbourview Plaza and Energy House in Darwin and Highway House in Palmerston. As well as providing records management services to DCIS, it is responsible for providing these services to the Power and Water Authority, the Department of Transport and Works and the Office of Communications, Science and Advanced Technology (OCSAT).

Regional Records Management is responsible for the provision of records management services in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine. The larger regional records management units are located in Alice Springs where DCIS provides services to several agencies from units located at the AFT and Greatorex buildings in central Alice Springs and at the Parks and Wildlife Commission to the south of Alice Springs. Similar arrangements are in place in Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Plenty of challenges lie ahead for DCIS Records Management as it settles into the previously uncharted concept of providing records management services to several other agencies and as it adopts whole of government initiatives in records management policies, standards and systems.

The next issue of Records Territory will profile the DCIS Records Management Units and their staff.

RECORDS DISPOSAL SCHEDULES

Whole of Government Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records

Work on a disposal schedule designed to cover administrative records common to all or most NT Government agencies is well under-way. The schedule will include records from the categories of Community Relations, Equipment and Stores, Fleet Management, Government Relations, Industrial Relations, Information Management, Legal Services, Property Management, Publishing, Strategic Management, and Technology & Telecommunications. As many of these categories relate to records common to most agencies (and are taken straight from the NT Government Corporate Thesaurus), a whole-of-government approach to the drafting and issuing of this schedule will ensure that agencies are free to concentrate on drafting disposal schedules for their unique functions.

This much-needed schedule will assist agencies in the disposal of approximately 25% of their records and will complement the two other general (whole-of-government) disposal schedules for Human Resource Management and Financial Management records.

Agency Specific Records Disposal Schedules

Apropos disposal schedules for records of an agency's unique functions, congratulations go to the Government Printing Office (Department of Corporate and Information Services) and the Work Health Authority (Department of Industries and Business) who have recently completed disposal schedules for their functional records. When the whole-of-government schedule for administrative records is issued, these agencies will have disposal coverage for all of their records.

Any other agency wishing to extend disposal schedule coverage for their functional records should contact the Records Standards Coordinator, Barry Garside. You may also wish to contact the two agencies mentioned in the above paragraph who will verify that the process is not as painful as some perceive it to be!

NT HISTORY AWARDS

Applications for this year's NT History Awards were received at the end of April and the successful applicants will have been announced by the Minister for Corporate and Information Services by the time this goes to print. The NT History Awards is an annual program of small grants provided by the Northern Territory Government to assist research projects related to Northern Territory history. The program is administered by the NTAS.

Details of successful applicants for this year's awards will be provided in the next issue of this newsletter.

STAFF NOTES

We welcome Jeanette Collins back to the NTAS to take up the position of System Manager wherein she will be responsible for the continuing management of the TRIM records management system across the NTG. Having been involved in the planning for the RecordsConnect project and beyond, Jeanette brings appropriate experience and expertise to this job.

Jeanette Collins

While Celina Hodge has been with the NTAS for some time working on the RecordsConnect project, we are very pleased to be retaining Celina as the TRIM System Support Officer. Those out there in records management land will appreciate that Celina's expertise in this area is something we just had to keep.

On the oral history front, we bid ciao to Oral Records Officer, Anita Angel. We will miss Anita's smiling face and her "Mediterranian" approach to life.

We welcome Sue Polden who has recently been appointed as the Oral Records Officer. Sue is responsible for analysing the contents of oral history recordings lodged with the NTAS and compiling documentation about them to make them accessible to the community.

We have also welcome Kylie Tallo to the team on a temporary basis to help out with records lending and retrieval and a host of other tasks.

Kylie Tallo

ORAL HISTORY - NTAS AND THE *BRINGING THEM HOME* ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

As part of its response to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, in 1997 the Commonwealth Government allocated $1.6m to the National Library of Australia (NLA), for an oral history project that is to collect and preserve a range of stories from Indigenous people and others involved in the process of child removals.

The aim of the project is to create a rounded history by recording a selection of the experiences and perspectives of various people who were involved. These will include those who were separated, and family members who were affected, as well as a range of people such as administrators, patrol officers, police and mission workers. The project is well under way around Australia, and will be completed by June 2002. After focussing on the collection of stories for the first two years, it will yield a major publication.

The recording of these oral histories is crucial to documenting a significant period of Australia's history and making it available as a public record. The process of recording, and the oral histories themselves, can play an important part in healing and reconciliation, and in helping Australians understand their history.

Interviews for the NLA's project are being undertaken around Australia, and the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS) is providing assistance by recording some in Darwin on behalf of the NLA. A number of interviews with people involved in these events, including those who were removed as children, were recorded by the NTAS some years ago and made available for researchers in our extensive oral history collections. Some of these interviews may also be made available to the NLA's project.

Further information can be obtained by phoning a toll-free number that will give direct access to the project office at the NLA: 1800 353 907. Alternatively, you can phone the Project


Bringing Them Home project staff and interviewers who attended a seminar at the National Library of Australia in February, 2000. Francis Good, Archivist, Oral Records is third from left, back row.

Manager, Doreen Mellor, on (02) 6262 1674, or e-mail her at dmellor@nla.gov.au. The NTAS will also be pleased to assist with inquiries. The person to contact is Francis Good, Archivist, Oral Records.

Whose Records...?

For some time the NT Archives Service has been storing secondary records on behalf of NT Government agencies. As a cost-saving measure now that the records storage contracts are in place, we will be in contact with agencies soon to arrange the return of responsibility for agency secondary records that are in our custody. Part of this task will entail identifying which agency owns which records. Those records which are not assessed for destruction in accordance with an approved records disposal schedule will be transferred to the appropriate storage contractor in Darwin or Alice Springs, and their continuing management will be the responsibility of the respective agencies.

For any queries regarding this issue please contact the Records Standards Coordinator, Barry Garside.
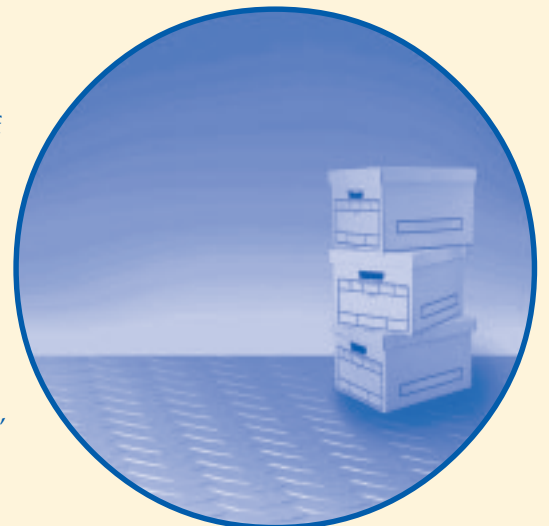
Northern Territory Government Corporate Thesaurus Update

Now that thesaurus titling of records has been in practice for some time, Northern Territory Government agencies are reporting significant business benefit in the form of improved records tracking and retrieval. Experience is also highlighting areas in need of improvement, and agencies are beginning to review and update their functional thesauri to better reflect agency business needs. Similarly, Northern Territory Archives Service is aiming to improve the *Northern Territory Corporate Thesaurus* on which agency thesauri are built.

A draft of the *Northern Territory Government Corporate Thesaurus* Version 2 was released in April to agency Records Managers for comment. The new version corrects a number of errors that were present in the first version, and adds some new terms to address identified gaps. Northern Territory Archives is keen to ensure that agencies are encouraged to participate in the ongoing development of the core thesaurus so that it remains relevant to government business. Comments on the new version will be collated by the end of June, and the new thesaurus implemented in agencies soon after.

Thesaurus Development Workshops were conducted recently with Records Managers, and featured discussion of various thesaurus amendment strategies. In addition, a variety of thesaurus documentation and presentation media were previewed. A highlight of the workshop was the release of the new Thesaurus Formatter Word Macro that converts a thesaurus export from TRIM (Tower Records & Information Management – the Records Management System used by the Northern Territory Government) into an alphabetical listing of thesaurus terms in a MicroSoft Word document. The alphabetical listing is particularly useful for end-users who may have little experience of thesauri as it provides extensive cross-referencing and notes to guide the user through the process of constructing a record title. Even more exciting was the sneak preview of a new interactive version of the thesaurus for the intranet, complete with search engine. The intranet thesaurus was developed by

the Department of Corporate & Information Services – Information Technology Management Services – Projects & Consulting Group, in conjunction with Northern Territory Archives Service, and is now available to all Northern Territory agencies. Inquiries relating to the intranet thesaurus should be directed to Northern Territory Archvies Service.

Contact Beth Moloney, Records Policy Coordinator, for more information.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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

- Study for the Co-operative Research Centre for Sustainable Development of Tropical Savannas of changes in the density of woody vegetation in the last half century throughout the Victoria River District/ *Russell Fairfax*

- PhD thesis 'The Catholic Church and the status of women: Port Keats - a case study'/ *Christine Gordon*

- Research on heritage sites including Wesleyan Church, Knuckey St; Myilly Point houses and the former Supreme Court/ *Barbara James*

- Tennant Creek goldfields pre 1940, especially 1930-35. Particular emphasis on the shooting affray in September 1934 when Mick O'Brien died at the hand of Snowy Renfrey/ *Kim Rowe*

- Non-fiction account of Cyclone Tracy to be published by Allen & Unwin/ *Gary McKay (Website: http://www.batawood.com.au/)*

- History of the North Australian Workers Union/ *Bernie Brian*

- Rynne family history/ *Timothy Rynne*

- Research for publications on Jim Bowditch and Xavier Herbert/ *Peter Simon*

- Essay on the Darwin area water supply 1869-1911 / *Arline McQueen*

- Research for book 'The Copper's Wife' covering 35 years spent in a police environment in the NT including 17 years in remote areas / *Christine Cox*

- PhD thesis on the corresponding development of Hermannsburg/Ntaria Council and policies of Aboriginal self-determination over the past 40 years/ *Rick Rutjens*

- Research into historical geography of Darwin during the South Australian administration / *Kathy De La Rue*

- Photographic research for NT Tourist Commission, Heritage survey of Mitchell Creek for Palmerston Town Council, Historical overview and site surveys of Strauss Airstrip for Heritage Conservation Branch (DLPE)/ *Bob Alford*

HARRY GIESE

Our condolences go to the family and friends of Harry Giese who passed away 4 February 2000.

Harry was a well-known Territorian for a host of reasons, including his services to welfare and Territory administration. He also held a special place with the NTAS as a founder of the Oral History and NT History Awards programs.

Harry's memory will be upheld through his extensive archival collections and oral history recordings which are preserved at the NTAS.

Intrepid Archivists in the North - the NTAS in Timor

In October 1999, the NT Archives Service (NTAS) was approached by local Timorese Bibliographer, Kevin Sherlock, on behalf of the Portuguese Mission in East Timor about concerns for records and archives damaged or lost in Dili, East Timor, following the conflict arising from the vote for Independence.

The following is a report from Linda Bell our Archivist, Records Services, wherein she details the trip made by herself and our Director, Greg Coleman, to Dili.

Soon after sunrise on 29 October we arrived in Dili Harbour having travelled ten hours on board the catamaran Jervis Bay and were greeted by dozens of INTERFET (International Force East Timor) soldiers. Once on land we were quickly escorted to the Governor's Offices (now United Nations Headquarters), where the surviving records had been located. Traipsing into the numerous hot and humid attics, we viewed and photographed records scattered and piled on floors. Most of the records were covered in dust and many showed evidence of mould damage. The records were written in either Portuguese or Indonesian language.

The task of inspecting records was made more difficult by the haste of the visit and some concern for our safety since the attics had not been swept for booby traps by the INTERFET! A highlight of the visit was a chance meeting with Xanana Gusmao who had just returned to Dili. After an extremely busy day, by late afternoon we were on a French Hercules returning to our ordered city of Darwin.

Following the visit we presented a report and recommendations for the salvage of the records to the Portuguese Mission and eventually to UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor). All was quiet for five months until March when we were approached by and met the newly appointed UNTAET Archivist.

Sylivester Sennabulya, an Ugandan Archivist, has been given the daunting task of setting up a storage facility, moving the records, arranging for translators in two languages, and gaining some control of the records. Hopefully, the records will be accessible for reconstruction, critical civil rights issues such as land ownership.

The Northern Territory Government, through the NTAS has offered professional assistance particularly in training staff. The NTAS will be aiming to build a co-operative relationship with the National Archives of the world's newest nation, along with the National Archives of Australia which has also made initial offers of assistance.

Greg and I have added a few lines to our Curriculum Vitaes to include an ability to travel on military transport (including an Airforce Hercules), and an ability to leave the country at short notice (with passports, visas, and inoculations galore). Having always wanted a work trip overseas, we hadn't anticipated that it would be to a war zone!

On a more human side, it is sobering to see such destruction of a community so close to our own homes. It is hoped that the records recovered from this devastation will assist the East Timorese people who have such a lot of work ahead in rebuilding their lives.

Governor's Offices, Dili

Piles of records in attic, Governor's Offices, Dili

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Police Camel Patrols

The use of camels for patrol work was a distinctive feature of policing in Central Australia in the early 20th century. NTAS holds a wide range of records relating to these patrols. Below are examples of some of the records.

The NTAS has several series relating to Inspector William (Bill) McKinnon. These photos were taken from a series of photographic copyprints of police work in Central Australia c.1931 -1968 (NTRS 234, CP 415-510)

NTRS 234, CP 466 - Officer in Charge of "South West camel patrol" 1931-1938

NTRS 234, CP 468 - Constable A.S. McColl starting his last camel patrol in May 1932 prior to transfer north.

Rations List: *Series NTRS 876 contain records relating to Centralian police camel patrols. The records were donated by Ron Brown who was the police Constable stationed at Finke, south of Alice Springs. The records also include magazine and newspaper features about the camel patrols..*

NTRS 234, CP 422 - Drinking from creek bed soak

Oral History: *NTRS 226, TS 473 Ernest Sell*
Ernest Sell joined the NT Police in 1914 and served for many years in Darwin, Alice Springs, Roper Bar and Tennant Creek. In this oral history he describes camel and horse patrols in the districts where he served.

NTRS 234, CP 420 - Climbing a range on Tempe Downs

WHO'S WHO

Greg Coleman 8924 7677
Director
greg.coleman@nt.gov.au

Jill Parker 8924 7677
Administration Officer
jill.parker@nt.gov.au

Linda Bell 8924 7649
Archivist (Records Services)
linda.bell@nt.gov.au

Cheryl Phillips 8924 7653
Archives Officer (Records Services)
cheryl.phillips@nt.gov.au

Craig Lush 8924 7654
Lending Officer (Records Services)
craig.lush@nt.gov.au

Cathy Flint 8924 7347
Archivist (Information Services)
cathy.flint@nt.gov.au

Andrew Pitt 8924 7652
Archivist (Information Access)
andrew.pitt@nt.gov.au

Francis Good 8924 7651
Archivist (Oral Records)
francis.good@nt.gov.au

Linda Pugh 8924 7655
Transcription Officer (Oral Records)
linda.pugh@nt.gov.au

Sue Polden 8924 7676
Oral Records Officer
susan.polden@nt.gov.au

Barry Garside 8924 7494
Records Standards Coordinator
barry.garside@nt.gov.au

Beth Moloney 8924 7485
Records Policy Coordinator
beth.moloney@nt.gov.au

Jeanette Collins 8924 7641
Trim System Manager
jeanette.collins@nt.gov.au

Celina Hodge 8924 7149
Trim Support Officer
celina.hodge@nt.gov.au

TRIM SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

As indicated in Staff Notes, the NTAS has successfully recruited staff into the system support positions to provide ongoing management and support for the whole-of-government record keeping system - TRIM. The team of two will continue to progress the implementation and effective use of TRIM across all Northern Territory Government agencies. It is important that the RecordsConnect initiative, which was to ensure that each NT Government agency's TRIM database setup, met specific standards at a whole of government level, are maintained. The team will monitor agency databases to ensure that this is being done and that TRIM is being used to the satisfaction of the Records Policy Coordinator at NTAS.

Data Conversions

Requests from agencies to convert small databases to TRIM are continuing. The NTAS is now in a position to offer this conversion service (dependent on the complexity of the conversion) at no charge. As agencies become more familiar with TRIM, they are identifying small databases that can be converted and thus reduce the duplication of effort in managing records in their agency. If you have any databases that require conversion to TRIM please contact the System Support Manager to discuss the conversion strategy.

Electronic Records Management

Some agencies are looking at electronic records management and the cost to implement this in specific work units (in the first instance) in their agency. NTAS staff can assist agencies in their planning and are more than happy to discuss issues with agency representatives. It is important that a whole of government implementation of electronic records management is maintained even though there is no corporate funding to achieve this across all agencies at this stage.

Stay Tuned for TRIM Version Upgrade

Planning has commenced for the upgrade of TRIM to TRIM Captura (4.3). Funds will be available in 2000-01 financial year for this. Agencies will be invited to attend information sessions to discover what this upgrade means to them once the full impact of the upgrade has been determined.

The cooperation and support from agencies during the RecordsConnect Project was great. We look forward to the continued cooperation and support from agencies to progress better record-keeping practice in government.

For further information, please contact the System Manager, Jeanette Collins, or the System Support Officer, Celina Hodge.