

On the Record

August 2011

Update from the new Manager Government Recordkeeping

Having commenced in the role of Manager Government Recordkeeping at the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office (TAHO) a couple of weeks ago, I'm focused on learning the business of government recordkeeping as well as getting to know the representatives in client organisations.

I have a background in state government, my previous role was the manager of Information Support Services for the Department of Education. In this role I implemented an EDRMS across the department and then moved into managing the Information Support Services Unit. Prior to this I worked at DIER as a Business Analyst.

In my previous role I had met many of my counterparts in other departments, and I look forward to catching up with you soon, as well as meeting the local council and other organisations' representatives. I would like to know your thoughts on how Government Recordkeeping can improve our products and services and how we can better support the government recordkeeping sector

Some of the work Government Recordkeeping is currently undertaking includes:

- Developing new Advices on how to manage floppy disks, Advice for agencies wishing to use the History Room, Web 2.0, Management of Backups and Digital Preservation Formats.
- Updating our web site. We are updating the look and feel and reviewing the content of the Government Recordkeeping website.

- Training and Events – we are reviewing and updating our training courses and putting together an Information Managers Forum. We are hoping to attract some interstate speakers, so feel free to contact us to suggest topics or speakers that you would be interested in.

I'm very excited about my new role, and providing a service to government agencies that is timely, relevant and effective in helping agencies work through the recordkeeping issues they are facing, especially in the digital context. I know that many of you are facing similar issues, and by working together we can develop tools and services to support you.



Disposal Project at DPEM

(Contributed by Kerry Hutton – Senior Records Officer, DPEM)

DPEM has 74 police stations throughout Tasmania, plus various administrative and operational sites, all of them crammed with records. Estimates of holdings indicate thousands of linear metres. In the past, disposal was not done regularly. In some remote areas, old cells no longer suitable for incarceration were used to store records when space became a problem. Of course, as we all know, if it is not fit for humans, it probably isn't fit for paper either!

Since the approval of the DPEM Disposal Authority in 2010, training has been given to assist staff in the huge task of dealing with the backlogs. Murder files from 1922 to 1986 are being transferred to the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office - and there were more of those than you might imagine! Some interesting "records" have appeared on lists from police stations, one notable example being a straightjacket.

The Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office has been inundated with pages from the Register of Records Destroyed, and has provided helpful feedback and advice.

The future includes more training, site visits, and use of the departmental intranet site to disseminate information on a regular basis and to gain feedback on how well the disposal authority is working. All areas will be encouraged to develop storage systems that will facilitate destruction on a yearly basis, and will be provided with check lists and information to help the process. And there will be many more register pages for TAHO to peruse!



Stockpiles of previously unscheduled records that may now be disposed of.

One of the interesting items Kerry found when carrying out disposal was a letter written by the occupant of a police residence. An extract appears below;

“Sir, For information I report that in the last few days I have killed a number of small Scorpions INSIDE the residence which I am occupying at Turners Beach. Some evenings I have killed up to four of them in various parts of the house..

The (sic) are only a small species approx 1 to 1½ inches long (Please find two specimens attached to file) but understand that they can give a nasty sting when bitten, so therefore I make application to have the residence fumigated of sprayed, (sic) to exterminate them.”

And indeed they did attach some dead scorpions to the file!



New Recordkeeping Policy for Kingborough Council.

In May I ran three recordkeeping presentations at Kingborough Council. Kingborough is about to implement a new Recordkeeping Policy and Nicole Rodgers, the Records Co-ordinator thought it would be a good idea to update the Managers on Council's recordkeeping responsibilities. The presentation was well received by Management and I was invited back to present to all council staff over two sessions.

Many Council staff were unaware that Council records were State records, and therefore covered by the Archives Act. I am pleased to say that they are now fully enlightened on their recordkeeping responsibilities and we congratulate Kingborough for their pro-active approach to managing their most important asset – information.



Spotlight

Helen Wyatt Integrity Commission

What is your role at the Integrity Commission?

I am the Records Officer at the Integrity Commission. My responsibilities encompass all aspects of record keeping, plus the secure storage and tracking of exhibits and property. The Commission is a small, newly established agency and I am the only designated records / property staff member.

How did you become involved in Information Management?

My first career was as a National Park Ranger. When I had a family I decided it was time for a career change so I trained as a Library Technician and gained a position in the library at the Police Academy at Rokeby. While there I had the opportunity to extend my responsibilities to take on additional information management roles.

When looking for a new career opportunity I decided to take a side step into records management.

What's the thing you like best about your job?

My job currently holds many challenges; for me personally because I am learning about aspects of information and property management which I have not been involved in before, and because we are a new agency establishing processes to meet our goals and obligations and to meet the expectations of the Tasmanian public.

I am particularly excited at the moment because of the introduction of TRIM (some others here don't understand that excitement). This, plus the refinement of associated processes and procedures, and the mapping of future tasks such as the creation of a Disposal Schedule, gives me a sense of achievement and direction.

I have also enjoyed and appreciated the support I've received from other organisations; both from Tasmania and interstate.

What's the thing you like least about your job?

The first phase of my working life involved a significant portion of outdoor work in some of the most beautiful areas of the state. On days when the sun is shining I wish there was an outdoor component to my job...

What do you see for the future of Information Management?

I think the current emphasis on open and accountable government, and raised demands and access to government information from members of the public, means that our role as Information Managers will become increasingly important.

I also see Information Managers playing a vital role in coordinating the capture and management of information which is increasingly coming from different sources. Advances in technology (increased use of SMS communication, PDA's and other tools) require someone to ensure that the value of the information these tools hold is not overlooked and lost.

What do you do for Professional Development?

I have joined RIM Professionals Australasia, and have attended several training sessions through the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office and through RIMPA. As mentioned above I am also learning a lot from those generous folk who are already in the industry.

Share with us something about your life away from IM?

Outside of work I value my family and friends. I enjoy working in my garden – although some sections of it have got the better of me over the past wet summer!

I am learning lace knitting which requires concentration and brain power; however the recent cold weather has set me on a beanie binge (more relaxing as it requires less concentration and brain power!).



Training for 2011

Disposal Procedures

Hobart 28 September

Using a Keyword Thesaurus

Hobart 16 Nov

Please book through the Training Consortium.
www.ttc.tas.gov.au

New Advice out soon!

Advice no 22, 'Advice for government agencies using records in the History Room' will soon be signed off by the State Archivist. This brief advice sets out who can request records, how to request records, how long it will take for records to be available in the History Room, and what happens when you arrive at the History Room.

Australian Standards free access via egovernment Website

Were you aware that you have free access to some Australian Standards (including ISO 15489-1 & 2) on the egovernment website?

Go to www.egovernment.tas.gov.au

Click on 'Service provided' then 'Standards select online service' then 'Click here to be redirected to the standards select online Facility.'

When the SAI Global screen appears click on 'subscribed documents' and a list of accessible Standards will appear.

Thermal Paper

We have recently been approached by several agencies wishing to transfer records containing thermal paper. As you are aware, printing on thermal paper fades over time, eventually disappearing altogether. Accordingly **thermal paper should not be in files that have Permanent value.**

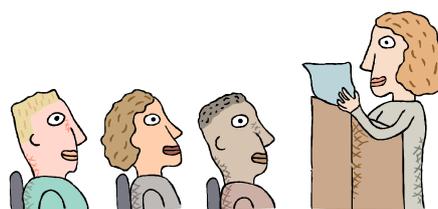
If you have thermal paper in files that you are preparing for transfer you need to copy the thermal paper and replace the thermal with the photocopies.

Please leave a file note at the beginning of the file to advise that this has been done.

Manager Government Recordkeeping to visit northern Councils.

Allegra has advised that she will plan a visit to Councils in the north & northwest shortly. She plans to run some training for Council management in relation to business risk around recordkeeping.

More detail will be available soon and will be emailed out to all relevant councils.



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Tasmania

Explore the possibilities