

Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

By Allegra Huxtable.

The Commonwealth Government has established a Royal Commission to investigate Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The terms of reference for this Royal Commission have been released and are available on the Royal Commission's website:

www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/LettersPatent/Pages/default.aspx

The Royal Commission will inquire into how institutions (private or public) with a responsibility for children have managed and responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse. The Commission has indicated that its investigations will entail examination of institutional responses in the past as well as current practices (Media Statement 16 Jan 2013).

An institution is broadly defined as a body that provides, or has at any time provided, activities, facilities, programs, or services of any kind that provide the means through which adults have contact with children, including through their families.

Given this definition of an institution, government agencies most likely to be maintaining records relevant to the Royal Commission are those agencies that directly cared for, or provided services to, children. This would include agencies that educated or provided childcare for children (e.g. schools, kindergartens, pre-school, after school, early childhood and childcare services), housed children (e.g. youth detention centres, support services), or provided services to children (e.g. hospitals, health, disability, community and child welfare or protection services).

Agencies that controlled, regulated, contracted services from, or provided facilities to such institutions (e.g. departments providing youth, family and community services, and justice and education agencies, as well as local government) are also likely to be maintaining records of potential relevance to the Royal Commission. Investigatory and prosecutorial (such as the Ombudsman, Police and Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions)

agencies

may also hold records of relevance.

The records of most likely relevance are those concerned with:

- specific cases of abuse or allegations of abuse, particularly how it was handled within the agency or referred to other agencies
- agency policy and procedures for the handling of allegations or reports of abuse (including response, investigation or referral and follow-up).

Consideration may also need to be given to records relating to the service of employees, contractors and volunteers who may have been engaged in child related employment.

However, the Royal Commission's terms of reference are broad and the actual scope of the inquiry will be determined by the Commissioners. At this stage it is only possible to provide advice of a general nature with regard to records that may be required by the Commission.

Agencies are strongly recommended to review the terms of reference of the Royal Commission and conduct risk assessments to determine if they hold records that are reasonably likely to be required by the Commission. This risk assessment should be conducted by appropriately qualified staff with knowledge of the records and information management systems and practices of the agency and, if required, informed by legal advice.

Where an agency does identify any holdings of records that are reasonably likely to be required by the Royal Commission, the agency should take steps to preserve them. This may require suspension of records disposal programs in some instances.

Agencies should also take steps to ensure that the records are accessible in case required.

Where an agency engages other institutions (or has engaged other institutions) to provide services relating to children we recommend the agency should liaise with these institutions to ensure that they are also identifying and preserving the relevant records.

http://www.linc.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/334948/Recordkeeping_Advice_No_16_-_Legal_Acceptance_of_Records_.pdf

TAHO Information Managers Forum

By David Bloomfield

Fifty-six information professionals attended TAHO's first Information Managers Forum held in November last year at the Salamanca Inn in Hobart.

The forum aims to provide professional development and networking opportunities for government agencies and the general consensus was that our first event certainly met those expectations.

The speaker's addresses are available to view on our website at <http://www.linc.tas.gov.au/global/govtrecordkeeping/services/trainingevents>

The keynote address was given by Janet Knight-Villata on 'How to Rebrand Records Management to Encourage Support and Collaboration'. Janet tackled the issue of how we can overcome traditional stereotypes to secure collaboration and support from key stakeholders. She firstly identified some of the negative perceptions that records managers face. She then introduced a five point plan for how to encourage collaboration across your agency,

1. Understand your business
2. Know where your business is being performed and focus on high risk
3. Aim to improve business outcomes
4. Be committed to continuous improvement
5. Build relationships and constantly communicate

We had a great range of speakers through the day covering subjects as diverse as historic maps and plans, recordkeeping compliance and the use of TRIM software to solve business needs. Also the State Archivist, Ross Latham and Allegra Huxtable, Manager of Government Recordkeeping gave updates on the current work of TAHO and how this relates to you.

We look forward to organising a great second forum for you later this year.

New Advices and Guidelines

In November of 2012 we released **Advice no 28 – Getting started on the Development of an Agency Functional Disposal Schedule**. This advice provides some key steps to assist you to get started on the initial stages of the development of a disposal schedule, scoping the task and some tips on the initial analysis stage of any disposal project. It was developed as a response to questions from smaller agencies in particular who do not have designated Information Management staff, and were grappling with having to write a retention and disposal Schedule.

Another Advice released last November is **Advice no 29 – Advice for Agencies on Managing Legacy Records**. Legacy records are accumulations of older records created by an Agency in the past, or inherited from another Agency through a transfer of functions. Many Agencies, particularly Councils have inherited considerable collections of legacy records as a result of the reform of government and these records require sentencing for disposal or further retention.

Although the legacy records may have been created by a former Agency, the agency's inheriting these records are responsible for their ongoing management.

Guideline no 8 – management of source records that have been copied, converted or migrated has been revised and re-leased in January this year.

Guidelines are issued under the provisions of Section 10A of the Archives Act, 1983, and this Section requires all relevant authorities to take all reasonable steps to comply with these Guidelines. To make compliance easier we are now including **MUST** and **MUST NOT**, **SHOULD** and **SHOULD NOT** in our Guidelines. A **MUST** or **MUST NOT** direction published in a Guideline is a directive to an Agency and all Agencies must ensure that they are compliant.

Advice no 3 Day batching of source records, was also updated to accompany the revised Guideline.



Spotlight: Sam Foster-Davies

Knowledge Management Analyst – Glenorchy City Council

How did you become involved in Information Management?

Almost by accident! Despite starting my career in the Communications department at Village Roadshow Ltd in 1988, I did a lot of other things before starting a 'mature age' traineeship in 2002 at RMIT University whilst studying Multimedia. I was employed at the School of Business Information Technology, as program administrator for the Masters of Business Information Innovation/Grad Dip Document Management – the only fully online postgraduate program delivered by RMIT back then. They had recently implemented the AMS (Academic Management System) for their student records and billing, and our rolling enrolment for an online program didn't 'fit' the system they'd configured. I spent a lot of time researching and rectifying records (and have been a bit of a trouble shooter ever since). After moving from Melbourne to Tassie in 2004 to do additional multimedia study, I started work - as a starving student - at Glenorchy City Council in 2005 as a part time IM officer/back up to the then web administrator (read: general dogs body). Some nine months later, GCC embarked on the implementation of a fully electronic EDRMS, I was appointed Senior IM Officer when my predecessor resigned, and we were away!

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

Problem solving – I like the creative aspect of designing the workflows; designing and building indexes; pulling things apart and putting them back together in creative ways - general business process improvement! It's great when you nut something out and get a positive – sometimes despite the initial reluctance ("if it isn't broken....."). I am really enjoying being more involved in the integration of ECM with Council's other key business systems. Finally, I get a kick out of seeing non-records staff getting the 'lightbulb' moment – like the Information Champions team I run at GCC had when they did their Introduction to Records Management training with David Bloomfield last year. After the training, the overwhelming feedback from the team was "everyone should be made to do this". Fancy that!

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

It fascinates me why it is that the people who *should* have the most vested interest (as they ultimately have the most to lose), always seem to

be the last to recognise the importance and 'push' the Records/IM agenda. It drives me crazy (!) that this is one of those disciplines where you never seem to have as much credibility as when you are an external consultant charging an obscene amount of money – then you can deliver the same message and suddenly people sit up and take notice.

Personally, I also don't cope too well with the red tape of Government – after a lifetime of private enterprise, the public service is quite an eye-opener. Finally – social media. Ugh. Enough said. *LOL*

What do you see for the future of Information Management?

BIG DATA BIG DATA BIG DATA.....need I say more? We're all drowning in it now – unstructured content, social media, SharePoint, multiple silos and repositories, etc – and I can't see the growth slowing anytime soon as new technology and alternative ways of 'managing' information and mining data become available.

Say 'bye bye' to traditional records management – and hello to Information Governance. We have to learn to be more flexible and think outside the box, become more proactive than reactive, and implement frameworks and tools to ultimately support our agencies to do business, whilst reducing the burden on our end users (they were never intended to be records managers). Sounds easy doesn't it?

I also hope the role of Archives becomes more regulatory – in that, we have some very clear 'minimum' requirements that we must adhere to as agencies – many of us are stumbling along just doing our best and I think it would be helpful to determine the "must have's" from the "nice to have's" – particularly for those agencies struggling with minimal resources. I think we're heading in that direction now which is great to see.

Share with us something about your life away from IM?

I'm a mad keen dog lover – I got my very first pup at age 3, and I currently have two 'fur kids' at home. I have been known to go around begging all my colleagues at work for their spare change to pay for sponsorship of a kennel at the Dogs Home (for all the ones I can't bring home!). On the plus side, it makes me an easy 'secret santa' at Christmas Thankfully, my Exec Manager and Coordinator are doggie mad too – so I'm in good company.



Disposal Schedule Working Group

On the 8 November the first of our planned Disposal Schedule Working Group meetings was held and attended by 17 participants. We discussed problems with the current disposal methodology and drew some ideas from the group on improvements that can be made. GRK will be working on improving disposal methodology in 2013.

The next Working Group meeting will be held on 15 May 2-4pm. If you are attending please email me deborah.drinkell@education.tas.gov.au

'Bring a Box' Workshop

New to disposal? Attended the disposal training course but still a bit tentative about the hands on work? Then come along to our 'Bring a Box' workshop. Bring a box of your own records and we will show you how to sentence them.

State Gov't and GBE's 8 May 10am – Noon

Local Gov't 1 May 10am – Noon

To register please email David Bloomfield david.bloomfield@education.tas.gov.au

'News' Section on GRK homepage

We now have a news section on the right hand side of our GRK Homepage. We will include links to any new Advices and Guidelines and also any other items that you need to be aware of.

STOP PRESS

Another new Advice has just been approved – 'Digitisation Dilemmas' – Advice no 30. If you are thinking of digitising records, particularly if you wish to dispose of the hard copy, there are a variety of issues and risks that you need to be aware of. This advice provides an overview of these issues and poses possible solutions.

Revised Retention and Disposal Schedule for the Tasmanian Electoral Commission.

A revised edition of DA2101 has been approved by the State Archivist. This updates a 2001 edition. Thanks to Rod Saunders for his assistance.

Don't forget that if your agencies' Schedule is over 10 years old it needs reviewing NOW!

Floppy Discs.

Have you finished the floppy disc hunt in your agency? I am just about to contact all agencies to verify that this task has been completed, so if you haven't finished yet...you don't have much longer.



What Registers do you create?

As part of our Disposal Review we will be contacting you all to find out whether you still create 'Registers'. As you know many of the old Registers are Permanent however we are finding that in the electronic environment these are no longer being created. Have a look in your Retention and Disposal Schedule to see if it includes classes for registers that you no longer create.

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