

On the Record

October 2010

New Manager TAHO & State Archivist

Mr Ross Latham has been appointed as the State Archivist and Manager of the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO).

Ross has had a long and successful career with the National Archives of Australia and has worked in the archives sector since 1986. He offers a great deal of experience and senior-level expertise in the areas of collection management, archive services, leadership and policy development.

Since 2003, Ross has been employed as the Director of the Victorian Office of the National Archives of Australia. Prior to this, he was Manager of the National Archives Office in Tasmania.

Ross will start work with CKN on 4 October 2010.

Update on Registers Of Records Destroyed

Archivist Caitlin Sutton has been enjoying checking all your Registers of Records Destroyed, and has noted that many errors are repeated over and over again by different agencies. She has made up this list of common errors, so have a read through and check that your agency isn't making these mistakes;

Sentencing a record under an Activity (any reference number ending in '0', for example I.I.0).

File descriptions that are too brief to be meaningful, for example 'Edu.' or 'Bread' or 'sect. 26's'.

Mixing up the Disposal Authorisations if using two, for example DA2157 and DA2094.

Omitting the Disposal Authorisation reference number completely.

Including Source Records (ie. where records have been migrated) These records can be disposed of under DA2159 and do not need to be entered in the Register of Records Destroyed.

Putting N/A as the Disposal Schedule reference.

Destroying records based on their start date rather than end date.

Destroying records within the period of retention, for example checking the year but not the month

Mission (not) Impossible!!

Contributed by Kirstie Mountain
Client Record Advisor DHHS

We have been affectionately referred to as the “bathroom brigade”, those “archiving people” and the “A team”. Bathroom, because that was the room in a particular site where all the inactive records were stored. (Actually that job was quite memorable as we used a mortuary trolley as our flat workspace!) “A” team as in archiving and “those archiving people” by those who have some vague idea about what we do.

So who are we? We work in the Department of Health and Human Services, Strategic and Portfolio Services, Information Support Services. I provide advice on all matters regarding medical/clinical/patient/client records and am ably supported by Scott Finlayson, Archiving and Disposal Officer who deals with business and corporate records. We are based in Hobart but work on an Agency and state wide basis, co-opting other Information Support Services staff in the north and north-west as required (thank you Jacqui and Michael).

Our most recent job involved a trip to Ulverstone where North West Regional Hospital stores their inactive records. Now I would have to say that this facility is no where near the worst that I have seen, and I have seen quite a few.



There are a number of common problems that we come across with secondary storage facilities including but not limited to; no plan of/for the space, storage of records that are eligible for destruction (this is my biggest bug bear), records that are not sentenced before being placed in storage, no list of what is contained in the storage facility, no management of the facility, inadequate storage containers used and unlabelled boxes.

Our aim in doing these visits is two fold. 1. We work with and train staff from the area in proper storage and disposal procedures. 2. We implement the process to organise and maintain secondary storage facilities. We then leave a site with “Management of Secondary Storage Guidelines” to enable maintenance of the then, hopefully, organised storage facility.

On this particular visit around 1.5 tonnes of records stored in the facility were eligible for destruction, and we didn’t even get to the hospital medical records! That awaits my next visit in September.



Well done to Kirstie & her team, they have been making huge inroads into the unsatisfactory recordkeeping practices of the past!!



Spotlight
William Bester
Department of Education

What is your role at DoE?
Document Management System
Administrator

How did you become involved in Information Management?

By Accident. My history is in retail photography and photo processing. My personal area of interest was copying and reproducing old photographs, originally on Silver Halide then graduating to digital imaging. After studying a degree in Computing I joined the Department in the then Web Strategy Unit to work on the roll out of MySource Matrix Content Management System. The RIMS project role came up about six months after I joined the Department .

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

The chance to help business units improve business process and save massive amounts of time, effort and resource is the best payoff. It makes the job less about imposing records management and compliance and more about improving government efficiency. Admittedly this has been a long time picking up momentum but with some very successful process change now under our belt the future within this department looks very positive.

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

Bureaucracy. With my small business background I find government in general very clumsy to work in. I was used to making decisions to change

and having them in place within days. Whilst I understand the need for full consultation with stakeholders and play an active and useful role in that process, I still find the sometimes ridiculously lengthy processes very stifling.

What do you see for the future of Information Management?

Less paper. Document management systems will naturally become more mature and document application providers like Microsoft will need to look to strengthening their offerings to simplify and streamline the capturing of business information into records systems.

What do you do for professional development?

As little as possible (which ends up as quite a lot)... I read Image & Data Manager and spend a fair bit of time in online research. I participate in various training courses when there is something directly relevant to my role available.

Share with us something about your life away from IM.

I have a partner with MS and two children ages 8 and 9, an early Victorian fixer-upper and a rather confused vegetable garden which currently keep me pretty busy. As a family we are currently shopping for a bus to convert to a motorhome so we can embark on a 6-12 month trip around mainland Australia.



Archival Estray

Contributed by acting Manager GRK – David Benjamin

A 1904 police report, affidavit and search warrant from the Campbell Town Police Station, relating to stolen firewood, was “rescued” from destruction some years ago and by a circuitous route arrived in Yuba County California before returning to Tasmania earlier this year. Richard J Horak Jr, a Probation Officer in that County, provided the following background when he offered the documents to the Archives Office:

It all starts in 1992, when I met a Tasmania Wildlife Officer Adam C. at a social event in Southern California. The officer and I were talking, regarding my role as a Los Angeles County Probation Officer during the 1992 Rodney King Riots. We spoke for quite awhile about the differences in law enforcement between the United States and Australia.

A few weeks later I received a Department shoulder patch from him, and started collecting these types of items. Adam and I became good friends over the next few years, trading law enforcement patches and memorabilia. In 1996 I travelled to Tasmania where I met through Adam a friend of his that worked in the Court Process in Tasmania. I only had a few minutes and provided this individual a number of shoulder patches from police agencies within the United States.

This individual and his family and I have remained friends ever since that time. We would exchange various law

enforcement items that both he and I collected. It was during one of these exchanges he sent me the documents. He rescued them from destruction, as they were found in a storage area, and a clerk was going to have the items destroyed. I placed the documents in to my Australian collection, after reviewing the information they contained.

We must now move forward to 2009, when I decided to actually organize my Australian collection. I had relocated from the Los Angeles Area and went to work for Yuba County, as a probation officer, in late 1996. Yuba County is located north of Sacramento, California, about an 8 – 10 hour drive north of Los Angeles. I reviewed these documents and found them to be interesting. I brought them to my office and decided to share them with a few of the judges I work closely with. We all took interest in the way they were written, considering the computer age was a few years away. It was suggested by one of the of the Judges that maybe this item would be better served outside of my collection and with the agency that generated it.

It was at this point I decided to start looking for an organization in Tasmania, that would be interested in these documents for historical purposes. I sent a few contact letters out and you responded.

Don't forget Disposal Procedures training
29 November – Hobart
www.ttc.tas.gov.au

Deborah Drinkell

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Tasmania
Explore the possibilities