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1. Check-up seminar

On 4 April the National Archives presented a seminar, 'Check-up: Audit Issues and Electronic Solutions' at Parliament House in Canberra. Ross Gibbs, Director-General of the National Archives, opened the seminar by speaking about the new approach we are taking to assist agencies, and about *Check-up*, the upcoming interactive tool for assessing information and records management needs.



Ross Gibbs, Director-General of the National Archives and Ian McPhee, Auditor-General

A presentation by the Auditor-General, Ian McPhee, focussed on the practical challenges of electronic records, including accountability and efficiency. This provided an appropriate backdrop for two panel discussions led by senior managers from a number of government agencies, who spoke candidly about their records management experiences and the associated challenges and solutions.

The Auditor-General's speech can be found at www.anao.gov.au/director/publications/speeches.cfm



The first panel, chaired by Russell Coleman from ANAO, featured Mark Carpenter, Sue Ball and Gail Urbanski



The second panel, chaired by Colleen McEwen from the Archives, featured Veronica Pumpa, Russell McCaskie, Ingrid Blount and Julie Lenson

This was the first in a series of seminars that the Archives intends to hold on contemporary records management issues aimed at managers working in Australian Government agencies. The next seminar is planned for the middle of the year, after the release of the Management Advisory Committee Report into Recordkeeping in the Australian Public Service.

2. Records management checklist for outsourced functions

The Archives is often asked about the status of records created by contractors. This is an issue that needs to be considered when the contract is being drafted. Contracts for outsourced functions should stipulate records management requirements needed to protect the Commonwealth's interest. Such contracts should:

- ascribe ownership of records (eg to the Commonwealth or a contractor) – all records created as a result of services provided by a contractor on behalf of the Commonwealth must be owned by the Commonwealth, and some records created as a result of services provided by a contractor may need to be owned by the Commonwealth
- stipulate existing records the contractor will need to carry out the function
- set out records management requirements
- prohibit the destruction of records without permission from your agency
- specify what happens to the records at the end of the contract
- prescribe requirements for use and disclosure of records
- protect the security of the records
- specify who can access the records, eg your agency or the public
- specify what access the provider will have to records kept in agency custody
- ensure that any subcontractors also comply with specified requirements.

The Archives' General Disposal Authority (GDA) 25 authorises the transfer of the custody of Commonwealth records to private contractors providing services; and the transfer of ownership of copies of certain records to a contractor. Detailed advice relating to responsibilities for records management in outsourcing arrangements is included with GDA 25 and is available on the National Archives website at www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/disposal/authorities/GDA/PDF/GDA25.pdf

3. Comcare visits the Archives

Recently a group of records and administrative staff from Comcare visited the Archives during a break in their national conference. They came to get a different perspective on records and to see what happens to them once they are transferred to the Archives.

They explored our new permanent exhibition, *Memory of a Nation*, which tells the history of Australia through a variety of government records, including everything from drafts of the Constitution to some naughty playing cards from a copyright submission.



Curator Johanna Parker was on hand to explain some of the unusual records on display

They visited the Reading Room and saw some early compensation case files that were settled for much lower sums than those of today! Comcare Records Manager, Brian Bourne, and his staff also had the opportunity to speak to some of our records management experts and look at the other exhibitions on display.



Comcare staff in front of the Archives building

If you or your team would like to visit us to see where your records could end up in the future, the public areas of the Archives are open every day except Christmas Day and Good Friday. If you contact us beforehand we will be happy to arrange a special tour.

4. Coming up

Information Awareness Month ACT launch on 1 May at the Archives

On 1 May the Archives is kicking off Information Awareness Month (IAM) in the ACT with a launch event hosted in the evening by Director-General, Ross Gibbs, at the Parkes office. This Month is all about increasing public awareness of the breadth of the information industry through a series of events in the month of May. These events showcase the importance of properly maintaining good records and information as they relate to everyone – from global corporations to small business and even the homemaker. The aim is to ‘connect information and people’.

IAM is a collaborative event between various bodies within the records, archives, library and information management community. They are recognised as some of the most widely-respected professional bodies in the information management community, not only within Australasia but worldwide.

To find out more about Information Awareness Month events or to RSVP for the launch event, visit the website www.informationawarenessmonth.com.au

CeBIT 2007

Also coming up in May is the CeBIT conference for the IT industry, held in Sydney. Archives staff member Michael Carden will present a case study to the OpenCeBIT day on 3 May. The digital preservation team at the Archives has developed open source software leveraging open standards to take the digital information of today and make it accessible for generations to come. Other staff are also attending the e-Government forum on 2 May. Through events like this the Archives is hoping to forge stronger ties with the IT sector. There will be more about the outcomes of the conference in the next issue of the e-bulletin.

Training update

There are still a few places available at our ‘Introduction to records management in the APS’ course in Canberra on 24 May. This course is also being run on 14 June and there are plenty of places still open for this date. See our website for details www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/training/calendar.html#canberra