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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Performance Audit Report No.3/2008

Records Management in ACT Government Agencies

Tabled by
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INTRODUCTION

The Government considers that the Performance Audit Report “Records Management in ACT Government Agencies”, tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 26 June 2008, provides a useful overview of the progress made by Government agencies in managing their recordkeeping responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

In opening the Records Management Association of Australasia’s 21st International Convention in Canberra in September 2004, the Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, said that he saw good records management as one of the key elements in achieving openness, responsibility and accountability in government. The Government recognises the importance of good recordkeeping, and values this Performance Audit Report as an important step in reassuring the people of Canberra that the Government is delivering on its commitment made in the *Territory Records Act 2002*, to encourage open and accountable government by ensuring that Territory records are made, managed and, if appropriate, preserved in accessible form.

The Government views the findings of the Report as providing evidence of significant progress made by all agencies since the passage of the *Territory Records Act 2002* in 2002.

Prior to self-government in 1989, the Commonwealth *Archives Act 1983* applied in the ACT. The ACT Government did not have specific archives legislation in relation to the management and preservation of its records until 2002.

In the period between the regimes of the two Acts (i.e. the Commonwealth *Archives Act 1983* and the *Territory Records Act 2002* several widespread trends affected the ACT as well as the rest of Australia. These included:

- The creation of an Australian Standard for Records Management, AS 4390;
- Existence of legislation in the Commonwealth, all States and the Northern Territory;
- The emergence of digital records as a significant component of Government recordkeeping, and of issues surrounding the management of these records;
- Recognition of the need for transparency in disposing of records;
- The value of using a common thesaurus for record titling;
- The wish for preservation of records and access to these records; and
- The need to maintain the evidential value of records.

In addition, the *Territory Records Act 2002* deliberately created a rather different recordkeeping regime from that which had existed prior to self-government. Whereas Commonwealth legislation had been created for a large and dispersed public service, the *Territory Records Act 2002* was created for a jurisdiction that was:

- Relatively concentrated in geographical extent;
- Narrower in scope (not having Foreign Affairs and Defence responsibilities in particular);
- Physically close to the community it served; and
- Closely interwoven with the recipients of its services.

In short, the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) is an integral part of the community that it serves and its records management regime reflects the size, scale and scope of the task at hand.

Examples of ways in which the *Territory Records Act 2002* and its implementation so far have delivered a unique regime appropriate to the tasks facing the ACT include the following.

- A Territory Records Advisory Council, which ensures community input and detailed community scrutiny of the ACT's rigorous records regime.
- A Director of Territory Records, who is required to develop and promulgate subordinate legislation. These codes of practice should be consistent with best practice trends in Australasia, and in effect they mandate the ACT's consistent records management regime.
- A small office of the Director of Territory Records (the Territory Records Office) with a staffing level of three people including the Director. The Director is required to monitor all ACT Government agencies for compliance with both the *Territory Records Act 2002* and their own agency Records Management Program.
- Records Management Programs which are developed by the Principal Officer of each agency, subject to conformity with the Standards and Guidelines promulgated by the Director of Territory Records.
- Distributed custody of records where all records remain the responsibility of the agency that currently delivers the function to which the records refer.
- A right, except in certain circumstances, of public access to records that are over 20 years old. All records will open unless a Section 28 Declaration has been made under the Act. The effect of the *Territory Records Act 2002* is to turn off the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* in relation to those records and the Section 28 Declaration has the effect of reactivating the FOI Act for a limited number of exempt categories, the most important being personal privacy. Consequently, the *Territory Records Act 2002* preserves the appeal provisions of the FOI Act and ensures that those people who would have had access under the FOI Act continue to have access.

The extended period during which ACT records were not covered by records-specific legislation coincided with a time of significant developments in recordkeeping across Australia, as well as challenges surrounding heritage or legacy records inherited from a different (Commonwealth) era of government administration. Accordingly, when the *Territory Records Act 2002* passed through the ACT Legislative Assembly in 2002, ACT Government agencies faced many challenges and a very considerable amount of work to raise their recordkeeping and records management practices to better-practice level.

In this broad context, the Government recognises that considerable progress has been made by all agencies in implementing their records management regime however the Government also recognises that continuing improvement in the management of Territory records is required.

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Territory Records Office should increase its compliance activities to ensure agencies comply with their approved Records Management Programs and the *Territory Records Act 2002* and to provide input to the required review of the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

Government Position

Agreed.

The Territory Records Office will increasingly turn its attention to agencies' compliance with the *Territory Records Act 2002* now that all parts of the Act have commenced. The Territory Records Office's compliance role involves both ensuring that an agency's Records Management Program conforms to the requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, and monitoring that the agency is doing what it has undertaken to do in its Records Management Program.

The Territory Records Office's involvement in compliance is valuable not only in ensuring that the requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002* are met, but also in providing reasonably direct and quick feedback to the Director about the effectiveness of the regulatory regime that the Director creates under the Act.

Until 1 July 2008, when Part 3 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* relating to public access to Territory records commenced, the Territory Records Office was necessarily focussed on assisting agencies to prepare their records for scrutiny by researchers and other interested members of the community. Although created for the business purposes of Government, these records are a community resource. However, information that should not be released had to be identified. This work has been extensive, frequently needing assessment on a record by record basis.

A key element in managing a consistent records management regime across the ACT Government is through the application and implementation of a consistent records management thesaurus for all agencies. Through the product called TVKAAA (Territory Version of Keyword AAA) the Director of Territory Records mandates common terminology for all of the common administrative functions used across government. This has been extended to a whole-of-government records management thesaurus to ensure that the terminology used by all government agencies is now consistent. This structure flows through to the titling of all government files, the creation of ACT Government Records Disposal Schedules and eventually the electronic directories within which all government employees work. The benefits of this structure ensure that ACT Government records will be able to be identified and located for the business purposes of government, when required for FOI or Court processes, when needed to be sentenced for disposal or eventually when required for use by members of the public for those records classified as Territory archives.

The Territory Records Advisory Council has consistently taken a keen interest in thesauruses employed by the ACTPS, noting that having unique and accurate file titles is critical in quickly and correctly locating relevant records, for both the community and government. The Territory Records Office undertakes the responsibility for the development and expansion of a consolidated whole of government records thesaurus to increase the effectiveness and accuracy of Territory records management.

The Director of Territory Records also has responsibility for the administration of Government copyright, which absorbs up to one-third of his time. The Territory Records Office has a part-time person assisting with Copyright administration.

The Territory Records Office will develop a work program to ensure that an agreed number of agencies are monitored to assess compliance with their Records Management Program and with the provisions of the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

Recommendation 2

The Territory Records Office should investigate and promote consistent records management practices across all ACT Government agencies.

Government Position

Agreed.

As indicated in the background given above, considerable gains have been made in records management across Government since the commencement of the *Territory Records Act 2002* on 2 July 2003. A major part of the work of the Territory Records Office has been to create a rigorous and consistent records regime.

Despite achievements so far, further effort is required. The most urgently needed tasks to promote consistency are:

- Expansion of the consolidated ACT Government records management thesaurus, to ensure consistency of records control across all agencies;
- Central management by the Territory Records Office of the regime that develops, expands and implements a whole of government thesaurus;
- Further Standards for Records Management, and in particular Standards relating to the “physical storage of records” and to “business continuity and records management”. Standards are Notifiable Instruments under the *Territory Records Act 2002*. These two Standards, numbers 7 and 8, were notified on 23 September 2008;
- Acknowledgement of the role of the Director of Territory Records as the regulator of all records (whether in paper or digital format) as set out in the *Territory Records Act 2002*. This ensures a consistent approach to the management of all records regardless of format, and will be administered in close consultation with the Government’s information technology provider, InTACT;

- Further agency-specific Records Disposal Schedules for those agencies still without coverage for all of their records. The result of an agency not having a relevant Records Disposal Schedule is that all records created must be retained indefinitely, as no authority exists that permits a record to be destroyed. There are clear storage cost implications of having to retain every single record indefinitely – until a relevant Records Disposal Schedule is promulgated; and
- Territory Records Office to have joint administration rights over ACT Government records management databases commencing with those used by ACT Records Services and then extending to other ACT Government agencies. ACT Records Services will retain all other existing functions, which support its ongoing operation on a fee-for-service basis. This is a small change that follows from the Territory Records Office having responsibility for the development and expansion of a whole of government thesaurus, discussed in Recommendation 1.

Since the commencement of the *Territory Records Act 2002* in 2003, the Director of Territory Records has formally had responsibility for regulating all Territory records as part of a consistent and rigorous regime across Government, regardless of the form that a record takes. The Government acknowledges that the Director is the regulator of all records, and that the Director will continue to work closely with InTACT on all matters relating to digital records.

The Government supports consistent records management practices and notes that the *Territory Records Act 2002* is consistent with the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*. However, the two Acts exist for different purposes and their provisions are not identical. Procedures will also not be identical. Consultation is required between parties setting up procedures that apply to each Act as some procedures may benefit from operating in parallel.

The issue of consistency of procedures between Acts applies also to the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*, the *Executive Documents Release Act 2001* and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwth). The review of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, commencing in July 2009, will consider this matter as part of its deliberations to ensure that overlaps or inconsistencies with the *Territory Records Act 2002* are minimised.

Recommendation 3

The Government should consider the merit of consolidating InTACT's Record Services of the Department of Treasury, within the Territory Records Office with a view to creating a single records management agency.

Government Position

Agreed-in-principle.

The Government has considered the merit of creating a single records management agency and is proposing an arrangement (as set out in Recommendation 2) that it believes meets the intention of the Auditor-General.

First, with the movement of Shared Services from Treasury to Territory and Municipal Services, ACT Records Services and the Territory Records Office are now within the same Department.

Secondly, agencies have their records management obligations structured in a manner appropriate to the culture of their organisation. Some agencies manage their records in house, some have outsourced their records management to ACT Records Services and others, particularly the smaller agencies, have their records managed on their behalf by their larger 'parent' Department. The records regime established by the *Territory Records Act 2002* and the work of the Territory Records Office is appropriate to all of these instances. The Government will support however the amalgamation of agency records management units if it can be demonstrated that there are efficiencies to be achieved at the operational level in ways that do not impact on an agency's records management obligations.

In the ACT, other instruments also ensure that records management contributes satisfactorily to transparency and accountability. The Auditor-General has independent authority to assess agencies' performance. The Public Sector Management Standards apply codes of appropriate behaviour to individual officers. At the level of ongoing regulation, the Territory Records Office is the appropriate unit to be responsible for records policy and regulation settings, and the ongoing monitoring of agencies' compliance with their Records Management Programs. At the level of day-to-day operations, agency Records Managers implement the regulatory regime created by the Territory Records Office utilising either their own Records management units or engaging the services of ACT Record Services.

The Government considers that this division of functions and responsibilities is sensible. It is more efficient than simply having all records management within a single unit as it allows the service provider within Shared Services to operate on a fee-for-service basis where this is considered to be desirable. Changes necessary to create such a functional division have been outlined in the discussion of Recommendations 1 and 2.

Recommendation 4

The Department of Treasury should finalise its Records Management Program for implementation throughout the Department.

Government Position

Agreed.

The Department of Treasury finalised an approved Records Management Program that included the Shared Services component. This Records Management Program began to be implemented throughout the Department.

The Department is presently working on an updated Records Management Program that reflects the changed administrative arrangements following the 2008 ACT election.

Recommendation 5

Agencies should ensure recordkeeping procedures and guidance material address the business activities specific to their operations.

Government Position

Agreed.

All agencies have undertaken an appraisal of their records management needs. This analysis has underpinned the agency-specific Records Disposal Schedules that are now in operation. The Government agrees that recordkeeping procedures and guidance material require revision from time to time to reflect current circumstances.

The Government recognises the need for each agency to review the applicability of its Records Disposal Schedules in light of changing operational procedures and other considerations. Such changes may derive from, among other things:

- a change in a business function, or in emphasis within a function;
- altered recordkeeping characteristics, particularly in relation to the use of digital records;
- amended internal operating procedures;
- different views of the period for which a record should remain accessible, including legal opinion of the evidential value of a record and community views of the archival value of a record; and
- a different view of the format in which accessibility to a record should be provided.

Relevant and current staff training is a vital component of delivering an agency's business activities. The Government recognises that appropriate recordkeeping training and guidance must be provided to all staff requiring it. This was recognised by the agencies that were examined in the Report, and steps to upgrade the training and guidance were foreshadowed in the agency responses to the Report.

To design and implement recordkeeping procedures that fully address agency-specific business activities requires a systematic, risk-based analysis and assessment of the agency's recordkeeping needs. The Report notes the guidance provided by the various Standards for Records Management developed by the Territory Records Office and the methodology to assist with the design of recordkeeping strategies and systems. The Report suggests there would be clear benefits to the Government if agencies were to analyse both their legislative and operational recordkeeping needs in a risk-management context.

Recommendation 6

The Territory Records Office should:

- subject to legal advice, improve the *Standard for Records Management No. 6 Digital Records* to provide sufficient information for agencies to assess the legal validity of their digital records;
- assist agencies in assessing the suitability of electronic recordkeeping systems or tools (including those currently in use such as *Objective* or *TRIM*); and
- assess the suitability of electronic recordkeeping systems or tools for wider application across government.

Government Position

Agreed.

The Territory Records Office will clarify legal advice regarding the evidential value of records and will monitor judgements from ACT Courts and Tribunals on the acceptability of digital records as evidence provided by the ACT Government to ACT Courts.

The Territory Records Office will monitor the *Standard for Records Management No. 6 Digital Records* and will seek feedback from Records Managers with a view to incorporating, where appropriate, refinements that would assist agencies to meet the requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

Records will increasingly be digital in form and digital records will present an increasing challenge for the Territory Records Office. This trend reflects the records management experience of all other Australian jurisdictions. The Territory Records Office is monitoring the rapid development of digital records management that is occurring nationally under the Australian Digital Records Initiative (ADRI) of the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities. This Initiative involves all jurisdictions in creating models of better practice for the many aspects of digital records management. The ACT is a full member of the Council and is participating in this cooperative effort to the extent that resources allow.

Many of the ideas that arise as part of this initiative will need to be incorporated into a revised *Standard for Records Management No. 6 Digital Records* if the ACT records regime is to remain rigorous, robust and consistent. The Territory Records Office will incorporate elements of these national developments as appropriate, and will address the issues needed to support the ACT Government in maintaining the evidential value of its digital records.

It is the Government's view that, in general, for the relatively small public service that the ACT has, it is not sensible to have a multiplicity of systems. A minimum of different recordkeeping systems is preferable, so as to be in a position to move forward from a

solid base. The Government also recognises the desirability of consolidating existing versions of the currently utilised recordkeeping systems.

As discussed in Recommendation 2, the Director of Territory Records has had, since the commencement of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, responsibility for regulating all Territory records as part of a consistent and rigorous regime across Government, regardless of the form that a record takes.

As the regulator of records, the Director will provide formal input to system changes and modifications that affect records management. The Director's input will reflect Australian better practice. For instance, under the sponsorship of the Australian Digital Records Initiative, a project "to produce globally harmonised principles and functional requirements for software that is used to create and manage electronic records in office environments" has been completed and endorsed by the International Council of Archives. (http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/records/standards/endorsed_tools.asp)

The Director's input to new policies will be done both through the Government's IT agency, InTACT, and directly to an agency where appropriate. This input is best provided at early stages in the design and specification process.

Ultimately, digital electronic records management will become standard for almost all aspects of the work of the ACTPS, including functions ranging from daily business operations, to Ministerial correspondence tracking, and to non-document digital records such as voice records. This will develop gradually as technology becomes available and is reflected in agency systems. The scope is enormous and the task will be ongoing. The Government agrees that the Territory Records Office should, in close consultation with InTACT, assess the suitability of electronic recordkeeping systems or tools for wider application across government and keep a watching brief on national developments in digital recordkeeping.

Recommendation 7

Agencies should assess the risks associated with the physical storage of records, within both in-house and outsourced storage facilities, and develop appropriate strategies to address these risks.

Government Position

Agreed.

The Government is concerned about any Territory record that is stored in a manner that incorporates an unacceptable risk.

Territory Records Standard for Records Management No.5 Recordkeeping and Outsourced Government Business sets out the requirements for outsourced records. The Standard makes clear that "while it is possible to outsource carriage or delivery of a government function or service, it is not possible to outsource responsibility".

Territory Records Standard for Records Management No.7 Physical Storage of Records, referred to in draft form in the Report, became a Notifiable Instrument under the *Territory Records Act 2002* on 23 September 2008. Its accompanying Guideline was notified on the same date.

Territory Records Standard for Records Management No.8 Business Continuity and Records Management also became a Notifiable Instrument under the *Territory Records Act 2002* on 23 September 2008. Its accompanying Guideline was notified on the same date.

These Standards and Guidelines provide the requirements and uniformity of approach to create a records regime that is rigorous and consistent in these regards. Accordingly, agencies are now in a position to carry out the risk assessment required by the Report's recommendation.

Following the risk assessment, agencies will be in an informed position to make judgements as to appropriate strategies to address the risks taking into account the likelihood of loss of records and the severity and of the consequences to their business activities of the loss.

The Government accepts that some risk-reduction and storage strategies will only be implemented over time. This will apply particularly to historical records and to legacy records created under different administrative structures.

As mentioned in the "Background" section above, the ACT has distributed custody of its archival records as it was seen as an appropriate provision at the time of the development of the *Territory Records Act 2002*. It is consistent with the concept that Chief Executives should have full responsibility for and control of all the records of their agency, and management of archival records should appropriately be a part of an agency's Records Management Program.

Recommendation 8

Agencies should implement a system, including conducting internal audits, to formally and regularly monitor and review their recordkeeping practices, systems, policies and procedures.

Government Position

Agreed.

Wherever possible, ongoing improvements should be made to procedures at all levels. Agency Records Managers meet regularly with the Director of Territory Records in a Forum that allows ideas to be shared between agencies, as well as with the Territory Records Office. Records Managers are a driving force in the continuous improvement in the management of Territory records, as ACTPLA indicated in the Report in its response

to this recommendation. This process of self-driven incremental improvement is expected to grow in its importance.

At agency level, Business Plans provide a means of identifying key result areas, and ensuring they receive appropriate attention. DET's response, contained in the Report, provided a good example of this, where records management is one of that Department's key deliverables. Extending good recordkeeping and records management into schools is an important part of gaining comprehensiveness in openness and accountability.

Agencies internally audit recordkeeping on a rotational or as-required basis. For instance, ACT Health records management system was subject to an internal audit in 2006, for which 8 of the 13 recommendations have been fully actioned and the remainder are still in progress subject to available resources. Another example is the Land Development Agency, which undertook an internal audit of its Records Management Program in September 2007, and has subsequently self-assessed its performance against the criteria used in the Auditor-General's Report.

Agencies implement a range of internal audits to provide a broader level of review, however whatever the subject, most touch on records management at some stage of the audit. Many agencies have identified records management in current audit plans.

Recommendation 9

Agencies should disseminate recordkeeping guidance material to staff through means such as staff forums, induction programs and staff bulletins.

Government Position

Agreed.

Information about all essential functions including recordkeeping should be distributed to relevant staff in any way that is cost effective. As all staff need to know some recordkeeping procedures, while relatively few need to understand its intricacies, it is sensible to scale the level of recordkeeping content to match the medium being used.

Induction programs are particularly suited to new staff, staff bulletins serve to remind staff of procedures and requirements, and staff forums allow problems to be raised and misunderstandings clarified. A more formal teaching situation is necessary where more substantial recordkeeping content needs to be conveyed. This is discussed further in Recommendation 10 below. Where it is required, training is to be taken to the staff locations, such as into schools in the case of DET.

A number of agencies are adding agency-specific advice to their intranets. For instance, ACT Health's intranet contains advice sheets specific to its business, and DET is increasing the range of information available on its intranet, including draft procedures for recordkeeping in schools.

It is also desirable to have information available for staff members to find for themselves as required. To this end, since the release of the Auditor-General's Report, the Territory Records Office has upgraded its intranet service, allowing agency staff to search for information at the time an issue arises. Additions will gradually be made to this intranet site over time, in response to needs expressed by agency staff and as perceived by the Territory Records Office.

Recommendation 10

Agencies should develop formal training programs that improve the skills and understanding of all staff in recordkeeping.

Government Position

Agreed.

Appropriate agency staff must have the approvals, procedures and knowledge to apply a full cycle of records management from creation to disposal of the records used by their agency.

As indicated in the Territory Records Office's response to the draft Report, on 1 July 2008 the CIT commenced the provision of whole-of-government records management training at both the Introductory and Certificate III levels throughout the ACT Government. Agencies may need to tailor some aspects of the training so as to be confident that their particular business needs are met. DET has developed its own training materials and implementation plans for implementation of its Records Management Plan in schools.

The Territory Records Office will monitor the success of this training provision to ensure it meets the audit recommendations and provides the means by which consistency in the records regime can be achieved.

Recommendation 11

Agencies should develop procedures that provide sufficient practical guidance to enable all staff to capture both paper and digital records.

Government Position

Agreed.

The Territory Records Office recognises its role in supporting agencies in their management of all types of records. Accordingly, the Territory Records Office will

continue to provide whole of government Records Advices on topics of practical importance as the need arises.

AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION OF RECORDKEEPING FRAMEWORK

The Government recognises the considerable effort that all agencies have applied to the preparation of their records for the opening to public access of records more than 20 years old. Records affect virtually all aspects of agencies' operations. The upgrading of recordkeeping and records management standards that has occurred over the years since 2003 has been considerable, and has been coupled with the introduction of a new service, in the form of public access to the Territory's documentary heritage since 1 July 2008.

The Government is pleased to report that every matter identified in the Report as being less than satisfactory has been or is being addressed. The following measures have been or are being implemented:

- *Territory Records Standard for Records Management No.7 Physical Storage of Records* became a Notifiable Instrument under the *Territory Records Act 2002* on 23 September 2008.
- *Territory Records Standard for Records Management No.8 Business Continuity and Records Management* became a Notifiable Instrument under the *Territory Records Act 2002* on 23 September 2008.
- *Records Disposal Schedule: Schools Management Records* became a Notifiable Instrument under the *Territory Records Act 2002* on 3 July 2008.
- Preparations are in hand for a required review of the *Territory Records Act 2002* to commence in July 2009.
- Consideration has been given to the most effective and efficient administrative means of delivering services required by the *Territory Records Act 2002*, and this has led to some significant additional responsibilities being taken on by the Territory Records Office.
- A review of Standards and Guidelines 1 to 5 has been undertaken by an independent consultant, and consultation with agencies and the Territory Records Advisory Council on possible amendments has been completed.
- The DET Records Management Program has been expanded to reflect the audit recommendations and all public schools have been provided with further advice regarding DET's recordkeeping practices including the management and disposal of their records. This has included commencement of the implementation of a three-year Records Management Plan for schools. This plan identifies strategies and actions for the development of appropriate recordkeeping procedures in schools, including suitable training for relevant staff.
- The Department of Treasury created an approved Records Management Program that included the Shared Services component, and is now updating its Records Management Program to reflect recent changes to Government administrative arrangements.
- CIT commenced the provision of records management training at both the Introductory and Certificate III levels throughout the ACT Government.
- The ACT Public Cemeteries Board has relocated its records backup to a geographically distinct location.

- ACTPLA's recently appointed Records Management Officer is working to raise the level of awareness and knowledge of, and compliance with, recordkeeping requirements.
- All agencies have given consideration to the need for formal risk assessment of recordkeeping and records management, and the inclusion of this area in the work of internal audit committees.

CONCLUSION

The Government considers that a culture of maintaining paper records is reasonably well established in the ACTPS. Yet the procedures that underpin this culture need to be updated to reflect current demands, and constantly reinforced to ensure that, despite the daily pressures of service delivery, transparency and accountability are not compromised.

Although firmly embedded as an integral part of doing business in today's world, digital records are a relatively recent arrival on the records management scene. Integration of recordkeeping parameters into the digital environment is important as new IT systems are implemented and upgraded to meet the business needs of government.

Over the five years since the *Territory Records Act 2002* effectively commenced, significant progress has been made. As the ACT's archives authority, the Territory Records Office, will keep the ACTPS abreast of national developments. The Government is committed to the further steady improvement in recordkeeping and records management as part of both the accountability and transparency of government and the documentary heritage of the community.

The Report's value is the independent perspective that it brings to the ongoing task faced by the ACTPS. The Government views the Report as providing useful guidance at this point in time in measures that must be taken to build on the progress of the first five years of the *Territory Records Act 2002*.