

State Records NSW, 1788-2011

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THIS VERSION OF THE MANUSCRIPT CONTAINS COMPLETE CITATIONS AND REFERENCES, INCLUDING THOSE THAT WERE OMITTED FROM THE PUBLISHED VERSION, AS WELL AS SOME ADDITIONAL TEXT

A full bibliography is attached

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CHAPTER 1 – Indifference, Ignorance and Neglect 1788 to 1910

“Without archives there would be little verifiable past and mankind would be left with no more than the fleeting present and the unknowable future.”¹

The foundation document for the colony of New South Wales was the commission from King George III to Arthur Phillip RN, to serve as Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the proposed convict settlement.² On 25 April 1787, the British Government gave specific instructions about many aspects of this venture, including grants of land to emancipated convicts, for which he was told “You will cause copies of such grants as may be passed to be preserved, and make a regular return of the said grants to the Commissioners of our Treasury...”³ This is the first reference to those official records that would eventually become our historic archives.

Governor Phillip was obliged to send detailed despatches back to London, and it must have been necessary to keep local records of the many decisions affecting the lives and activities of the inhabitants. Other senior officials who accompanied the First Fleet – including the Judge Advocate, the Surveyor General, and the Superintendent of Convicts – presumably kept records relating to their particular jurisdiction, but no administrative support was provided for the Governor, who had overall responsibility for the settlement. This was an unreasonable additional burden on the man who was responsible for the lives of more than a thousand people in a strange environment.

Almost immediately upon his arrival at Sydney Cove, Governor Phillip asked the Commissary, Andrew Miller, to serve as his confidential private secretary in addition to his other duties.⁴ The extra workload proved excessive, so Miller resigned after five months, to be replaced by David Collins, the Deputy Judge Advocate.⁵ Collins was a junior officer of marines who proved to be an efficient and sympathetic Secretary to the Governor, or Secretary to the Colony as he preferred to be called.⁶

After Collins returned to England in 1796, the second Governor of NSW, Captain John Hunter was forced to act as his own secretary for nearly two years, with some help from unreliable clerks. At least by that time the Governor did not have to deal with the constant pressures for survival faced by his predecessor eight years previously. Lawyer Richard Dore arrived in the colony in 1798 as Deputy Judge Advocate. He immediately asked the Governor to appoint him as confidential Secretary, and Hunter reluctantly agreed. The relationship soon deteriorated because of Dore’s wilful behaviour, so Hunter dismissed him as Secretary at the beginning of 1799, although he could not remove him from his judicial post. Hunter then reverted to managing the affairs on his own. When Phillip Gidley King became the next Governor in September 1800, he appointed a succession of capable men as Secretary, but they all proved to be corrupt.⁷ Governor King gave a clear description of the Secretary’s duties in 1804, stating that he “Has the custody of all official papers and records belonging to the colony ... and every other official transaction relating to the colony and Government; and is a situation of much responsibility and confidence.”⁸

This implied that an embryonic archives office was envisaged in some form. In addition, Governor King required the Judge Advocate to maintain separate registers of assignments and other legal instruments.⁹

Governor William Bligh brought his own Secretary with him in 1804, Edmund Griffin, who served loyally throughout the vicissitudes the Governor faced until he was deposed in 1809. The rebel administration denied him access to official papers and even arrested the Commissary, John Palmer, demanding that he hand over the financial records of the colony. Remarkably, some have survived.¹⁰

In the interregnum before Lachlan Macquarie became Governor the following year, three different men served as Secretary to the administration run by renegade army officers. This meant that over a period of twenty-two years, ten different men, with different allegiances and capabilities had been responsible for the colony's records, which is hardly a sound basis to maintain consistent and coherent archives. It is not surprising that the surviving records from this period are incomplete. The day after he took office, Macquarie ordered that "all the public records, official books, and papers belonging to the Government" should be delivered to him the following morning, together with an inventory of them. Most of Bligh's papers were missing, apparently taken by the rebels to support their cause in subsequent legal proceedings. Some were able to be reconstructed from documents sent to the Colonial Office in London, and from correspondence with political leaders in Britain, but the surviving administrative records for the period from 1788 to 1809 occupy only three bundles.¹¹

Under Governor Macquarie and his Secretary J.T. Campbell the situation improved. Not only did Campbell serve for the first ten years of Macquarie's rule as his closest adviser, but also the governor himself had a more methodical manner of working.¹² Perhaps his training as an army officer had cultivated different skills from those possessed by his four naval predecessors; or perhaps it was his Scottish heritage.

When Macquarie appointed Campbell as provost marshal, the Colonial Office in London assumed the position of Secretary was vacant, and so appointed Frederick Goulburn as Colonial Secretary. As was customary for the period it was probably a case of patronage, because his elder brother Henry Goulburn was under-secretary for the colonies at that time. Frederick Goulburn became the first official Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, as well as holding the title Registrar of the Records, which gave him responsibility for all the official documents. He took over from John Campbell on 1 February 1821, and like his predecessor served as private secretary to the Governor.¹³ Meanwhile, the separate court records were organised more systematically after John Gurner was appointed Clerk and Registrar of the Supreme Court in 1817.¹⁴

Various explanations of the haphazard record keeping have been offered: a belief that the records were the Governor's personal documents, a shortage of stationery, and the overwhelming desire for practical achievements in the colony.¹⁵ Another reason is that the early Governors were serving naval or army officers, with responsibilities to their superiors in London as well as the Colonial Office. The demarcation between military and civil affairs was not always clear-cut, and this may have affected the destination of reports the Governors generated.

The records that have survived have mainly done so through inertia. It was sometimes easier to keep documents than to dispose of them, provided that there was an empty basement or spare room, "left to rot in safe custody" as Gordon Richardson

later remarked.¹⁶ In any case, the records were not voluminous in an age when everything had to be hand-written.

When he was compiling the second volume of *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Alexander Britton challenged the supposition that early Governors may have retained their records. He pointed out that Governor King's personal papers contain copies of the despatches received from England, but not the originals; if he had regarded them as personal papers there would have been no need to copy them. From this, Britton concluded that the original records must have been destroyed later. There was no reason to believe that other Governors behaved differently. Britton noted that other public records besides those for which the Governors were directly responsible had also disappeared.¹⁷ A notable exception is the proceedings of the law courts, which are virtually complete from the trial of convict Mary Jackson on 19 February 1788. This came about because the courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction had their own clerks and kept the records in the courts' possession for many years, albeit with variable levels of competence.¹⁸

Sir Thomas Brisbane, who also was a soldier and a Scot, replaced Macquarie as Governor at the end of 1821. Initially Brisbane and Goulburn had a congenial relationship, but this deteriorated after the Governor accused Goulburn of exceeding his authority. Because of disagreement about the extent of these responsibilities, Sir Thomas appointed Major John Ovens as his Private Secretary, leaving Goulburn with the purely official duties. Ovens had come to New South Wales with Brisbane originally as his aide-de-camp and acting chief engineer, so must have found the additional workload rather daunting.¹⁹ The Colonial Office refused Brisbane's request to appoint a private secretary.

To prevent the common practice of British colonial officials retaining the records that they generated, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Bathurst, issued an instruction in 1822 that all official papers were to be kept "most carefully and methodically" in the Governor's official residence, and then handed to the next incumbent of that office.²⁰ It is unclear how this was applied in practice. For personal reasons, Sir Thomas Brisbane resided at Government House at Parramatta, only visiting the city establishment once a week to transact official business. Presumably the documents were kept at Bridge Street in Sydney Town.

Brisbane suffered severe rheumatism in both shoulders, which made writing difficult. His sister-in-law helped with his personal correspondence but could not deal with confidential official matters. It is not surprising under these circumstances that his despatches to London were briefer and less frequent than those of previous Governors. This left him vulnerable to malicious reports from his opponents in the Colony.²¹

Governor Brisbane was recalled in 1825, to be replaced by Major-General (Sir) Ralph Darling, with specific instructions from London in relation to the duties of the Colonial Secretary, who was stipulated to be "the general medium of Communication."²² These instructions were further codified over the next few years. Soon after he arrived in the colony, Darling discovered that the office of the Superintendent of Convicts was in disarray, and decided "that the original indents, and muster rolls of prisoners, should be carefully kept and registered, in the Secretary's office."²³ Many other convict records were however destroyed later on official instructions between 1863 and 1870.²⁴

When Frederick Goulburn left New South Wales early in 1826 he was replaced as Colonial Secretary by Alexander Macleay, who received clear instructions not to interfere in the Governor's administration.²⁵ Macleay was an experienced civil servant who was also an entomologist with an international reputation. He brought his large collection of insect specimens with him to Australia, and this eventually became the nucleus of the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney. His skills in collecting and classifying specimens were put to good use as Colonial Secretary, where he began the systematic registration of correspondence and set up a large Record Office fitted with wooden presses containing pigeonholes for the files and bundles of papers.²⁶

By the 1830s the various departments of government were given a list of the returns that they must furnish to the Colonial Secretary periodically, thus giving some measure of overall supervision, if not control, over the colonial records. More importantly, this reduced the potential for conflict between Colonial Governors and their executive officers.

The other exception to the generally slack record keeping in the colony was the convict records, many of which have survived in reasonably good order despite occasional moves to destroy them.²⁷ As Governor Darling remarked: "It appears highly expedient, that the original indents, and muster rolls of prisoners, should be carefully kept and registered, in the Secretary's office."²⁸ This was particularly pertinent after Governor King's experience.

Shortly before he left the Colony in 1837 Governor Sir Richard Bourke virtually called for Alexander Macleay's resignation when he asked the Colonial Office to appoint his son-in-law, Edward Deas Thomson to the position of Colonial Secretary and Registrar of Records. Thomson served with considerable distinction in that capacity until the advent of responsible government in 1856, when the Colonial Secretary became an elected member of Parliament rather than an appointed official.²⁹

It was becoming apparent that better procedures were required for the preservation of documentary evidence about matters with great personal and legal significance – land titles, mortgages, births, deaths and marriages amongst them. In 1844 an office of Registrar General was created to take over these duties from the Supreme Court, although five years later the responsibility returned to the Court.³⁰ However, with the passing of legislation in 1855 to make compulsory the notification of births, deaths and marriages, the office of Registrar General was reinstated.³¹

In case it is thought that New South Wales was particularly backward in its attitude towards archives, it must be remembered that the Public Record Office of the United Kingdom (now known as the National Archives) was only established in 1838. Government and court records dating back hundreds of years were dispersed over many locations, including the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, in conditions that varied from adequate to appalling, just like the antipodean colonies.³²

By the middle of the nineteenth century, there was some awareness of the intrinsic historical value of the Colony's official records, particularly the proliferating correspondence, despatches, and reports. In 1848 the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, when eulogising Charles Cowper as a candidate in the forthcoming Legislative Council elections, observed that "a considerable proportion of the most elaborate Reports now standing in our official archives, bear his signature..."³³ This presumed that there was in fact such a collection of documents. Almost two years later, when Cowper resigned from the Council, the editor of the *Herald* commented

that his reports “will take their place in our official archives as works of permanent historical value.”³⁴

In 1852, the *Herald* could still speak sanguinely about the importance for the official archives of the 1851 Immigration Report, because that was “the most memorable of all the years that have rolled by since the foundation of the Australian colonies, and the one by which all the future years of Australian history will be deeply influenced.”³⁵ This refers, of course, to the gold rush that followed the announcement that the precious metal had been discovered in the Bathurst region.

THE FIRST ARCHIVES

Ever since the emergence of the first city-states about 7,000 years ago, there has been a need for systematic storage of the decrees of the rulers, whether they are kings, priests, or more participatory forms of government. Especially important was the need to document the ownership of property, often for the levying of taxes. Commercial business, whether conducted by an individual tradesman, shopkeeper, or a modern multinational conglomerate could not function or survive without records of their transactions. Archives are inseparable from civilisation.

According to the technology of the period, these written documents might be on wooden sticks, clay tablets, stone monuments or more ephemeral materials such as papyrus, parchment, paper, magnetic tapes or computer chips. Some have survived for millennia without any particular care being taken for their preservation.

Around 500AD the Roman Emperor Justinian decreed: “throughout each and every province...a public building be allocated, in which building the magistrate is to store the records, choosing someone to have custody over them so that they may remain uncorrupted and may be found quickly by those requiring them...and let that which has been neglected in the cities be corrected.”³⁶ These ideals are still valid, but in practice lapsed for the next thousand years until the invention of printing revived the need for recordkeeping, and various European monarchs established Royal archives.

Modern archival practice can be traced to the French Revolution, when government, religious and private archives dating back to 625AD were seized to form the French *Archives Nationales* in 1794, still probably the largest collection in the world. English-speaking countries were slow to follow this initiative, with the Public Record Office in England opening in 1838, and the United States National Archives not established until 1934.³⁷

When the colony achieved responsible government in 1856, the volume of documents began to increase rapidly, reflecting both population growth and expanding public services. Afterwards, until the establishment of a separate Premier’s Department in 1907, the Colonial Secretary and his Department were at the centre of administration. From 1859 the Colonial Secretary was designated as Chief Secretary to the Government, and often given the title of Premier or Prime Minister. His department was responsible for every aspect of business not delegated to a specific Minister; this left him with a remarkable range of functions, from policing to public health and education.³⁸ This meant that most official files were held in his office.

Apparently, concern about the state of the colonial archives had been expressed for some time. ‘A colonist’, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1858, foreshadowing events over twenty years later:

Reference has been repeatedly made, for a long time past ... to the insecurity of all the registered instruments of the colony – all the wills, grants, conveyances, mortgages ... in short, everything relating to the social happiness and well-being of our commonwealth. In sixty minutes or less the entire accumulation of sixty

years ... compiled with so much labour and expense, might be reduced to ashes
...³⁹

This correspondence followed a report of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly where the Colonial Secretary, Charles Cowper, was asked whether any action had been taken to transfer the registers of births, deaths and marriages from the (Church of England) Bishop of Sydney to the care of the Registrar-General. Cowper replied that enquiries had been made but no action was taken because it was doubtful whether the Registrar-General's office afforded safe custody for the documents. His predecessor as premier, S.A. Donaldson said this was an unsatisfactory response, because "these records involved some of the most important interests of the community."⁴⁰

Following a Select Committee investigation in 1858, there were moves to reduce salaries for young clerical workers in the public service. This was strongly resisted by William Elyard, Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department, who argued that it was essential to preserve a meaningful career structure. "Men who had come up steadily through the ranks held the unwritten as well as the written departmental memory, both of them vital to efficient administration."⁴¹ Public servants were thus seen as both custodians and repositories of the accumulated knowledge of the Colony.

In 1860 an article on 'Our hidden Treasures of Knowledge' remarked that for very many years these had lain "among the mouldy, dusty records, and other state papers in the gloomy archives of the Chief Secretary's office."⁴² The article notes with approval that Under-Secretary Elyard "had been always most ready to permit inspection of any works or papers of public interest which are under the charge of his department." Elyard had compiled a helpful list of various colonial publications, but the building was unsuitable for "any methodical arrangement of those official and private published works, and manuscripts, in which the archives are so rich." The unidentified writer described the premises as a "sunless, gloomy, treasure-house" where research was like the excavation of Pompeii, and would only be undertaken by "ardent votaries in the pursuit of useful knowledge."

Amongst these documents were the records of navigators and explorers including the expeditions of Leichhardt and Kennedy, as well as geological reports by Mitchell, Clarke, Stutchbury and others. No serious history had been written to date, despite the fact that "the Secretary's archives are extremely rich in rare and extraordinary registers, both printed and written – from the first days of convictism and crime; proceeding onwards to the early flow of immigration..." Worse still, the complete set of United Kingdom Patents since 1617, presented to NSW by the Home Government in 1856, had been placed in the Parliamentary Library because there was no other available space. This meant that these hundreds of volumes were only accessible to the honourable members – as the author wryly commented: "much learning has certainly not made many of this privileged class mad."⁴³

Already some people were contemplating alternative techniques for conserving important records. In one of its regular articles on science and arts, the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted the quality of images in an exhibition by the Photographic Society, in particular a facsimile copy of the *Domesday Book* prepared by the Ordnance Department in Southampton. "We...would take leave to suggest that it [this process] should be applied to any of our national archives that shew signs of decay. We have seen copies of ancient documents...differing in no respect from the originals, except that they are sound and fresh..."⁴⁴ That was remarkably prescient, foreshadowing the Australian Joint Copying Project which after many difficulties

began microfilming UK Colonial Office records in August 1948,⁴⁵ and in the twenty-first century has led to the digitising of significant documents in the NSW archives to meet the twin objectives of preservation and accessibility.

In a letter to the editor of *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1863, 'Civis' refers to the Registrar-General's annual report in which the importance of the records collected during the seven years' existence of his office is noted. However, the correspondent observes that the antecedent records of births, deaths and marriages are equally important. "It would be very gratifying, therefore, to know that among the foreshadowed 'measures calculated to effect social improvement when the state of the public business will permit' – suggested in the Cabinet Speech is one for the accomplishment of the great 'improvement' of securing to the public access to these archives."⁴⁶ From around its inception in 1869 the Sydney Free Public Library began collecting books and manuscripts relating to Australia, but there was no attempt to preserve the official archives of the colony.⁴⁷

Augustus Morris, pastoralist, politician, and secretary for the planned Sydney International Exhibition, argued for a large historical display from New South Wales, including "quaint old records, proclamations, and manuscripts with which, I am told, the public archives abound." Morris also believed that there were "men in this community pre-eminently fitted to superintend the collecting of the records of bygone days, of writing the history of the struggles of the first settlers, and of contrasting the past with the present." Less appealing possibly was his suggestion that portraits and busts of all the Governors and Judges and "other distinguished officials" of the colony should be displayed.⁴⁸

Knowledgeable men in New South Wales were conscious that Canada had appointed an Archivist in 1872, and established a federal Archives Office at Ottawa where all public records except those kept by the provincial governments were stored.⁴⁹ In 1879 the journalist John Henniker Heaton recommended the appointment of schoolmaster and former Unitarian minister Rev. Dr G.H. Stanley as Keeper of Archives in the Colonial Secretary's Office, pointing out that in the basement of the Office were "thousands of papers of the most valuable character relating to the first period of the Colony's history."⁵⁰ Shortly before he returned to live in London, Heaton wrote to Sir Henry Parkes lamenting that in New South Wales there was no "special room or department or building where such records might be kept."⁵¹ Nobody in government seemed to care.

There was much excitement in Sydney when the Sydney International Exhibition opened in 1881. The extravagant Garden Palace exhibition building was the largest structure in the colony. It was situated near where the statue of Arthur Phillip now resides in the Royal Botanic Gardens, surrounded by a number of ancillary buildings in the Domain. When the exhibition closed later that year the government was anxious to find a new use for the Garden Palace. Until a permanent solution was devised, it became a storage site for various government agencies. Machinery and artefacts collected for the nascent museum of technology were placed there, and files from the Colonial Secretary and other public offices were dumped inside, including land occupation records, railway surveys and the 1881 Census results. Space was made available to worthy associations such as the Linnean Society of NSW for office accommodation. At dawn on 22 September 1882 the Garden Palace was destroyed in the largest conflagration Sydney had ever seen. Everything in the building was lost, including many important but relatively recent records of the colony. Fortunately, most of the very early archives, as well as the registers of births, deaths, marriages

and land titles survived because they were stored elsewhere.⁵² For many years afterwards there were suspicions that the fire was not accidental.⁵³

As the centenary of the foundation of New South Wales approached in 1888, some people began thinking about the significance of the records of the past hundred years as an insight into the history of the Colony. They were considering not only the official archives but also the array of manuscripts, pictures and maps held privately. Clearly there was a need to preserve and record the existence of this material systematically so that it was not lost, either through destruction, neglect, or simply through ignorance of its existence. With the forthcoming celebrations in mind, the Government Printer, Charles Potter, proposed publishing a revised official history of New South Wales, despite the existing version being barely four years old.⁵⁴ In 1887 he felt that one of his clerical staff, F.M. Bladen would be suitable for this task, but the job was given instead to journalist/lawyer G.B. Barton, elder brother of (Sir) Edmund Barton who became the first Prime Minister of Australia.

George Barton had grand plans for the series he was commissioned to write. “It would be”, he said, “a comprehensive history, embodying information obtainable from all known sources, and of such an authentic character as to form a reliable basis for the labours of the future historian.”⁵⁵ Barton lobbied the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, pointing out there is no purpose in storing masses of documents if there is no way of determining what information they hold. He referred to the records stored at the Colonial Secretary’s office, which he said “in their present condition, are not available for historical or any other purposes.”⁵⁶ Barton proposed that a Public Record Office be established, and offered to accept appointment as ‘Keeper of the Records’. The government rejected these suggestions but agreed he could prepare a fifteen-volume history based on the records. Only one volume of the *History of New South Wales from the Records* was completed (dealing with the period 1783-1789), before Barton’s engagement ended after an acrimonious dispute when he was accused of inordinate delay and unauthorised expenditure.⁵⁷ There were also misgivings about the content of the book, which did not seem to match his ambitions.

Another journalist, Alexander Britton, was engaged to write the next volume. The project took a different course when Britton took over. A History Board was appointed in 1891 to supervise the publication. Rather than writing a historical narrative with selected excerpts from the records as Barton had done, the Board decided that it “was not only desirable but necessary” to supplement this with volumes containing reprints of official documents in full. Not only would this make the original sources readily accessible to researchers, but the historian would be able “to draw his own conclusions from direct testimony” rather than relying on secondary sources. This proposal was adopted by the Colonial Treasurer.⁵⁸

THE HISTORY BOARD

Creation of the History Board in 1891 recognised the importance of the State’s historic records and gave the Government some measure of control over their use. The Board comprised the Hon. Geoffrey Eagar, Under Secretary for Finance and Trade; former Parliamentary Draftsman Alexander Oliver MA; G. Arnold Wood, Challis Professor of History at the University of Sydney; with R.C. Walker, Principal Librarian at the Public Library as Chairman. Besides being an accountant, Eagar was well known in literary circles as an essayist and poet. Oliver was President of the Land Appeal Court, and reputedly owned one of the best private libraries in Sydney. After graduating from Oxford, Arnold Wood was appointed as the inaugural professor of history in Sydney at the age of 25. Robert Walker was born in England but came to Sydney as a boy. He worked as an accountant in the railway department before appointment as librarian at the Free Public Library, becoming the first Principal Librarian.

The History Board was disbanded in 1894 after publication of the second volume of the *History of New South Wales from the Records*, when the nature of the project was altered. By then, H.C.L. Anderson had replaced Walker as Principal Librarian and Geoffrey Eagar had died.

When Britton died in 1892 after drafting the second volume of the *History* (covering the period 1789-1794), completion of the project was finally allocated to Frank Bladen at the request of the History Board. However the government then decided to change the nature of the series, omitting the commentaries and narratives begun by Barton and followed to a lesser extent by Britton. Bladen thus became editor of the *Historical Records of New South Wales* which appeared in a different format. Frank Murcott Bladen had trained in law but was keenly interested in history, sharing the Board's belief that it was essential to have access to original documents. The *Historical Records* aimed to fill this need, by providing a compilation of official reports and correspondence, starting with Cook's *Endeavour* log from 13 April 1770. Not everybody mirrored his enthusiasm. A reviewer of volume 2 in the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote, "All records are not profitable. Why, then, must we read a quantity of the dreariest public correspondence?"⁵⁹

In 1896 Bladen transferred from the Government Printing Office to the re-named Public Library of New South Wales, where he continued working on the *Historical Records* although much of the editorial work was delegated to a clerk working under his supervision. This was possible because unlike the earlier *History*, it was primarily a collation of material without commentary. The project was suspended for financial reasons in 1902, after seven volumes appeared, covering the period to 1811.⁶⁰ In any case, the Library Trustees felt that printing of the records could eventually to be transferred to the new Federal Government because "the history of New South Wales up to 1837 [was] practically the history of the whole of Australia."⁶¹ The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament took up this suggestion, and the early volumes of the *Historical Records of Australia*, published in 1914, made extensive use of the material collected for Bladen by James Bonwick in London.

Bonwick spent much of his younger life as a schoolteacher in the Australian colonies. On a return visit to England in 1882 he began searching for original documents relating to the early years of Australia, and published two books based on this material.⁶² This gave him the idea of transcribing documents held in London for the various colonial governments, his first client being Queensland, the newest Colony. The NSW government engaged him to list and briefly describe the 'Brabourne Papers' it purchased in 1884.⁶³ The next year Bonwick wrote to Parkes, as well as making a formal application to the Colonial Secretary, Alexander Stuart, "for permission to act as the archivist in your colony to a small extent."⁶⁴ Although he was never appointed to the public service, the Trustees of the Public Library described him as "Archivist for the State"⁶⁵, when from 1887 to 1902 he provided transcripts relating to New South Wales for Frank Bladen's *Historical Records*. Bonwick was then eighty-five years old and could not be expected to continue with the task, although one of his assistants continued to supply material for the next two years; he died at Sussex in 1906. The project then lapsed.

One must remember that this mammoth publication was largely compiled from material held overseas. It did not make use of the unsorted documents remaining in Sydney, some of which were duplicates of original papers now in London. In a sense it was re-creating the archives from other sources. Although it attempted to be a strictly chronological compilation, this was not possible because additional material was often discovered after the publication of a volume. Bonwick did not attempt to

copy every document, but only selected material he believed would be of importance.⁶⁶ Furthermore, to the annoyance of future historians, he did not always cite the source of the documents he transcribed.⁶⁷ Bonwick understood that it was impractical to preserve every official document, and some informed triage process was necessary. He advocated an independent body that would divide non-current records into three groups – “absolutely useless, doubtful value, recognized utility”.⁶⁸ To some extent, this is what the short-lived History Board hoped to achieve, as a forerunner of modern records management practice.

At the same time, James Bonwick’s concept of archives extended far beyond official documents. He wanted to see an office that would become “a storehouse of the History of the Colonies & of Colonists, in their political, ecclesiastical, industrial and domestic aspects.” In essence, rather like the future Mitchell Library would become. But he went further: this archives office should not merely collect existing documents but should actively commission material:

Old Colonists might be urged to write upon Sealing, Whaling and Intercolonial Trade of old Commercial Houses. Above all, they should record experiences with the Natives, Their Habits [and] Language.⁶⁹

Modern collecting institutions often do this through oral history recording programs.

In a letter to the editor of *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1887, ‘Exoniensis’ complained about “the vast quantity of public documents possessing an historical interest now hidden away in the cellars and lumber-rooms, or on the dusty shelves of our public offices.” His (or possibly, her) solution was to provide space in a proposed State House that was under consideration by the government.⁷⁰ The problems were not, of course, unique to Australia. In 1890 it was reported that the New Zealand government was proposing “to erect a fireproof building for the safe custody of public documents and archives of the colony.”⁷¹ They did not want a repetition of the Garden Palace debacle.

A severe economic depression that affected New South Wales in the early 1890s meant that any prospect of a new building became very remote, particularly for something as arcane as a repository for old government files. In that financial climate, some people felt that publication of the *Historical Records of New South Wales* served sufficient purpose, and there was no need to do anything further.⁷²

Following a visit to European archives in 1902, Frank Bladen wrote

It is a disgrace to Australia as an enlightened nation that there is no place where the original papers bearing on the discovery of the continent; the exploration and settlement of the states; the constitutional history and records of their courts of law and judicial and political institutions can be consulted by the student of history.⁷³

Nevertheless, many rare publications and manuscripts about the origins of Australia were about to become available to the public, due to the generosity of bibliophile David Scott Mitchell, who bequeathed his entire collection to the Public Library of NSW on condition that a suitable building would be erected to house it after his death. Mitchell died in 1907, the same year that Frank Bladen was appointed Principal Librarian. After much prevarication by the government, the eponymous library opened in Macquarie Street, adjacent to Parliament House, in March 1910.

For the first time in Australia there was a dedicated focal point for collecting and studying Australian history. The librarians at the Mitchell Library did not

differentiate between books and archives and so they arranged and catalogued the documents in their accustomed manner, without being aware that an essential characteristic of archives is their relationships to each other and to the agency that produced them. Unlike library materials, any cultural value is incidental.⁷⁴ This practice would create difficulties in future years.

Having attained the position of Principal Librarian, Frank Bladen should have been in a strong position to influence the Library Trustees towards becoming the State's official archival institution, but his declining health caused them to lose confidence in his opinions.⁷⁵ He retired at the beginning of 1912 and died in September of that year at the age of fifty-four.⁷⁶

CHAPTER 2 – Public Library Takes Charge 1911 to 1960

“The essential quality of archives is that they record not merely achievements but also the processes by which they were accomplished.”⁷⁷

Inspired by the magnificent addition to their resources with the opening of Mitchell Library, the Trustees of the Public Library of NSW decided that no time should be lost in establishing “an Archives Office in which all public records of a certain age shall ultimately be deposited.” Following a deputation to the Acting Premier, the President of the Trustees, Professor Mungo MacCallum proposed to the government in September 1911 that the Archives Office should be a separate entity within the new building, but under the control of the Trustees.⁷⁸ The recommendation was referred to an inter-departmental committee which two years later reported that while it unanimously supported the creation of an Archives Department, it did not favour housing the archives within the Mitchell Library. However, the committee could not find any suitable alternative accommodation for the records. Amongst options considered were the Conservatorium of Music, the Supreme Court buildings and even the basement of Government House.⁷⁹

The Public Library had been collecting significant books, maps and original manuscripts from the 1870s after the government acquired the Australian Subscription Library, but these functions were greatly enlarged by the bequest to the Library by David Scott Mitchell, and the opening of the new building to house his collection. Although the proposal for a separate Archives Office was not accepted, nevertheless Cabinet authorised all departments and public agencies to hand over to the Mitchell Library records which were more than 25 years old and not in current use, if the Principal Librarian considered they were of ‘historical value’.⁸⁰ This authorisation left wide scope for interpretation (or misinterpretation) by officials without training in the discipline of history. By selecting only certain documents, the archival integrity of the records could be compromised – that is, the preservation of an unbroken line of official custody, important both for legal and historical reasons.⁸¹

One of the Trustees of the Public Library was Dr J.F.W. Watson, a medical practitioner who published a history of Sydney Hospital in 1911. As a trustee he served on a committee investigating the administration of the Library, and following the retirement of Frank Bladen, became honorary acting principal librarian for six months in 1912. To Watson’s disappointment, the position was then filled by William Herbert Ifould, the State Librarian of South Australia, who became Principal Librarian in Sydney for the next thirty years.

Ifould understood the thinking behind the inter-departmental committee’s objection to depositing archives with the Public Library. A part-time Board of Trustees, appointed by the government mainly for their bibliographic expertise, controlled the Library. Departments considered that official documents were their own property, and were reluctant to delegate control to an “outside” body with no apparent understanding of administrative needs. As the current Director of State Records and former Mitchell Librarian has written:

Fundamentally the Government did not trust the Library to look after its documents; however the Government was consistently unwilling to take proper responsibility for its own archives.⁸²

With an independent income, Dr Watson was rather dilatory in his medical practice, preferring to pursue his love for documentary research. He was a robust advocate for government archive offices to be established at both State and Commonwealth levels. Following his brief term as acting librarian in 1912, he was appointed editor of the *Historical Records of New South Wales* series that was expected to resume publication. That project was taken over by the Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament in 1907, and on Watson's recommendation was renamed the *Historical Records of Australia*, with its scope broadened accordingly. The thirty-third and final volume appeared in 1925. The Parliamentary Library Committee terminated his contract the following year, following an acrimonious dispute.⁸³ Undaunted by this setback, Watson moved to Canberra in 1927 with the expectation of being appointed Commonwealth archivist.⁸⁴

Supplementing the massive transcription of records in London carried out by James Bonwick at the end of the nineteenth century, Mitchell Library engaged Mme. Helouis in Paris to transcribe records of French exploration in the South Pacific. This project lasted from 1912 until 1929, making a substantial addition to the Library's manuscript collection, although these were not public archives of Australian governments.⁸⁵

Another great benefactor of the Public Library, Sir William Dixon, wrote to the Colonial Secretary in 1915 requesting the establishment of a separate archives department. In August 1916 the Trustees sought a deputation to the Premier, W.A. Holman, but he refused to see them.⁸⁶ The First World War was not going well for Britain and her allies, so it was hardly an auspicious time to be seeking funds. Nevertheless, in April 1917, the Premier's Department suggested to the Minister for Education that he consider providing £1000 in the next estimates to establish an archives department. The Minister declined on the grounds of financial stringency, after which it was forty years before the idea was revived.⁸⁷

If politicians were reluctant to spend money on archives, their views probably reflected public opinion. In 1926 a speaker at the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science conference in Perth said that in Australia "archivists are hopelessly confused with architects and architraves."⁸⁸ At this conference it was suggested that all the archives from the States should be consolidated into a single collection, or at least under a centralised administration, but difficulties of access made this seem undesirable. Anyway, by 1929 the country was in the early stages of the Great Depression, so that discussion of archival practice dropped very low on policy agendas.

FILING SYSTEMS

While archives may not have been valued at this time, the attitude was typical of the haphazard records management practices of government departments during the 1920s. A.G. Kingsmill started his public service career as a junior clerk in the Records Branch of the Colonial Secretary's Department in 1924, rising to become permanent head in 1958. He wrote a brief history of the Department after he retired, which highlights the casual attitude that prevailed:

"In the first few months of my service I devised a system which, if it had been persisted in, would probably have saved a great deal of time and work in the public service. As each letter came in it was given a number and its contents briefly summarised on a card. It was one of my tasks to go to the files, take out the relevant papers and attach the new piece of correspondence which normally would go into

the Department for action. I got the files out all right but then merely put them away again under their new number. As far as I know the files remained in their dormant state and no major calamity seemed to overtake the Government."⁸⁹

Nevertheless, during the inter-war years Mitchell Library acquired departmental records of historical significance when the opportunity arose. Between 1934 and 1936 the Colonial Secretary handed over records up to the year 1855. All administrative business passed through his department in the early days of the colony, so this material was of immense interest. Many records from other major departments, including Treasury, Lands, Education, and Public Works were obtained around the same time.⁹⁰

Cabinet's direction about disposal of official records was not always observed by the responsible officers, so had to be repeated at intervals by the incumbent Premier. Later the Public Service Board – the employing body that supervised the activities of all public servants throughout the State – reinforced this message, but it was purely advisory until the advent of the 1960 *Archives Act*.⁹¹ Arising from Cabinet's instructions, the Trustees of the Public Library effectively became the archival authority, and used this official recognition to expand their activity in the collection and preservation of the State archives. Russell Doust described this as the "creation of an archives through administrative action".⁹² We should be thankful that so much survived, rather than bemoaning the loss of valuable information. As Doust observed, "It was perhaps sufficient that the Library acquired the older records, even if for the most part it did not quite know what to do with them."⁹³

WHAT ARE ARCHIVES?

Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines archives both as "a place in which public records or historic documents are kept", and "a historical record or document so preserved". Professional archivists tend to be more specific. Thus Sir Hilary Jenkinson, the doyen of British archivists, in 1937 wrote that "A document which may be said to belong to the class of Archives is one which was drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which itself formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and their legitimate successors."⁹⁴

Following a visit to Australia in 1954, his American counterpart Dr T.R. Schellenberg described archives more simply as "Those records of any public or private institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archival institution."⁹⁵

To the layperson, archives institutions may look like cemeteries for old documents, but as an anonymous staff member of the Archives Office wrote, only partly in jest: "Archives are not necessarily 'dusty old files'; they can be dusty old maps; dirty faded photographs; scratched and torn films; illegible, out of scale plans of historic buildings long since torn down; poor quality sound recordings which cannot be played as the appropriate equipment went down with the *Dunbar*; and stretched and erased computer tapes which once contained obsolete information."⁹⁶ An earlier commentator remarked that they often were to be found in basements, "serving as a mat for the feet of any chance visitor".⁹⁷ One of the tasks of the archivist is to ensure that these items are kept in an environment where they will not suffer further degradation, and to arrange conservation treatment for valuable records that are already damaged.

Meanwhile, important series of records were still being destroyed, such as Department of Public Works documents in the 1920s, and Department of Railways documents in the 1950s. Sometimes this was wholesale destruction, at other times random culling in order to save space. The Public Service Board itself was one of the worst offenders.⁹⁸ In any case, there was negligible interest in access to the archival documents during the inter-war years. Australian history was not taught in undergraduate courses at the University, so that few students were motivated to

explore the field, and there was little public curiosity about the subject. The handful of scholars who were undertaking serious research found plenty of material in the manuscript collections of Mitchell Library, or the proliferating volumes of Watson's *Historical Records of Australia* if they were dealing with the early colonial period

Community attitudes slowly began to change as economic conditions improved after the Depression. When opening a sesquicentenary exhibition organised by the Royal Australian Historical Society in 1938, Premier Bertram Stevens acknowledged that "the foundation of good historical work is, of course, an adequate collection of records, and a system of keeping the collection up to date. In both respects we suffer from serious deficiencies."⁹⁹ His speech did not address the question of what constituted an adequate collection. In the background, both the Public Library and the Royal Australian Historical Society were angling to be designated as the official archival body for the State. The RAHS had expressed its interest as early as 1919.¹⁰⁰ In the United States there was a precedent for local historical societies being funded to maintain their State's archives, so the idea was not as bizarre as it might first appear.¹⁰¹ Russell Doust believed that the Library Trustees did not really want to be responsible for the archives, but were using this as a ploy to secure completion of the library building, only the western wing of which was built in 1910 to house the Mitchell collection.¹⁰²

While the preservation and storage of the records of State Government departments and agencies was one issue, from the viewpoint of some historians the situation with records of local government authorities could be even more dire. All too often "municipal records other than those on current files ... [were] looked upon as cumberers of the earth, especially of that portion of it required for their storage."¹⁰³ This would not change until 1998 when the State Records Act extended the definition of a 'public office' to include councils, following which their records were required to be treated identically with those of other government agencies.

Wartime always leads to paranoia or even panic on the home front, even when the battles are taking place on the opposite side of the world. During the First World War, important series of administrative records were destroyed in case they fell into enemy hands. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the Premier wrote to all government departments and agencies, as well as scientific and cultural bodies such as the Royal Australian Historical Society, asking them to cease distributing their reports to similar bodies in foreign countries, because these documents may "contain information which may be of value directly or indirectly to the enemy."¹⁰⁴ Soon afterwards, the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the Royal Australian Historical Society were pointing out to State and Federal Governments:

"the necessity of taking steps to ensure that no records are at any time destroyed or transferred from their custody without the approval of some authority competent to advise on their possible value both as administrative precedents and as historical source material ... and that provision be made for the housing and arrangement of such records, with a view to their permanent preservation."¹⁰⁵

That pleading fell on deaf ears. Because of wartime shortages of imported newsprint paper, there were national campaigns to recycle all waste paper. A Commonwealth Salvage Commission was established in 1943 to co-ordinate the collections. With unaccustomed fervour, many officials took this opportunity to dispose of old records and inconvenient "dead" files.¹⁰⁶ Much valuable archival material must have been lost

in this way. After the war, records again accumulated because of the “inherent inertia of the public service and the unwillingness to discard files, especially when there was sufficient room for storage.”¹⁰⁷ Mitchell Library moved many original manuscripts and other items of potential archival significance to relatively safe locations in the country such as Armidale Teachers’ College.¹⁰⁸ This meant those records were inaccessible during much of the war, but escaped the perceived threats of enemy invasion or the depredations of over-zealous public servants.

From 1946, the nation settled down to a period of unprecedented prosperity. Population expanded rapidly due to a ‘baby boom’ and a strong immigration program. Returning military personnel were offered opportunities for tertiary education in the burgeoning universities. Citizens who had experienced years of deprivation expected governments to provide services that were never contemplated previously. These pressures all generated mountains of documents. In the USA it was estimated that government officials produced one-third of their own weight of paper each year.¹⁰⁹ Records again accumulated because of the “inherent inertia of the public service and the unwillingness to discard files, especially when there was sufficient room for storage.”¹¹⁰ At the same time, Australian history began to be taught as a separate discipline, which increased the demand for access to archival material. The combination of these factors prompted serious consideration to be given to preservation of the official archives of the State, both for administrative and cultural reasons.

In 1948, Mitchell Library and the National Library finally commenced the Australian Joint Copying Project, under which all documents in the Public Record Office and other repositories in the UK relating to Australia and the Pacific would be microfilmed. This project had a stormy gestation because of rivalry between the two libraries at the time that the idea was first mooted in 1939, but eventually an agreement was reached in 1945.¹¹¹ Unlike the selective transcriptions made by James Bonwick over half a century earlier, the Joint Copying Project made available in Australia comprehensive, accurate documents for use as primary sources by historians. Although the partnership between the two libraries ended in 1988, the project continued for another five years under the direction of the National Library, by which time over 10,000 reels of microfilmed records had been produced, covering the period from 1560 to 1984.¹¹²

Meanwhile, new technological processes for copying and multiplying documents caused even more paper records to be generated. Departmental branches found it convenient to have duplicates of the documents held at head office. Much of this duplicate material had no archival value, but there were no uniform procedures for dealing with the avalanche that threatened to overwhelm many agencies. Structured records management processes such as disposal scheduling were uncommon, so individual officers were left to work out how to deal with the influx. Because ‘filing’ was considered the lowest form of office work, this inevitably led to both the destruction of significant records and the retention of others that no longer served a useful purpose.

To alleviate the pressure on space, the Public Service Board rented premises at 53-55 George Street West and in Goldsbrough House at 11 Loftus Street, near Circular Quay. Areas in these unsuitable old buildings were divided into compartments by wire mesh, with each Department allocated a locked compartment under its own control.¹¹³ Some agencies attempted to stack their files in chronological order, but for others it was merely a dumping ground.

The Public Service Board appointed a committee in 1951 to review the whole question of storage or disposal of departmental records. The committee recommended that a State Records Repository be established under the management of the Principal Librarian, and that a Records Committee with representatives from the department affected, the Public Library and the Public Service Board make the decisions about the fate of the records in that department.¹¹⁴ Despite the rented storage facilities, a considerable amount of material continued to arrive at the Library; the Trustees reported in 1951-53 that the archives collection “was growing at an increased rate,” although Principal Librarian John Metcalfe stated that it was no longer “actively seeking archival material except that covering the earlier periods.”¹¹⁵ The Trustees were anxious to gather any pre-1850 material into the Mitchell Library collection, but rejected later documents.

Some 2,300 metres of archival material had been collected by the early 1950s, including the Supreme Court records from 1788 to 1825, early records of the Surveyor General, and most significantly the extensive archives from the Colonial Secretary's Department from the foundation of the colony until 1938, the New South Wales sesquicentenary year. Valuable as this was, there were nevertheless significant gaps, with some major departments not represented. Sometimes this was because of the proprietorial attitude of the agency concerned – or individual officers within it – but more often it resulted from deliberate destruction of documents due to lack of storage space, relocation of the department, or administrative changes.

As W.H. Ifould discovered in 1912, there was a legitimate concern behind the reluctance to hand over documents which many officers believed were the property of the agency that created them – much as some early Governors regarded the records of their administration as their own personal property until the Colonial Office informed them otherwise. Their disquiet was aggravated because departments were asked to give this material to the Trustees of the Public Library, a part-time body of people with no particular understanding of official records.

In 1952, Marjorie Jacobs, a lecturer in Australian history at the University of Sydney, began a research project to survey the accessibility of documents such as public records and private papers held by Mitchell Library and other places. To her surprise, she discovered that there was much work to be done before these could be used in historical research. There were no guides to important series of records with the exception of G.D. Richardson's 1951 thesis on the Colonial Secretary's In-letters, and this was only available to staff, not to historians. Jacobs concluded that “existing arrangements fell far short of the most basic practices adopted overseas” and it appeared that the archives were a neglected part of the Library's collection.¹¹⁶

Miss (later Professor) Jacobs discovered that unwanted departmental records were being dumped in Goldsbrough House, where the older records were sent to the pulp mills to make space when newer records arrived.¹¹⁷ Neither the Mitchell Librarian nor the Principal Librarian were aware of this practice, which had been sanctioned by the Public Service Board in contradiction of its own periodic instructions to Departments about the disposal of documents. Following these experiences, Marjorie Jacobs became a committed lobbyist for a separation of library and archival functions. She found a congenial ally in David MacMillan, who had trained as an archivist in the Scottish Record Office before appointment as Sydney University Archivist in 1954, the first in an Australian university. Soon after he arrived, MacMillan challenged prevailing attitudes. He argued that the era of great collectors like David Scott Mitchell had passed, but asked whether half a century later “will those who make the

decisions take a long-term view or will they muddle through with the cheap, shoddy and makeshift?"¹¹⁸

From an archival point of view, the real concern was that decisions about which documents had 'historical significance' and therefore should be preserved often were made by low-ranking departmental staff with no training in how to make this assessment. Even those documents that reached the Public Library were processed in accordance with library practices of indexing and cataloguing by subject, which destroys the archival integrity of a series of records kept in their original sequence. There was also a tendency to look for significant "treasures" within a collection of documents, not realising that their research value might be lost or distorted if removed from the context in which they were created. Biographer and former archivist H.J. Gibbney argued that "in libraries the collectors instinct is perfectly proper and indeed positively valuable but in archives it can do real harm."¹¹⁹

Despite all the deficiencies in the system, and the probable loss of some historically valuable archives, the Public Library did manage to preserve important material that could very easily have disappeared without trace. Realistically, even with the planned building extensions in Macquarie Street, the Library could never hope to store all the records that were being generated by the postwar proliferation of government agencies. Probably the Trustees, with their "jewel box" mentality, never envisaged that they would become a general repository for all records that were no longer currently required by the respective departments.

Following the Goldsbrough House controversy, the Public Service Board looked for other accommodation that was cheap but larger. They selected a disused former wool-store in a complex at Shea's Creek, also known as the Alexandra Canal, in Alexandria, an inner suburb of Sydney. The unlined, unpainted wooden building, soaked with lanolin and with asphalt floors, was a terrible fire risk. A repetition of the Garden Palace disaster seemed all too likely, and indeed nine similar wool-stores at Botany were destroyed in a spectacular blaze in 1969, while an identical shed 250 metres away burned to the ground in 1970. Perhaps the parsimonious Public Service Board was not particularly alarmed by that prospect, although the Principal Librarian, John Metcalfe, was dismayed.

Metcalfe was determined to maintain control over the archives, and in 1953 the Trustees of the Public Library adopted his recommendation to re-affirm that principle.¹²⁰ As a strategic move to assert their authority, an Archives Department was established within the Library in November 1953, with Allan Horton appointed as Archives Officer, reporting direct to the Principal Librarian, and supported by two other staff.¹²¹ The Archives Department was not part of the Mitchell Library although housed in the same building. It was actually a service operated by the Public Library on behalf of the Public Service Board for the care of non-current records of the various public offices. Only incidentally did it have a function to identify and preserve valuable documents.¹²²

The tiny staff became the nascent archival profession in New South Wales, and so began preparing inventories of official records held in Mitchell Library and Goldsbrough House. A disposal schedule was prepared in consultation with the Departments of Lands and Education, to determine which records should be archived and which ones could be destroyed. Existing haphazard procedures were replaced with a system of stacking non-current records in boxes in order to conserve space and improve storage conditions.¹²³

Even with its obvious deficiencies, the premises at Shea's Creek became the Government Records Repository in 1954, placed under the supervision of the Archives Department of the Public Library, but responsible to the Public Service Board. The Repository was intended for the storage of non-current files rather than irreplaceable documents. Within a year nearly 7,000 metres of records from thirty-eight government departments or agencies was stored there, causing the Trustees some alarm because these included some archives of permanent value that could not be stored at the already overcrowded Library.¹²⁴

The simmering tensions between library and archival practitioners became apparent during a tour of Australia in 1954 by Dr T.R. Schellenberg, the Director of Archival Management at the National Archives of the United States. Schellenberg's unequivocal advice was that the two functions should be separated. He also encouraged archivists to demonstrate their independence by forming their own professional association and journal. Following his visit, he wrote a book encapsulating his beliefs which became a standard text for budding Australian archivists.¹²⁵

Schellenberg had a profound impact on archival practice in Australia. Until then, British archivist Sir Hilary Jenkinson had influenced the embryonic profession. As with so many other aspects of Australian society and culture in the early post-war years, the imperial connection remained strong. Jenkinson was critical of the American approach, which he felt placed too much emphasis on techniques and not enough on principles.¹²⁶ However, this pragmatic attitude rather suited the less-traditional emerging practitioners in New South Wales.

Academic historian Marjorie Jacobs reinforced these views in articles written for professional journals. She pointed out the selection and custody of departmental records that have permanent value was more than simply "saving valuable records from destruction and making them accessible to the public when they have safely aged." The archivist needed to become involved in the process from the time records are created until they are disposed of, and librarians were not trained to do this.¹²⁷ Such opinions validated the beliefs of the archival faction, while at the same time hardening the opposition of those librarians like John Metcalfe who preferred to retain the existing methods that preserved their own power and authority. Although he admitted that "sooner or later consideration may have to be given to a complete separation and specialisation", he drew attention to some disadvantages. He argued that in the past more disorder and destruction of the archives had been caused by administrators and historians than by librarians."¹²⁸ While it was a spirited defence, Metcalfe overlooked Jacobs' main point: that systematic records management was at the core of good archival practice. And as she asked in reply, "Are they [libraries] the appropriate bodies to advise departments about the administration of current records?"¹²⁹

Interstate archivists joined the debate. P.R. Eldershaw from Tasmania maintained that "the profession of archivist is rapidly becoming an administrative job rather than an academic one", believing that library training was a handicap for dealing with administrative records, as against private or business manuscripts.¹³⁰ This contention was not likely to endear him to either librarians or archivists.

During his time in Australia, Dr Schellenberg attended a seminar convened by the National Library to discuss the management of archives in Australia. Proposals for appropriate legislation emerged, which prompted Allan Horton to work on a suitable Bill for legislation in New South Wales, based on principles enunciated at the

seminar. The following year, the Minister for Education asked the Principal Librarian to prepare a draft Bill, commenting that he “would be very happy to see an Archives Act on the statute books of the State.”¹³¹ The Minister recommended to Cabinet in May 1956 that the Library Trustees should become the archives authority, and this proposal was not disputed.

Ministerial advocacy did not produce immediate action, but certainly generated intense lobbying behind the scenes by the opposing factions. The records may have been neglected, but there were passionate debates about their future custody.

John Metcalfe kept the pressure on his Minister (R.J. Heffron, later Premier) to achieve the promised expansion of the Library building. Recommending that basement floors below ground level be constructed for storage of the State’s public documents, he pointed out that this would mean “permanent relief in government offices elsewhere.” To reinforce his argument he reminded the Minister that the store at Shea’s Creek was “dangerous and unsatisfactory” and enclosed photographs of piles of cardboard archive containers that had collapsed because of moisture, with consequent deterioration of the records they contained.¹³² Cabinet may have been unconcerned by this prospect, as there were reports that privately, Ministers felt “that the sooner all the records were destroyed by fire, the better.”¹³³

An influential opposing group consisted of the various departmental heads, who were alarmed about the prospect of sensitive or controversial documents being handed over to an external institution, the Public Library, and becoming available for historical research or even curious prying. The Permanent Head of the Attorney-General’s Department regarded the proposals as “highly dangerous, and can result in Departments being in effect, organised by Librarians.”¹³⁴ These men managed to convince the Public Service Board, led by its long-serving and authoritarian chairman, Wallace Wurth, to reverse the Board’s previous relaxed attitude towards the proposal.¹³⁵ Departments had no problem with placing their semi-current records in the repository at Shea’s Creek, because they remained departmental property and could not be inspected without express approval.

Within the public service there was little understanding of the function of a state reference library as a core function of government. For many bureaucrats it was akin to a charity supported by the government, run by a group of non-accountable voluntary trustees.¹³⁶ To some extent this was a hangover from the library’s earlier name as the Free Public Library, which in turn originated from the Australian Subscription Library founded in 1826. The confusion about its function as the Public Library was partly redressed by adoption of the title Library of New South Wales in 1969, later altered to State Library of New South Wales in 1975.¹³⁷

Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1957 the Public Service Board reminded all departments that no records, whether or not considered to be of historical value, should be destroyed without approval from the Principal Librarian. The Trustees of the Library welcomed this action, but lamented the fact that there was no legislation to regulate the preservation of the State’s archives. At the same time, the Trustees again took the opportunity of pointing out that there no satisfactory storage facilities available.¹³⁸ Twelve months later the Trustees noted that even the proposed southeastern wing of the Library building would soon become too small to contain the expanding collection, and the best solution might be to construct additional floors over the whole site.¹³⁹

Outside government circles there was concern about the possible destruction of records if left in departmental custody. Following a Cabinet meeting in July 1957 the *Daily Telegraph* reported that the government was “to form an archives department at the Public Library ... to preserve historical public documents” and to “receive documents that government departments no longer wanted”, overlooking the fact that a section with that name and function had been set up in the Public Library four years earlier.¹⁴⁰ This was followed quickly by an editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* which praised the Government’s decision to proceed with an Archives Bill “after nearly 60 years of neglect of State records”, but at the same time questioned the wisdom of handing over these records to the Public Library, because “the care and collection of records need special skills which the librarian cannot be expected to have.”¹⁴¹ By then the Minister was conscious that the people who were persistently lobbying him were “not really as objective as they should be in approaching this matter.”¹⁴²

Professor Jacobs states that in August 1957 she organised a deputation to the Director-General of Education, Dr H.S. (later Sir Harold) Wyndham, comprising herself, David MacMillan, and Dr C.H. Currey, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, at which Dr Wyndham “listened attentively” to their accounts of overseas archival institutions, and the interest of historians in the preservation of records. According to Jacobs, Dr Wyndham then asked his staff to commence drafting a new Bill.¹⁴³ Shortly afterwards, a ‘special correspondent’ to the *Herald* recommended that an independent committee should be formed to examine the State’s archival resources and to report on whether they were so extensive as to require an autonomous authority for their management.¹⁴⁴

Reports about a proposed Archives Bill attracted lobbying both by the Business Archives Council and the RAHS, arguing that modern archival practice differed from library management in objectives and training.¹⁴⁵ Even the National Trust of Australia (NSW) entered the discussion by proposing that one of its heritage properties would form an ideal location “to house all the historic documents and manuscripts available as well as relics of importance.”¹⁴⁶

When David MacMillan wrote to the press about the “deplorable state of the archives organisation”,¹⁴⁷ John Metcalfe promptly leapt to the defence of the Public Library. He said that the only deplorable thing was the accommodation, and the government had already promised to build an archives wing on the remaining part of the Library site.¹⁴⁸ Allan Horton, as Archivist in the Public Library Archives Department, dutifully echoed his superior’s line of argument, suggesting that, while the existing situation was not ideal, any move to separate the archives from the Library “would throw away a valuable site and a good chance for a secure repository in the future.”¹⁴⁹ He correctly pointed out that but for the interest of the Library over many years, it was doubtful whether many valuable historic records would have survived. However, this was not a convincing argument for continuing that function in future. MacMillan had already antagonised library staff by his suggestion that a separate state archives should be set up, with the printed material held by Mitchell Library forming “an adjunct library ... in such an institution.”¹⁵⁰ In other words, he saw the library as a subsidiary of the archives, rather than the other way around as it then was.

Gordon Richardson became Principal Librarian in 1959 when John Metcalfe moved to the University of New South Wales as University Librarian and Director of the School of Librarianship. Like his predecessor, Richardson firmly believed the Public Library should retain control of the archives, prompting him to write to the Minister

about the “urgent need for archival legislation” in order to “legalise the present ‘de facto’ State archives”.¹⁵¹

In the early months of 1959 the Royal Australian Historical Society again came into the picture when it established a Records Survey Committee that included David MacMillan and Marjorie Jacobs amongst its members.¹⁵² MacMillan considered himself the only trained archivist in New South Wales, and this gave him a special standing in some quarters. These two remained at the forefront of the campaign to separate archives from libraries, but did not overtly use the RAHS Committee for this purpose. Ostensibly, the Records Survey Committee was more interested in the Society’s own “sadly neglected” archival material of manuscripts, maps and pictures.¹⁵³ The stated purpose of the Committee was “to publicise...the nature and quality of the historical records available in History House.”¹⁵⁴ Their wider campaign may have been thwarted after Gordon Richardson was elected Vice-President of the Society in 1962. One can imagine that there were energetic discussions between the protagonists behind the scenes.

Public concern about the official records erupted once again when the tabloid *Sun* newspaper published an article in September 1959 showing a photograph of the “firetrap” at Shea’s Creek, and claiming that it only needed one tiny spark “to send most of the rich, documented history of New South Wales up in smoke.”¹⁵⁵ The Trustees of the Public Library claimed that one reason for the reluctance of some departments to transfer their records was their fears about the safety of the Shea’s Creek repository, but that departments would be happy if their records were kept in the secure environment of the expanded Public Library.¹⁵⁶ This was a reversal of the previous argument that departments were reluctant to place records in the hands of the Trustees.

As Director-General of Education, Dr Wyndham was also one of the Library Trustees, but he believed the library and archival functions should be separated, perhaps influenced by the semi-clandestine meeting reported by Marjorie Jacobs. At the beginning of 1960 the Department of Education argued that it might not be prudent to burden the part-time Trustees of the Public Library with the additional responsibility of managing the State archives, noting that they may not be able to gain the co-operation of other governmental agencies “which are very jealous of their traditions and standing.”¹⁵⁷

Whatever the background, Dr Wyndham certainly ensured that the Royal Australian Historical Society was kept informed, regularly advising the Council of the Society about developments in the preparation of the Archives Bill that was expected to come into effect in 1961.¹⁵⁸ There appears to have been little consultation with the other Trustees of the Public Library.

The Chairman of the Public Service Board expressed reservations, but the government accepted Wyndham’s advice despite the fact that it was likely to be a more costly option, with the added administrative burden of a separate organisation. The press reported that an Archives Authority would be established, chaired by a judge, but this proved to be inaccurate.¹⁵⁹ The first Chairman appointed to the Authority was Dr Wyndham, with Gordon Richardson as the first Principal Archivist, in addition to his existing functions as Principal Librarian and Mitchell Librarian. To this extent, there was still an indivisible link between the Authority and the Library, minimising the risk of conflict between the institutions. At the same time, bureaucratic fears about control by the Library were assuaged.

The Minister for Education, Hon. E. Wetherell, introduced the Bill in the Legislative Assembly on 15 October 1960.¹⁶⁰ Two of the Members were Trustees of the Public Library, but they strongly supported the legislation even though it took a different direction from that favoured by other Trustees. The Bill was a non-partisan measure that nobody challenged, so was quickly passed by Parliament, with the Act receiving the Governor's assent on 17 November 1960.¹⁶¹ An interesting feature of the Parliamentary debate was the strong advocacy from rural constituents. Four of the seven Members who participated, including the Minister, represented regional electorates. Two of the city members were Trustees of the Public Library, and argued strongly for the legislation even though it had taken a different direction from that favoured by the majority of Trustees for many decades.

Although the Act was much weaker than its proponents may have wished, it was pioneering legislation for Australia, with New South Wales being the first government to establish an independent statutory body with sole responsibility for official archives. It was not, however, the first legislation to require the preservation of government records. That distinction went to South Australia, which established a State Archives Department in 1919 and passed legislation in 1925 to prohibit the destruction of official documents without the approval of the Libraries Board of South Australia.¹⁶²

The Trustees of the Public Library accepted defeat graciously. In their final annual report while they were still directly responsible for the archives, the Trustees recorded their pleasure that legislation had at last been enacted, and that one of their number had been appointed Chairman of the Archives Authority, with the Principal Librarian to become the Principal Archivist. They noted that the Authority had accepted their offer to provide accommodation within the Library, and to transfer to the Authority those public records already held by the Library.¹⁶³

As the Minister for Housing, Hon Abram Landa, remarked during the debate in the Legislative Assembly:

Even if this bill is not acclaimed by the multitude, as it deserves to be, those who know life, learning and history will recognise the work done by the trustees and officers of the Public Library of New South Wales and the Mitchell Library.¹⁶⁴

CHAPTER 3 – Pioneering Legislation 1961 to 1975

“The hopes and expectations of fifty years had at last been realised.”¹⁶⁵

The Archives Act came into effect on 1 June 1961, when the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and seven members of the Archives Authority were appointed, together with a Principal Archivist. Members were chosen by the government to represent particular stakeholders – the legislature, judiciary, the Trustees of the Public Library, the Director-General of Education, the Public Service Board, other public agencies, and three members to represent universities and historical or archival bodies. Effectively, these members became the board of directors of the new corporate body. The Authority held its first meeting at the Public Library four weeks later, on 29th June, with the Minister for Education present.¹⁶⁶ The chairman was Dr H.S. Wyndham, Director-General of Education.

It was a time when some traditional Australian values were being challenged by radical social changes. The better-educated, more affluent community that was emerging in the 1960s was interested in heritage conservation, both cultural and environmental, as well as issues such as feminism and multiculturalism that were unfamiliar to older generations.¹⁶⁷ It was also the period when a committee of educationists led by Dr Wyndham was planning a transformation of the New South Wales secondary school system. The eponymous Wyndham Scheme introduced in 1962 provided a system of comprehensive co-educational high schools that brought six years of secondary education within reach of all adolescents, rather than being limited to an elite few.¹⁶⁸

Transition to the new agency was helped by the more responsive attitudes of the Public Service Board following the sudden death of its chairman, Wallace Wurth in 1960. He had exerted autocratic powers, and was a supporter of those departmental heads who did not want their official records to fall into the hands of others. The new chairman, J.W. (later Sir John) Goodsell, stated that the Public Service Board “should guard against concerning itself too much with detailed administration at the expense of major policy issues.”¹⁶⁹ This was the beginning of a revolution in public administration.

The stipulated purpose of the Archives Authority was to

undertake the preservation, storage and arrangement, repair, cataloguing and calendaring, and have the custody and control, of the State Archives and shall have the management of the Archives Office of New South Wales.¹⁷⁰

The Archives Authority was a statutory body, independent of any other government agency although it was required to report annually to Parliament through the Minister for Education. This independence mollified the reluctance some departments felt about transferring official records to the Trustees of the Public Library. Even so, the Authority would need to foster an atmosphere of trust and co-operation in order to be effective. Because of the high profile of Authority board members, they were able to use their position and influence to encourage departments to hand over records they previously regarded as their own property.¹⁷¹ Gentle persuasion seemed to be the best strategy, at least initially until the Authority had earned the confidence and respect of government agencies.¹⁷²

NOMENCLATURE OF THE LIBRARY

To understand the evolution of the Archives Authority as described in this chapter, it is necessary to recognise that the administration of the Public Library was itself undergoing changes during this period.

The **Free Public Library** was established on 1 October 1869 when the government purchased the private **Australian Subscription Library**, founded in 1826. Prompted by bibliophile David Scott Mitchell's offer to bequeath his unrivalled collection to the Free Public Library, on specific conditions, the government created the **Public Library of New South Wales** in 1899, controlled by fifteen Trustees. In 1969 the name was altered to the **Library of New South Wales**, managed by a Council of eleven persons. Six years later, in 1975 the name was further amended to become the **State Library of New South Wales**, under the direction of the Library Council of New South Wales consisting of thirteen persons.¹⁷³

At the first meeting of the Authority a message of goodwill was received from the Trustees of the Public Library, offering accommodation and all available facilities for its activities.¹⁷⁴ The Authority reciprocated by paying tribute to the Trustees' "active interest in the preservation of State archives."¹⁷⁵ Following these formalities, the Authority immediately settled down to serious business – recommendations for the disposal of certain records from the Department of Education and the Clerks of Petty Sessions. Fortunately, the Authority inherited an organisation that was already functioning tolerably well, and so could take over the archives, thirteen staff and supporting services of the Public Library's archives department as the nucleus for the new Archives Office of New South Wales. Everybody continued working at their customary desks in the Mitchell Library building without interruption. In most respects it was business as usual.

The transition was smooth because the Principal Archivist was also the Principal Librarian of the Public Library, as well as Mitchell Librarian. Gordon Richardson was a forceful administrator who was meticulous about details and expected staff to share his ideals. Perhaps due to his military experience, he maintained a hierarchical structure with a clear chain of command, and as was common with managers of his generation never used first names when speaking to staff. According to his successor, Richardson always "went by the book", whereas his predecessor, John Metcalfe, "probably felt he was inventing the book."¹⁷⁶

G.D. RICHARDSON – OUR FIRST PRINCIPAL ARCHIVIST

Gordon Dalyell Richardson, OBE, MA, FLAA, FRIPA was Principal Librarian of the Public Library as well as Mitchell Librarian from 1959, and became Principal Archivist in 1961 until he retired on 28 February 1973. Born into a farming family at Raymond Terrace in the Hunter Valley on 23 November 1917, he completed the Leaving Certificate at Maitland High School. He joined the NSW Public Service as a junior library assistant in 1934. For a short period he was Acting Librarian at Newcastle Technical College, but returned to the Public Library in 1938. He enlisted in the AIF in November 1939 soon after the outbreak of war with Germany, serving as an infantry officer with the 8th Division in Singapore. After the fall of Singapore he escaped to Sumatra but was captured by Japanese forces and became a POW in Changi.

He resumed work at the Library when war ended and completed BA and MA degrees at Sydney University, later visiting North America on a Carnegie Fellowship.¹⁷⁷ Following his retirement, Gordon Richardson lived in Scotland for a number of years before returning to reside in Canberra. His 1951 thesis for the Master of Arts dealt with the archives of the Colonial Secretary's Department, 1788-1856.

Over the years, a number of official records had fallen into private hands, so it became an objective of the newly formed Archives Authority to recover as many of these estrays as possible. Because there was no mandatory power to acquire them, there was no guarantee that certain important documents would ever form part of the archives, or that they would be stored in an appropriate environment. Gordon Richardson addressed groups such as the Book Collectors' Society of Australia – amongst whose members one might reasonably expect to find some offenders – to remind them that although it was not illegal to possess archival estrays acquired in good faith, any attempt to destroy or sell this material would be penalised. Richardson sought co-operation in returning archival material to public ownership by drawing attention to the principle of *respect des fonds* which asserted that the importance of archives was compromised unless documents were preserved as an integrated series that recorded the administrative structure and history of the agency that created them.¹⁷⁸ Over the next few years the Authority acquired a number of significant estrays, usually by purchase but sometimes by gift. The Principal Archivist was given approval to negotiate a reasonable price for these documents, subject to later confirmation by the Authority. If agreement could not be reached, the seller was reminded that it would be illegal to sell the documents elsewhere.¹⁷⁹ For several years, almost every meeting of the Board dealt with further acquisitions, but sometimes estrays were easier to recover. After it was discovered that three volumes of convict indents were missing from the NSW archives, it transpired that these were held by the Public Record Office in London (now the National Archives). When the Archives Authority asked for them to be returned, the PRO gladly did so.¹⁸⁰

Another issue that emerged quite early in the Authority's existence, and which would become the subject for frequent discussion until clear guidelines were determined, was the question of lending archival documents to other institutions. In September 1961 the Chairman announced that in his capacity as Director-General of Education he had agreed to a request from Lane Cove Municipal Council that the original school register for the area could be exhibited at the Town Hall for an indefinite period. This action provoked debate about whether a public office such as the Department of Education had any power to lend what were public archives.¹⁸¹ It may have been an error of judgement on Dr Wyndham's part, but the Authority endorsed his action "in this particular case." By the following year, the Authority's attitude was clarifying. When an infirm older researcher offered a cash surety if he could work on archival documents at home, the Authority decided "that it would be undesirable to allow any public archives to go out of official custody, whatever the circumstances."¹⁸² This policy has not been applied rigidly, because from time to time particular items are lent to museums or libraries for exhibitions, under strict conditions to minimise the risk of damage.

The Act stipulated that the Authority should establish an office and repository to be known as the 'Archives Office of New South Wales'. Extensions to the Public Library building were constructed to house the archives, so that in December 1961 the Archives Office moved into three newly completed floors in the southeast wing of the Library, air-conditioned and fitted with 12km of mobile shelving which was expected to be sufficient for several years' growth. The move was not entirely trouble-free, because although the new floors had been reinforced to carry the weight of the "Compactus" mobile shelving, one of the concrete floors sagged, and required immediate rectification.¹⁸³ Proximity to the unrivalled collection of Australiana in the Mitchell Library was expected to be a boon to researchers who had previously found much of the archival collection inaccessible. They now would be able to use original

material from both collections at the same location, as well as books from the Library. From 1966 an archives officer was always supposed to be available in the Mitchell Library reading room, or at least on call, but sometimes this did not happen, to the annoyance of Library staff who had to deal with disappointed readers.

Dawn Troy, who later became Assistant Principal Archivist, remembered the stultifying conservatism of Australia at that time. Women readers in the Mitchell Library customarily wore hats and gloves, “rather like going to church.” Female archival staff also had to observe strict dress codes, which were closely monitored by Gordon Richardson. Although junior officers were predominantly female, the higher levels were reserved for men in accordance with a traditional public service view that women should not occupy management positions.¹⁸⁴

With the exception of documents such as those relating to convicts or mental hospitals, accredited readers could access any archival material more than fifty years old. In general, approval was only granted to serious researchers or advanced students, although exceptions were made “if someone had a good story”, in Dawn Troy’s words. Initially, a Mitchell Library reader’s ticket was accepted as evidence, but from 1966 all users of the archives had to possess a separate ticket issued by the Archives Authority, even though the institutions shared the reading room. Readers were required to stipulate the purpose and subject of their research, and frivolous requests were rejected. Genealogical research was not encouraged. Indeed, a former Mitchell Librarian recalled that some librarians regarded family historians like vermin, to be stamped out.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the rather onerous restrictions imposed by the Mitchell Library eased gradually because the Archives Authority was mindful of trends towards greater transparency and accountability in public administration. Records became available up to thirty-five years from date of creation, although public offices could still impose a longer period of restriction if they wished.¹⁸⁶ This access period was reduced to thirty years in 1972, in line with common international practice. At this time the Authority had a clear view of where its primary responsibility rested when it asserted:

That its first duty lies in the preservation and maintenance of the permanently valuable records of the State, notwithstanding that their official use may be overshadowed by the use made of them by private research workers.¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, the closing of particular records beyond that time was limited to those relating to individuals where the Authority believed it would not be in the public interest to make the information generally available.¹⁸⁸

A later Principal Archivist, John Cross, who started work at the Public Library in 1963, recalls that the accommodation for the archival staff was “absolutely diabolical”.¹⁸⁹ Fifteen years later when the young Baiba Irving started her career in the Archives Office the situation had not improved; in her words, “the conditions were appalling”.¹⁹⁰ The archives were located in the diametrically opposite corner of the building from the Mitchell reading room, and several floors below. This meant that material requested by researchers had to be wheeled through the building, a journey that could take fifteen minutes. Some of the additional space created in the building extension had been absorbed by the Public Library for its own expanding collection, rather than becoming a dedicated archives stack as intended. No area had been planned for the people who worked there, so Archives Office staff were located in odd corners, without natural light or fresh air; because of the low ceiling in the stacks, tall people like Cross bumped their heads on air conditioning ducts or water pipes. Morale suffered further because of suggestions that under-performing staff

from the Library were transferred to the Archives where they would be out of sight.¹⁹¹ It was these working conditions that convinced John Cross that the two organisations should be separated.

Unsatisfactory working conditions were not unique to the Archives Office or unfamiliar to Public Library staff. As early as 1905 the Trustees had written about their premises in Bent Street:

Nearly all of the staff are working under conditions which are far from healthy, and on many days, especially in still muggy weather, the reading rooms are most uncomfortable and injurious to the health of those whose duties keep them there for several hours at a time.¹⁹²

Occupational health and safety legislation was not introduced until 1983.

Archival work during the 1960s concentrated on the core activities stipulated in the Act: appraisal, arranging and describing the State archives, and providing reference services.¹⁹³ Staff for the Archives Office were seconded from the Public Library, but functioned as an autonomous unit within the same building. Tellingly, Russell Doust felt that the Library Trustees were “not the least interested in what the Archives were doing” once their building extensions were completed.¹⁹⁴ Archives Office staff learnt on the job, because there was no professional training for archivists in Australia at that time, although many were qualified librarians. Doust considered that the duties of archivists and librarians were so closely linked that they could readily move from one field to the other; he believed basic principles were similar even though documents were dealt with in different ways. This view was strongly contested by the younger generation of archivists, who struggled for years to differentiate between the occupations. A specialist course only became available when the University of NSW commenced teaching the discipline in 1973, after Peter Orlovich from the Archives Office moved there as inaugural lecturer. John Cross suggests the difference is not so much in the nature of the work, but in the personality types who are attracted to each profession. Whereas archivists like to work quietly on original documents by themselves, librarians are more focussed on helping people to locate suitable resources. As a result, librarians regarded archivists as aloof beings who considered themselves a superior breed.¹⁹⁵

From its inception, a significant part of business at each meeting of the Archives Authority consisted of the “Disposal Recommendations” from staff, made after assessing a request from the department concerned. These recommendations were sometimes modified by a decision to retain a sample of the records, along the lines “that sufficient records are preserved as State archive to illustrate the normal functions of the Department.”¹⁹⁶ By measures such as this, the Authority hoped to satisfy the competing needs of departments to save storage space, and future researchers inquiring into the activities of a particular official agency. To some extent, neither group of users were fully satisfied by the compromise.

The Archives Office in the Public Library building provided storage only for the most significant state archives. Officially, the Government Records Repository at Shea’s Creek was the responsibility of the Public Service Board rather than the Archives Authority, but because their staff were involved with the storage and availability of public records held there, the Authority always included a report on the Repository in its annual report. The *Archives Act* required the Authority to establish a repository, but clearly Shea’s Creek could only be a temporary expedient until a purpose-built facility could be constructed.¹⁹⁷

In 1962 Gordon Richardson began looking for prospective sites on the northern side of Sydney Harbour. One near Berowra railway station seemed a possibility except that it was high-value land in private ownership. Vacant land adjoining railway lines was considered, but any available sites were much too small. A site in St Ives earmarked for a future university was rejected because of the lack of public transport. The search then spread to the west and south of the city.¹⁹⁸ A joint Committee on Future Accommodation for State Archives and Library Books inspected several potential sites but was not enthusiastic about them. When the Chief Secretary, Hon. C.A. Kelly, suggested that the Authority could take over a historic home “Woolstone” at Kelso, near Bathurst, this proposal was rejected quickly.¹⁹⁹

Eventually about 20ha of rural land on the corner of Bringelly and Caddens Roads, Kingswood, near Penrith on the western fringe of Sydney was acquired.²⁰⁰ Evidently the lack of public transport was no longer regarded as an obstacle. Russell Doust, who was Senior Archivist at the time, recalls inspecting the site with Dr Wyndham, when they decided this would be an ideal location.²⁰¹ So suitable did it appear that no other sites were considered. Protracted negotiations were necessary before the site was purchased more than twelve months later. Although the Authority had now obtained a large site, the government had not committed any funds to design the buildings, let alone finance the construction.

By the end of 1964 the existing repository was completely filled with records due to the imminent move by government departments into the new State Office Block on the old Public Library site at the corner of Macquarie Street and Bent Street, where there would be little storage space.²⁰² Part of the adjacent Shed 66 at Shea’s Creek was acquired to provide additional space, but until this was ready no further records could be accepted for storage.²⁰³ Even that space was filled by the end of 1965. To cope with the impending crisis, the basement of a former tramway substation in Margaret Lane was rented to provide storage for another 1,000m of records.²⁰⁴ The Archives Authority was becoming alarmed by the situation, in particular its own potential liability in the event of a disaster such as a fire at Shea’s Creek. It informed Parliament in 1965 that

The Authority wishes to place on record that it cannot accept responsibility for the safekeeping of a large quantity of essential documentary records of the State while they continue to be stored in the present unsatisfactory and unsafe buildings.²⁰⁵

Whether any parliamentarian noticed this disclaimer in small print in the middle of what looked like a routine annual report is a moot point.

Certainly it did not deter the Parliamentary Librarian, who asked the Archives Authority whether space would be available in the Kingswood repository for little-used books from the Parliamentary Library. The Authority responded that this might be available at a later stage, but in the first instance it was only planned to house public records.²⁰⁶ During this period of a Cold War between the Soviet Union and its satellites and the United States and its allies, the Trustees of the Public Library were also looking for suitable space in which they could “ensure the preservation of unique and valuable items in their various collections in the event of sudden enemy action.”²⁰⁷ An underground vault at the proposed Kingswood repository was thought to be a possible solution, so a joint committee of Library and Archives Authority representatives was established to explore this. Fear of a nuclear confrontation was often an undercurrent in political thinking in the nineteen-sixties when a so-called ‘Cold War’ prevailed between the Soviet Union and its satellites and the United States

and its allies. With this prospect in mind, there were plans to erect the archive buildings on the western side of a hill, sheltered from a nuclear blast that might destroy Sydney. The Trustees of the Public Library were also looking for suitable space in which they could “ensure the preservation of unique and valuable items in their various collections in the event of sudden enemy action,” reminiscent of their response during World War II. An underground vault at the proposed Kingswood archives repository was thought to be a possible solution, so a joint committee of Public Library and Archives Authority representatives examined this concept. Realists argued that if Sydney was annihilated, whether or not the archives survived was a somewhat incidental consideration.

While the Department of Public Works agreed that protection against attack was technically feasible, the issue was really one of securing funding for a new building in whatever form it might take. For the next ten years there was a continuous flow of correspondence between the interested parties. Successive Government Ministers supported the proposal for a repository but always regretted that funds were not available.²⁰⁸ The former owner of the land then was granted a five-year lease for the area planted with grape vines, so that he could continue fruit growing.²⁰⁹ At the same time a small cottage on the site was leased to a local public school principal. A new building was beginning to look like a pipedream.

Although the storage problems were an ongoing concern for the Archives Authority, board members and staff took umbrage when a tabloid newspaper published a sensationalist article headlined ‘Can’t be found! Chaos in Government files.’²¹⁰ Board member Mervyn Gray who was Under Secretary of the Premier’s Department made enquiries and found that the article was a complete fabrication by a reporter; the Acting Premier decided that no reply was called for.²¹¹

Most citizens probably had no idea that official archives existed, let alone what they were, so the Authority was pleased when ABC Radio broadcast a series of fifteen talks in 1967 called “From the State Archives”, and reported a good response from listeners.²¹² These talks presented by staff from the Archives Office or well-known historians covered popular topics such as ‘The Voyage to Australia’ (Philip Geeves), and ‘Captain Moonlight’ (Russell Doust).

It will be recalled that Allan Horton became the first Archives Officer when the Public Library started its Archives Department in 1953. His career progressed through the Public Library ranks until 1965, when he succeeded John Metcalfe in the position of University Librarian at the University of NSW. In June 1967 Horton resumed his affiliation with the archives when he was appointed to the Archives Authority to replace Metcalfe when he retired. Horton served on the Archives Authority for ten years, a critical period where his extensive experience and firm opinions proved invaluable.

Later in 1967 Russell Doust went to North America with Ross Bonthorne from the Government Architect’s Office to inspect archive repositories in the USA and Canada as a prelude to beginning design work. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which had microfilmed genealogical records held in the NSW archives during 1961-2, sponsored this trip. In return for this privilege, the Church invited Doust to a conference in Salt Lake City, from where he and Bonthorne travelled to inspect other archives.²¹³

Meanwhile, the condition of much of the material held by the Archives Office was desperate:

Some thousands of volumes of State archives are in very bad condition and have to be held together with straps. Use of these volumes is causing further deterioration. There is an even greater number of volumes whose bindings are rotting and need treatment, while many thousands of individual documents require expert attention if they are to survive.²¹⁴

The conservation staff at the Public Library were able to help to a limited extent by rebinding some volumes, but they naturally gave priority to their own work. Until a specialised facility was available for the archives, the best that could be hoped for was to preserve particularly valuable items, and to keep those which were in constant use in reasonably good repair.²¹⁵

At the end of 1968 Dr Wyndham retired as Director-General of Education, and therefore as chairman of the Archives Authority. He had guided the organisation through seven and a half formative years and set a clear pathway for the future. For his services to education he was knighted as Sir Harold Wyndham the following year. As provided in the *Archives Act*, the new Director-General, Mr H.L. Yelland filled the vacancy on the Authority, and was in turn appointed Chairman.

Despite dedicated efforts by archival staff to rationalise the growing mass of paper, the ground floor in a two-storey plastics factory at 127 Rookwood Road, Yagoona was leased from 1971 to 1975 - later extended to 1979 - to provide nearly 7km additional shelving space. Although not ideal, this brick building was equipped with fire sprinklers, so it was decided to move there those archives and semi-permanent records "whose loss in the event of disaster would cause the greatest difficulty in the conduct of government."²¹⁶ That decision may simply have substituted one risk (water damage) for another (fire). Adding to the pressure, the building in Margaret Lane had to be vacated in 1972 because the owners wished to re-develop the site. By 1973 this meant that new accessions had to be stacked on the floor in the repositories, between existing rows of shelving.²¹⁷

One possible solution to the storage problem not actively explored at this time was to make greater use of decentralised regional repositories. The University of New England raised this possibility with Education Minister R.J. Heffron and the local Member of Parliament for Armidale, Davis Hughes, in October 1959.²¹⁸ During the debate in the Legislative Assembly when the Bill was introduced, several Members spoke on the same issue.²¹⁹ The Archives Act indeed made provision for the establishment of branches of the Archives Office. There was strong resistance within the Public Library however, both from the Archives Officer, Allan Horton and Gordon Richardson, who were confirmed centralists.²²⁰ Horton did concede that shire and municipal council records could be kept in the local public library, apparently on the assumption that such material would be of purely local interest.²²¹

The growth of regional universities and major regional libraries offered the prospect of a dispersed collection that would be closer to many users. Obviously this would be cheaper than setting up branches of the Archives Office in selected centres. Active and articulate local historical societies, often with considerable political influence, were determined to retain local records within institutions in their own region.²²² There was a large amount of unique and valuable material already held outside Sydney. In particular, local land records were primary documents for the study of land use because the Head Office records were arranged chronologically rather than by district, making them particularly difficult to use. Somewhat tentatively, the University of New England in Armidale was offered the long-term loan of records relating to that region that were not required as State archives, to be made available

to the public on prescribed conditions.²²³ Newcastle Public Library accepted a similar offer of archives formerly held in the Land Board Office at East Maitland.²²⁴

However, when a local historical society asked for particular records to be transferred to its care, the Archives Authority was adamant in asserting the fundamental principle that public records should remain in public custody.²²⁵ Within three years that policy on transfer of records was eased. By 1970 public records not required as State archives could be transferred to approved bodies, including local historical societies, if a department was satisfied that there would continue to be proper control over public access.²²⁶ In practice, very little changed because senior archivists were not supportive.²²⁷ The wishes of the legislators and the majority of Archives Authority members were thwarted by those practitioners who preferred a centralised collection.

Reviewing the legislation in 1967, Gordon Richardson as Principal Archivist commented that after five and a half years' experience it could be asserted that

While the Act is obviously not perfect, it nevertheless does represent the highest development in a formal statutory framework for the preservation of official archives that has yet been achieved in Australia.²²⁸

Annual reports of the Archives Authority regularly echoed these sanguine views about the functioning of the legislation, but Russell Doust in his 1969 Master of Librarianship thesis wondered whether it was "An Act with no teeth", because it was dependent upon voluntary co-operation rather than coercion. He noted the predilection of many government agencies to retain 'their' records as long as possible, particularly when they had ample (if unsuitable) storage space, and their reluctance to grant any form of public access.²²⁹ These obstacles would be pondered for the next thirty years.

THE CONVICT BIRTHSTAIN

Sensitivity about possible convict ancestors was still rife in the early 1960s. During the 19th century it had been a mark of shame. Prominent families did not want curious investigators to discover their possibly disreputable past. This meant that access to the original 1828 Census returns had been restricted for many years. The documents were locked in a specially built cedar cabinet and the officer responsible was required to keep the key on his person at all times, rather like senior hospital staff with access to the drugs cabinet. When the Census was transferred to the Archives Office in 1965, the Registrar-General ceremoniously detached the key from his watch chain and handed it to Russell Doust, who was Acting Principal Archivist. Russell was of a younger generation that did not wear a fob watch, but he still kept the key secure in his desk, although the information in the Census was then publicly available in Mitchell Library.²³⁰ John Cross later followed this precedent, but only because of the fragility and intrinsic worth of the documents, not the sensitivity of their contents.

As Babette Smith has observed, censorship of the convict records until the middle of the twentieth century created a major distortion of Australian history.²³¹ In December 1965, the Archives Authority resolved that there could be unrestricted access by approved persons provided that there was no publicity given to the change in rules, and that "no pain or embarrassment would be given to any living person."²³²

Attitudes changed when family researchers began using the archives to trace their ancestors, inspired by the forthcoming celebrations of Cook's mapping of eastern Australia in 1770. Within ten years any stigma had vanished, as genealogists began diligently searching the colonial records in the hope of locating a convict amongst their forebears, because for many people this had become a badge of pride as the bicentenary of European settlement approached.

Around this time, a marked change in enquiries became evident. Research into family backgrounds turned into a popular pastime, particularly after the formation of the 'Fellowship of First Fleeters'. For anybody living in New South Wales the archives contained a vast store of useful information. The Archives Office usually refused to issue readers' tickets to people tracing their own family history because of fear about damage to the delicate records; vestiges of attitudes learnt at Mitchell Library persisted. To cope with the increasing demand and to protect original documents, it was decided to make microfilm copies of the most-used records. Recognising that this project would take some time to accomplish, a small number of professional researchers were accredited to use the original records for genealogical searches on behalf of clients.²³³ It now became clear why the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ("The Mormons") wanted to copy genealogical records several years previously; like so many trends, the family history phenomenon had spread from the United States to Australia, and the Church was compiling an international database of family trees. The Archives Office held copies of these microfilms, but initially they were not widely available because of the lack of space and equipment in the Mitchell reading room. In 1974 the Genealogical Society of the Latter Day Saints was given approval to microfilm additional early records, including those related to convicts and to passenger arrivals. Because the Archives Office was given a copy of these microfilms, it made a valuable supplement to the Authority's own copying program and allowed public access to documents sooner than they otherwise would have been available.²³⁴ Although this was a pragmatic decision, it might be wondered why in a secular nation, a religious sect with only a tiny presence in Australia should be given favoured access to these records.²³⁵

Archive collections are rather meaningless unless some means of identifying and locating the material they contain is available. Ever since the establishment of the Archives Office there had been attempts to compile basic inventories, but other pressures on the small staff hindered the preparation of more descriptive reference tools. So readers were pleasantly surprised in 1970 when two important publications appeared: *Concise Guide to the State Archives of New South Wales* and a *Guide to Convict Records in the Archives Office of New South Wales*. These guides to the collection were not regarded as best practice by archival purists, because they combined material from several different record groups, but they were a realistic solution that met users' needs within a single volume.²³⁶ Other inventories also were nearing completion, due largely to the enthusiasm of Russell Doust and Dawn Troy for this work.

Present-day readers must remember that electronic data processing was in very early stages of development forty years ago. Today all archivists have a personal computer on their desks, but in 1970 a member of the Archives Authority board asked whether there were plans for the installation of a computer "if one should prove necessary in the future." Gordon Richardson responded it would be desirable to erect a separate building for the computer if one was needed, but there was sufficient space at Kingswood for this.²³⁷ In those days, a computer required special rooms in a closely controlled dust-free environment, and was used mainly for processing financial records or large membership databases. The application to library cataloguing or archival arrangement was hardly contemplated.

In April 1971, responsibility for administration of the Archives Authority was transferred from the Minister for Education to the Minister for Cultural Activities. This was a drastic downgrading in the Cabinet pecking order, and it briefly created an anomaly, because the *Archives Act* provided that the Director-General of Education

or his Deputy would be a member of the Authority.²³⁸ The Act was amended so that the Permanent Head of the Ministry of Cultural Activities would become a member of the Authority.²³⁹ Although it was not immediately apparent, the drop in status affected the credibility of the Archives Authority amongst other government agencies.

Towards the end of 1971 the Authority finally received word that the Premier had approved the preparation of working drawings for the proposed repository at Kingswood. This was pleasing news. The Authority considered requesting funds for additional rented accommodation while the repository was being built, but decided this was unwise tactically, because the Government might then say a new repository was not really needed. A better plan was to join with the Council of the Library of New South Wales in a joint deputation to the Minister to discuss accommodation requirements both for the Library and the Archives Office.²⁴⁰

The deputation met the Minister on 14 December 1971, but did not learn anything new; he was aware of the acute problems but could not indicate when funds for construction would be available.²⁴¹ A Parliamentary question about the proposed repository prompted a response from the Minister, and led to some publicity in local newspapers that helped to raise public awareness of the desperate situation.²⁴² These pressures may have influenced the government to allocate some funding in the 1972-73 budget. Russell Doust later remarked that few politicians were interested in preserving departmental records, let alone providing public access to them. It was politically easier to justify expenditure on new schools or hospitals rather than erecting a substantial building to accommodate the old files and other documents generated by the bureaucracy. Likewise, the Public Service Board tended to overlook the savings resulting from consolidating all government records in a single location.

Just when it seemed that work would commence on building the new repository, an unexpected hitch occurred. Towards the end of 1972 the State Planning Authority approached the Archives Authority asking whether because of objections from Penrith City Council, they would consider exchanging their land for another site of the same size about 1.5km to the east, fronting O'Connell Street, Kingswood. This would be in an area set aside for public buildings such as hospitals and colleges and would free the original site for low-cost housing development. Initially the Authority was hostile, pointing out that no objections had been raised during the ten years they had owned the land until construction was just about to begin.²⁴³ However, after inspecting the alternative site and receiving assurances that the construction timetable could still be met, the Authority approved the exchange and arranged for modified plans to be drawn up.²⁴⁴ Originally, the repository was to consist of as many as 36 independent units spread over the site, but this was later modified to provide larger buildings that offered similar security with more efficiency. Fears of nuclear attack had vanished by then; fortunately, because the new site was on the exposed eastern side of the hill.

Meanwhile, the lack of experienced archives staff created problems in processing the avalanche of documents that descended on them. Limited sorting space in the Library building, and the need to accommodate many accessions elsewhere aggravated their difficulties. It was estimated that seventy per cent of staff time had to be spent on duties other than the processing, arrangement, and description of records.²⁴⁵ The situation eased when four additional professional staff were recruited, but in the event much effort had to be diverted to preparing for the move to the planned new Repository at Kingswood.

Industrial strikes and disputes with sub-contractors slowed construction, but the first building containing fifteen 'cells' was ready for occupation in August 1974. The Authority calculated that three new 'cells' would be needed every year to keep pace with accessions.²⁴⁶ The original concept for a major facility of uniform design by then had been replaced by a decision to stage the project over several years, with additional buildings erected as required to meet the inexorable demand for space. That decision spread the cost over several budgetary periods and political terms, but it meant that an administration building with services for readers could not be provided initially.

When John Cross was promoted to Principal Archivist in 1980, he was presented with a *fait accompli* although personally he would have preferred a location that was more accessible to serious researchers. To him, a better solution would have been to take over a disused mental hospital or similar facility near Parramatta, where transport is reasonable, and staff and records could be moved easily between the repository and the city.²⁴⁷

Just when the Kingswood Repository was nearing completion, the re-named Library of New South Wales announced that it required at least one of the three floors occupied by the Archives Office for its own growing collection and staff. While there were plans to construct further extensions to the Library, these were delayed because of a proposed redevelopment of the adjoining Parliament House site.²⁴⁸ This meant that it soon would be necessary to relocate at least part of the Archives Office, so the Accommodation Section of the Public Service Board began looking for suitable premises that could be leased in the CBD. The tenth floor of the Centrepont Building in Market Street was considered satisfactory except for the poor climate control within the building, and had to be rejected when Treasury would not provide funds to modify the air-conditioning plant.²⁴⁹

Archive collections are fairly meaningless unless some means of identifying and locating the material they contain is available. Ever since the establishment of the Archives Office there had been attempts to compile basic inventories, but other pressures on the small staff impeded the preparation of more descriptive reference tools. Knowing this, readers were pleasantly surprised in 1970 when two important publications were released: *Concise Guide to the State Archives of New South Wales* and a *Guide to Convict Records in the Archives Office of New South Wales*. These subject guides were not considered to be best practice by archival purists, because they combined material from several different "record groups", but they were a pragmatic solution that met users' needs within a single volume.²⁵⁰ Other inventories were close to complete, due largely to the enthusiasm of Russell Doust and Dawn Troy for this work. The *Concise Guide* eventually developed into the present *Archives Investigator* website. In 1973 the important descriptive inventory *Colonial Secretary: Part II, Correspondence* was published, together with a *Supplement* to the *Concise Guide*. The Authority observed that

Its usefulness as an administrative tool alone compensates for the amount of staff time spent on its compilation, while its steadily growing circulation in Australia and overseas is an indication of its popularity with students and researchers.²⁵¹

The lack of experienced archives staff created problems in processing the avalanche of documents that descended on them. Their difficulties were aggravated by the lack of sorting space in the Archives Office, and the need to accommodate many accessions elsewhere. In 1972 it was estimated that seventy per cent of staff time had to be spent on duties other than the processing, arrangement, and description of

records.²⁵² The situation eased two years later when four additional professional staff were recruited, but in the event much staff time had to be devoted to preparing for the move to the new Repository at Kingswood.²⁵³

Gordon Richardson retired from his several positions at the beginning of 1973. In September of that year his deputy, Russell Doust was appointed Principal Librarian, but unlike Richardson he did not hold this appointment concurrently with that of Mitchell Librarian. Nor was Doust appointed Principal Archivist, although in effect he held the position in an 'Acting' capacity for the next three years. He did not see any conflict in performing both roles because he regarded the function of the chief executive of both organisations as an administrative rather than a technical one.²⁵⁴ Neither was Doust anxious to keep the archives within the library premises, indeed he encouraged the archives to re-locate in order to provide desperately needed additional space for the expanding Library collections and staff.²⁵⁵

Russell Doust was a less formal manager than his predecessor, allowing section heads to handle their responsibilities without close supervision. Doust's lighter touch extended in both directions; he considered that the board of the Archives Authority, like the Library Council, should restrict themselves to policy issues and should not be concerned with the operational details.²⁵⁶ Because he believed the Mitchell Librarian should have an extensive knowledge of Australian history, he appointed Suzanne Mourot to this position without consulting the Trustees. He admits this action was uncontentious because "the Trustees' obsession with men only" in senior positions had evaporated by then.²⁵⁷

RUSSELL DOUST – ACTING PRINCIPAL ARCHIVIST, 1973-1976

Russell Fletcher Doust, BA, MLib, FLAA was born on 19 September 1927. His father was a Methodist minister, and the family lived in rural NSW before coming to Sydney. Russell completed the Leaving Certificate at Sydney Boys High School. After contemplating a teaching career, he enrolled instead in the librarianship course run by the Public Library of NSW in 1944. Within a few months he was appointed as a Library Assistant, but after two years was seconded to various Teachers' College libraries, culminating with the new Alexander Mackie College at Paddington. Returning to the Public Library, he replaced David Bluford as Archives Officer in 1962, becoming Senior Archivist at the end of that year. During this time he completed an Arts degree as an evening student at the University of Sydney, and subsequently a Master in Librarianship degree from the University of New South Wales in 1969, for a thesis on the administration of official archives in NSW from 1788-1960.²⁵⁸

In December 1970 he was appointed Deputy Principal Librarian of the Library of New South Wales before becoming Principal Librarian and Acting Principal Archivist in September 1973. He held the latter position until 1976, although he continued as Principal Librarian until 1987. After his retirement, Russell Doust moved to England for several years before returning to live in Canberra, where he became active in the Friends of the National Library, while continuing his interests as a writer and musician.

Throughout almost the entire period of Doust's term as Acting Principal Archivist the chairman of the Archives Authority was J.W. Davies, the only person to have occupied the Chair without an obvious background in educational or cultural affairs. Jack Wallis Davies was at this time deputy chairman of the Public Service Board, after a career devoted to financial and administrative roles in the public sector.²⁵⁹ He was undoubtedly appointed to keep a watchful eye on the Authority, although Doust recalls that his involvement was insignificant. That was not the perception of John Cross, who regarded Davies as an outstanding chairman - active and dynamic. At

their first meeting, Davies, as the newly appointed chairman visited Cross, then Senior Archivist, in the latter's office in the "dungeon" at the Public Library. Cross recollects Davies' opening remark: "I'm going to get you out of this dump for a start", and soon proved true to his word.²⁶⁰ Because of his position at the Public Service Board he was able to exert more influence with the decision-makers than his predecessor could.

Management practices in both the public and private sector faced reform during the 1970s when old methods based on tradition or learning through on-the-job experience were replaced by efforts to apply scientific principles to commercial businesses as well as public administration. Universities opened postgraduate management schools to provide an academic qualification as well as intensive shorter training courses for existing administrators. The Public Service Board responded to these innovations when J.H. (later Sir Jack) Dickinson became Chairman in 1971. In 1974 the Archives Office was required to prepare a Corporate Plan of Objectives that it aimed to achieve in the following year.²⁶¹ As the Acting Principal Archivist pointed out to the Authority, the plan did not contain anything revolutionary because essentially the objectives of the organisation remained the same. Nevertheless, the opportunity was taken to point out that the existing shared arrangements for management of the Government Records Repository were not satisfactory. Unless additional resources could be provided, it would be better to transfer this responsibility to some other body, Doust argued.²⁶²

Particularly worrying were the haphazard records management procedures of some government agencies. This was intensified by a perception that records offices were "personnel rubbish dumps" for inferior employees.²⁶³ When John Cross inspected the archival records stored at Gladesville Psychiatric Hospital in March 1973, he was dismayed at what he discovered. Files were kept in an attic with broken windows, located above an old laundry; some were stacked on shelves, but many were strewn on the floor and damaged beyond recovery.²⁶⁴ Although the Archives Authority did not have a direct responsibility for improving the standard, it did have a vital interest in achieving this objective, as ultimately the documents were likely to end up in its care. At the Authority meeting on 11 October 1974 it was resolved to approach the Public Service Board,

Stressing the importance of records management as a means of obtaining systematic control over the creation, maintenance, retention and disposal of records, and of ensuring rapid retrieval of information and the economic use of storage space.²⁶⁵

The Authority emphasised the need for creating awareness amongst all levels of the Public Service of the benefits that could be achieved, and suggested that the salary and status of departmental records officers should be reviewed. To set an example, the Authority appointed John Partridge as its first Records Manager in 1974, and reported an immediate improvement in the management of semi-current records stored in the Repository.²⁶⁶

As a result of the approach, the Public Service Board established a Task Force in March 1975 to investigate the situation and recommend any necessary remedial action. Leader of the Task Force was I.R. Roe, Assistant Secretary of the Police Department, together with Dawn Troy representing the Archives Office and J.D. Kelly representing the Public Service Board, with other senior public servants seconded temporarily to assist. Counterparts in public sector records management in the UK and Canada were also consulted.

The Task Force soon realised that existing practices were inconsistent: in some cases records were destroyed without authorisation, while in other instances they were retained longer than necessary, thus exacerbating the already critical storage problem. Rumour alleged that to avoid repercussions, timid officials would set the retention date to coincide with their retirement from the public service. It recommended many significant changes, including the physical and administrative separation of the Archives Office from the Library. The Task Force also recommended that a Records Management Division be created within the Archives Authority to oversee the practices adopted by public agencies in handling their records, in a re-named "Archives and Records Management Office of N.S.W."²⁶⁷ Two Public Service Board inspectors wrote a report criticising the recommendations, but the Board supported the proposal for a Records Management Office (RMO).²⁶⁸ However, it decided to retain this function within its own jurisdiction, like the records repository, although both were under the supervision of the Principal Archivist. This divided responsibility created conflict between the Public Service Board, the Library, and the Archives Authority for several years, because each of these bodies had a different understanding of their role.²⁶⁹

The Public Service Board set up a steering committee to implement the other Task Force recommendations, as well as asking its Staff Development Division to look at improved training in records management practices for public servants.²⁷⁰ Existing practices were inconsistent: in some cases records were destroyed without authorisation, while in other instances they were retained longer than necessary, thus exacerbating the already critical storage problem.²⁷¹ A senior officer from the Police Department was given the task of reviewing the disposal dates of semi-current records held in the Repository, but he also made a number of recommendations about the procedures for handling this material. This was an important step, because while libraries are accustomed to receiving a few items from time to time that are then shelved permanently, semi-active official records arrive at the repository in truckloads, essentially becoming an exercise in materials handling. Other radical proposals included charging statutory bodies for using the Repository, and identifying potential archives before they came into the Authority's keeping.²⁷²

Historian Bede Nairn was one member of the Archives Authority who was impressed with the Task Force report, and the rapid action which flowed from it. He remarked that:

It was one of the most enlightened things that he had seen in either the Commonwealth or State Public Services and was a superb effort which could well set the pattern for development of records management in Australia for the next forty years.

Nairn believed that any lingering resistance came from departmental heads rather than middle-ranking officers, who generally recognised the importance of records management.

But there were also elements of resistance within the archival profession, some of whom feared their traditional role as custodians of precious historic documents would be supplanted by a new emphasis on "total documentation" that begins with the initial creation of records, and lasts until their ultimate disposal, later described as the "records continuum". Tasmanian archivist Peter Eldershaw was a progressive thinker who argued that unless the archivist embraced the enlarged role, "he [sic] will moulder in his ivory tower and ultimately defeat his own ends."²⁷³ Eldershaw further pointed out that the changed function meant that the remaining links between public

libraries and archival institutions had become inappropriate because their purpose was quite different.

From its inception, a significant part of business at each meeting of the Archives Authority consisted of the “Disposal Recommendations” from staff, made after assessing a request from the department concerned. These recommendations were always examined carefully, and sometimes modified. To select an example, when in December 1961 the Department of Child Welfare and Social welfare sought approval to destroy miscellaneous correspondence files for the year 1953, this was approved subject to the proviso “that sufficient records are preserved as State archive to illustrate the normal functions of the Department.”²⁷⁴ By measures such as this, the Authority hoped to satisfy the competing needs of departments to save storage space, and future researchers inquiring into the activities of a particular official agency.

When refraining from renting or building suitable storage space for the archives, it was easy for the Public Service Board to overlook the consequent savings within government departments that were usually situated in more expensive locations. Nor did the Board take account of the inefficiency and uneconomical management arising from an activity that was dispersed over several sites in different parts of the metropolitan area.

Right in the middle of the Task Force enquiry an unexpected distraction occurred. On 10 March 1975 a record-breaking rainstorm flooded Parliament House. The basement rooms holding the Legislative Assembly archives were flooded to a depth of one metre, seriously damaging historic manuscript records, which included correspondence to and from the Governor dating back to 1824. Dawn Troy, who was acting Senior Archivist immediately diverted Archives Office staff to the adjacent Parliament House to save as many of the sodden documents as possible.²⁷⁵ Although Parliament did not adopt a suggestion that its archives should remain with the Archives Office in future, the near-disaster may have remained in the minds of Parliamentarians when considering allocation of resources for the future development of the Archives Authority.

After fifteen years in the southeast wing of the State Library building, in August 1975 the government gave approval for the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority to construct a building for the Archives Authority in The Rocks area, with frontages both to Harrington Street and Globe Street.²⁷⁶ Planning began immediately, with construction starting early the following year. Unlike many projects planned for The Rocks that were halted by union Green Bans protesting against excessive development, there was no opposition to the archives building, because it was harmonious with the existing streetscape and filled an important social purpose.

The imminent separation of the archives from the library meant that Russell Doust could not expect to hold the dual positions of Principal Librarian and Principal Archivist as his predecessor had done. He had only retained the position of Acting Principal Archivist as an interim measure, and in the long run was probably glad to be able to devote his time to his first love, the library.

Relocation of the Archives Office to The Rocks would be clear evidence of its separation from the State Library, as the Task Force had recommended. To ensure that the Archives Authority would be managed as an independent entity, the position of Principal Archivist was advertised nationally, thus severing the remaining links.²⁷⁷

CHAPTER 4 – Divorce and Settlement 1976 to 1998

“The archival profession has ceased to be concerned, wholly or even primarily, with the preservation of records of the past for use by the present generation and has become involved with preserving the records of the present for future users.”²⁷⁸

When the Archives Authority became administratively separate from the State Library in 1976, Ian Maclean was appointed to the position of Principal Archivist.²⁷⁹ He thus became the first person to occupy the top managerial position for the state archives without also holding administrative responsibilities for the Library. Maclean is regarded as one of the founders of modern archival practice in Australia, with extensive experience both here and overseas, so the Government contemplated his appointment with some satisfaction.²⁸⁰

IAN MACLEAN – PRINCIPAL ARCHIVIST, 1976-1980

Ian Maclean, AM, BA(Hons) was born at Invercargill in New Zealand on 20 October 1919. He was educated at Scotch College and the University of Melbourne, where his father was a Professor of Theology. He served in the Army from 1941-1944, before taking up the position of Archives Officer with the Commonwealth National Library, where he remained until 1960. A travelling scholarship in 1958 enabled him to study archival practice in Europe and North America, and this greatly influenced his thinking.

In 1960 the Commonwealth Archives Office became a separate entity, with Ian Maclean as its Chief Archivist until 1968, when he was seconded to the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), remaining in Bangkok until 1974. Returning to Australia that year, he was briefly Director of the newly established Australian Archives before appointment as Deputy Keeper of Public Records in Victoria. In 1976 he was appointed Principal Archivist of the Archives Authority of NSW. For five months in 1977-8 he undertook a consultancy role in Kenya on behalf of UNESCO, for which he also served as a consultant in Burma and Fiji. Deteriorating health forced his retirement from the Archives Authority on medical grounds in 1980.

Outside his official duties, Ian Maclean had a reputation as a *bon vivant*, who also was involved in amateur theatre as an actor and director. In 1996 he was awarded Membership of the Order of Australia (AM), in recognition of his “service to the inauguration of the system of Australian Archives and to the development of the archival profession.” Annual Ian Maclean Awards are offered by the National Archives of Australia for innovative research that will benefit the archival and historical profession.²⁸¹ Ian Maclean died in Brisbane in 2003, at the age of 83.²⁸²

As the senior member of the existing staff, John Cross was somewhat ambivalent about not being selected for the top position, but nevertheless managed to work effectively with Ian Maclean, whose rather theoretical approach complemented his own more pragmatic inclinations.²⁸³ Ian Maclean had expected to be appointed Keeper of Public Records in Victoria, where his family resided, but when that did not eventuate, accepted the position in New South Wales. Facilities and staffing of the NSW operation were leaner than Maclean had been accustomed to, and he found the close scrutiny by Treasury and government Ministers somewhat stifling.²⁸⁴

Arising from the 1975 Task Force report, the Public Service Board created a Records Management Office (RMO) in March 1976, “to advise the Board and Departments on ways of achieving sound records retention and disposal policies, the economical use of storage facilities and the improvement of the record systems.”²⁸⁵ This was an area

in which Ian Maclean had considerable knowledge, and the RMO reported through him. Because he was not then in good health his contribution may have suffered, although he never showed a strong commitment to the Task Force recommendations.²⁸⁶ The earlier tensions between archivists and librarians now reappeared as a rivalry between archivists and records managers, which Maclean felt was counter-productive. In his view they were merely separate specialisations within the core archival profession.²⁸⁷

Dianne Patenall became Records Administration Officer, heading the Records Management Office. She had worked in the Archives Office previously, before studying records management practices on a scholarship at the Archives Nationales in France.²⁸⁸ Although there were fears that there might be some resistance to the intrusion of a new agency, in fact the response from government departments was favourable, with many requests for assistance.²⁸⁹ RMO staff visited many departments and began developing records training programs, while the Public Service Board decided to include records management as a strand in all its management training courses. Public offices now had to justify their retention of non-current records, or else dispose of them after appraisal, and the approval of the Archives Authority. The number of disposal recommendations almost trebled between 1976 and 1978.²⁹⁰

Although a building dedicated to the archives was now on the government agenda, this did not solve the immediate accommodation problem, which was aggravated by the appointment of additional staff to both the Archives Office and the Records Management Office. As a temporary solution the Public Service Board leased a floor of the new CAGA Centre in Bent Street to house the RMO and that part of the Archives Office that needed to work closely with it, as well as part of the State Library administration.²⁹¹ This partially fulfilled the Authority chairman's promise to find more acceptable accommodation, although the actual archives and the staff who serviced readers remained at the Library, under the direction of Dawn Troy, the Senior Archivist.

The cost of storing little-used public records had been kept in check by moving them to remote locations, but it was clear that the sheer quantity would eventually overwhelm the Kingswood repository as it had done at Shea's Creek. When the Minister for Services inspected the repository at the end of 1976, he was critical of the use of fixed rather than compact moveable shelving, and asked why the records were not all microfilmed in order to save space. It was pointed out that this would cost at least \$7 million, substantially more than the cost of new buildings of the current design.²⁹²

John Burke was appointed manager of the repository in early 1977, and immediately began introducing operational innovations. For the first time the repository had a professional archivist on-site full time. A Records Reduction Campaign was launched in 1977 to rationalise storage. Staff of the Archives Office examined records already held in the repositories, while the RMO conducted a stocktaking of records still held in government offices. By August of that year up to three hundred metres of records were destroyed each week.²⁹³ As part of this campaign, a more efficient storage scheme was devised, using a standardised style of carton designed by Ian Maclean; this resulted in an effective increase in storage capacity by one-third while eliminating the occupational hazard of handling larger boxes.²⁹⁴

It was obvious that additional storage space would be needed before long to accommodate the inexorable growth of records, despite the success of the records

reduction campaign. State Government budgets were unlikely ever to be large enough to meet this demand in the face of political pressures for schools, hospitals and infrastructure expansion. The original buildings at Kingswood based on discrete cells that could be replicated all over the large site had been an elegant solution, but not the most economical. In conjunction with the Department of Public Works, the Authority developed a simpler building style for the storage of those records that would only be retained for a limited time before disposal. This was a two-storeyed structure with compact mobile shelving, and not requiring air-conditioning. It was estimated that the cost for housing records in the first building of this type would be approximately two-thirds the cost per shelf/metre of the original design, and that future additions would reduce the unit-cost still further. In November 1977 work began on a building to the new specification.²⁹⁵

When Jenni Stapleton joined the staff in 1978 she volunteered to work at Kingswood, which then consisted of “a concrete bunker in the middle of a paddock, surrounded by cows.” As a young archivist, she never intended to stay long, but ended up spending her entire career there after a period at Shea’s Creek, becoming in time the Manager of the Government Records Repository (GRR), partly because she enjoyed the challenge of “bringing order out of chaos”.²⁹⁶

Without warning, responsibility for management of the repositories at Kingswood, Shea’s Creek and Yagoona was transferred to the Records Management Office in July 1977, because the Public Service Board believed that the Archives Office, as only one of several users of the repository, should not also control it.²⁹⁷ Effectively, the PSB was taking over the repositories, and in the opinion of Archives Authority member Justice J. H. Wooten, who was Chairman of the Law Reform Commission, “it is difficult to imagine more contemptuous treatment of a statutory authority, but reality steps in where imagination fails.” Faced with strong opposition, the Public Service Board relented, transferring management of both the Records Management Office and the Government Records Repository (GRR) to the Archives Authority in October 1978, coinciding with the move to The Rocks. Subsequent advice from the Crown Solicitor’s Office cast doubt on whether the Public Service Board could delegate its powers in this way, but that question remained unresolved until the enactment of new legislation in 1998.²⁹⁸

Under the new arrangement the Archives Office and the Records Management Office retained separate identities under the control of the Archives Authority.²⁹⁹ The Archives Office regained responsibility for the repositories, while the Records Management Office would be restricted to providing assistance with departmental recordkeeping. Placing both the RMO and the repositories under the supervision of Ian Maclean and the Archives Authority also caused some conflict amongst the staff, who felt their promotional prospects could be impeded by their transfer to a combined administration.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, it was a logical move given that the repositories required a considerable amount of professional archival work. In an effort to ease tensions, the Records Administration Officer was invited to be present throughout all bi-monthly Board meetings, in addition to the Principal Archivist and the Chief Archivist, who had always attended.³⁰¹

As well as this internal turmoil, a delicate political situation arose after press reports that Premier Neville Wran had instructed the Police Special Branch to stop keeping records on certain people, and to destroy all existing records about them.³⁰² The affected persons were under surveillance for potential subversive activity, but included members of social action groups, ethnic associations, and trade unions, as

well as some politicians and judges. The Privacy Committee report which triggered the Premier's reaction followed a controversy in South Australia where the Premier dismissed the Police Commissioner after the Commissioner refused to let him inspect Special Branch files. The Archives Authority considered that the NSW Premier's instruction to destroy such records contravened the Archives Act, which stipulated that the legal responsibility for disposal of public records rested with the Authority. Rather than engage in outright confrontation over this issue, the chairman of the Archives Authority wrote to the Under Secretary of the Premier's Department, stating that from a reading of the press statements it seemed the provisions of the Act "may have been overlooked."³⁰³ The Premier then agreed that the Commissioner of Police should consult the Authority before destroying Special Branch files that were no longer current.³⁰⁴ However, the Police did not accept that they were subject to the Archives Act, so the dispute dragged on for some time, until the newly appointed Police Commissioner instructed his staff to comply with the Act. Ironically, eleven years later the Police Service was criticised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption for failing to keep proper records of criminal activity.³⁰⁵ Undeterred by these directions, large quantities of the remaining Special Branch records were destroyed in 1994 shortly after the commencement of a Royal Commission of inquiry into the Police Service.³⁰⁶ Entrenched police culture was hard to overcome. But the issue did not rest then. In 1998 the Chairman of the Privacy Committee asked the Attorney General for special legislation to override the Archives Act so that all Special Branch records could be destroyed. The Archives Authority considered it was offensive to imply that the Authority could not make a proper decision in relation to these records, and requested the Premier to intervene.³⁰⁷ There appeared to be a growing tendency for privacy legislation to over-ride the Archives Act by authorising the destruction of records of a kind that might harm or embarrass individuals.³⁰⁸ This seemed to be a reversion to the years when convict records were expunged for the same reason.

At the end of 1978, the Archives Authority moved from the State Library and the CAGA Centre into its purpose-built six-storey building at The Rocks, known as "The State Archives", which had cost in the vicinity of \$7 million to construct and equip. When the City Search Room opened soon afterwards, the Archives Office for the first time had its own reading room and exhibition area, separate from Mitchell Library. Relocation was a major exercise in logistics, with 8 shelf-kilometres of books and documents to be packed for transportation in covered trucks between 6.00pm and 6.00am over four weeks. It could not simply be a transfer of everything to the new building, because there was much less storage space than at the Library. Dawn Troy and her team had to grade all the archives according to the likelihood of them being used, with the remainder sent to the repository at Kingswood.³⁰⁹ For three months during the transition period, researchers could not access the archival material.

Location of the building was singularly appropriate for housing the official records of early Australia, as it is very close to the place where Captain Arthur Phillip raised the Union Jack to mark the beginning of the colony of New South Wales on 26th January 1788. Surprisingly, media interest in the move was stronger in Canberra than in Sydney. In a lengthy article, the *Canberra Times* wrote that "almost two centuries of NSW history is about to be moved." The journalist noted that people had begun using archives more as "part of a swing to a 'Joe Blow' type of history as opposed to that of 'great men'."³¹⁰ There was still no search room at Kingswood, but the Authority ran a daily courier service between the two locations in a small air-conditioned van so that items requested by readers could be delivered to the city on the next working day.³¹¹

From the beginning, the Archives Office had gained a reputation for focussing on the needs of researchers, as shown in the preparation of the various *Guides* to the early records. It was a practice that contrasted with attitudes that were said to prevail in other archival institutions at this time, where public access was often resented rather than facilitated.³¹² This orientation developed further in the new location, where additional space and staff encouraged a more expansive policy of outreach to the community. Ideally, the Archives Authority would like to have employed an Education or Extension Officer, perhaps seconded from the Education Department, but requests for this support invariably failed.³¹³ As a substitute, two kits of facsimile documents were published for sale to secondary school history teachers – *The Changing Face of the Rocks*, and *Convict Case Studies*. Although not perfect, these were a useful resource in the new student-enquiry approach to the study of history.³¹⁴ Students now were expected to carry out research using original documents, but were effectively prevented from using the Search Room because readers' tickets could only be issued to people 18 or over. In 1992 the Archives Authority contemplated removing the age restriction entirely, but settled on reducing the minimum age to 15 years.³¹⁵

In the event, the Archives Authority did not get to occupy the whole of its new building, because the Public Service Board retained the top floors for its computer bureau, which like the archives, needed an environment with controlled temperature and humidity. This meant the shelving space was only about three-quarters of that available previously in the overcrowded Public Library building. Archival staff still had to cope with the awkward "stroke system" of identifying records that had been inherited from the Mitchell Library, where it provided a ready guide to where an item was located.³¹⁶ Obviously the correlation between stroke numbers and the relevant floor at the Library no longer applied, but nevertheless it was decided to persevere with this unique reference system rather than attempt to re-number the entire collection. In fact, additional "stroke numbers" were used in order to provide some reference to location at both The Rocks and the Kingswood repository.³¹⁷

Repair and preservation of the archives was an important function of the Archives Office that could never be properly be undertaken until the move to The Rocks, where a Conservation Laboratory was established, with an overseas consultant, John Davies, initially engaged for twelve months to advise on its equipment and operation.³¹⁸ It then became possible to repair maps and manuscripts and to treat documents for fungi and insect pests. Rebinding of archival records was carried out on site, but it was still necessary to have most binding and rebinding done elsewhere by specialist bookbinders.³¹⁹

The RMO was now beginning to exert its influence over public sector record keeping. Rather than imposing records disposal schedules, the RMO soon realised that they must be developed within the departments themselves to suit their particular needs.³²⁰ The innovative Keyword Method of Classification was introduced progressively in departments where it was expected to be suitable. Departmental officers were trained in the compilation of functional thesauri, and supporting publications were prepared. The RMO also acted in an advisory capacity to those agencies who wanted assistance in improving their systems.³²¹ To spread its message, a short promotional film *A Place for Everything* was produced in conjunction with students from the Film and Television Section of North Sydney Technical College.

While all this was going on, the Public Service Board itself was about to undergo a fundamental change, following recommendations made by Professor Peter Wilenski

in 1977. The Archives Office was involved indirectly when Baiba Irving was seconded to the Review Team to research the issue of equal employment opportunity.³²² According to Justice Michael Kirby, Wilenski “revolutionised the face of public administration in this country”.³²³ Responsibility was delegated to Departmental heads, who were given greater flexibility in staffing and administering their organisation, while retaining accountability to the appropriate Minister, subject always to budgetary constraints. The Board lost its function of recruitment and overall direction for the State’s public service, although it continued to handle industrial matters and provide management advice. With the shift in power, Gerald Gleeson, as Secretary of the Premier’s Department, became an authority figure to equal the legendary Wallace Wurth in the glory days of the Public Service Board.³²⁴

From time to time within the Archives Office there had been grumblings about the deficiencies in the 1960 Archives Act, and the need for new legislation. The essential weakness was that the legislation was reactive, addressing problems after they arose. Ian Maclean was asked to prepare a list of issues that should be considered, but when this came before the Board meeting in February 1979, members expressed strong reservations about attempting to amend the Act, preferring to work within the existing framework.³²⁵ This became a pattern for the next twenty years; for instance, when the question arose again in 1982, the Chairman said that amendments to the legislation could have unintended consequences, and other Board members agreed.³²⁶

The rented Yagoona Repository closed in March 1979, when all the records and staff were transferred to Kingswood, but the repository at Shea’s Creek continued to function as before. However, because funds were not available to construct the planned extensions at Kingswood, the Authority had to contemplate renting factory premises at Smithfield in order to cope with the expected growth.³²⁷ When that proposal did not proceed, the repositories were temporarily closed for the accession of semi-active records, which then simply accumulated in public offices. That made the Government acutely aware of the problem, so funds were allocated in the next Public Buildings Programme to construct the next stage of the Kingswood Repository.

Although the State Archives building offered superior facilities for historians and other researchers, many regretted the separation from the Mitchell Library reading room, where previously they could access original material from both collections concurrently. From the point of view of the Archives Office it had staffing implications as well, because there would no longer be ancillary support in the reading room from Library staff, which meant that the hours of opening must be reduced if additional staff could not be employed. At least the new building was still within the Central Business District of Sydney, easily accessible by public transport. This avoided the outcry that accompanied the removal of the English Public Record Office from central London to Kew. In fact, the State Archives building at The Rocks generated its own momentum, with an immediate increase in the number of users – 82 per cent in the first year of operation, but rising to a four-fold increase within five years.³²⁸

Additional staff had been sought in conjunction with the move to The Rocks, but less than half the requested increase could be provided because of the State’s difficult financial position. Although this helped relieve immediate pressures in the search rooms, it meant that much of the behind the scenes processing of records had to be curtailed.³²⁹ Even that turned out to be a short-lived reprieve; in October 1979 the Authority was informed that its authorised staff establishment had been reduced

from 68 to 51 positions. Naturally the Authority viewed this decision “with more than a little concern”. The Authority immediately asked the Public Service Board to reconsider the situation, which resulted in approval to employ additional temporary staff, and avoided the need to retrench existing staff.

The Archives Authority pointed out to the Government that the archives were not just an unimportant backwater, to be drained when finances were tight. Employment restrictions meant a reduction in the capacity to provide records and archives services to public offices, which in turn led to inefficiencies and extra costs throughout the Public Service.³³⁰ It was a false economy, the Authority argued, when departments were paying high rents for space within the inner city to house records that could be stored more cheaply in one of the repositories. Furthermore, the historic archives were an important cultural resource of the State, much valued by the community.

There was one remaining concern now that the Archives Authority clearly had the responsibility for managing the Kingswood repository. Who owned it? Could the Authority suddenly be evicted if the Government wanted the site for other purposes? The title deeds were vested in the Department of Public Works. The Authority wanted ownership in its own name and persistently sought clarification from the Premier on security of tenure. The best that could be achieved was a letter from the Secretary of the Premier’s Department, stating that:

I am informed that it is the policy of the Department of Public Works that all land acquired for or on behalf of another Department or Authority is held on trust for that department or Authority and no action is or will be taken in respect of the land without the concurrence and approval of the client Government body.³³¹

Meanwhile, the staffing situation did not improve. A proposal to restrict the Search Room opening hours drastically met with immediate disapproval from the Secretary of the Premier’s Department, who said this “would be badly received by the public and could embarrass the Government.”³³² With a diminished establishment available, it was decided that as far as possible, services to the public should be maintained at the expense of services to public offices. Five of the ten staff in the RMO then were transferred to the Archives Office. Halving the Records Management Office staff naturally affected the services it could provide, and coupled with the complaints already received from public offices following the temporary closure of the GRR, the Archives Authority decided to discontinue the Disposal Education Programme in September 1980. While it was gratifying to see the increased public awareness of the reference services available from State Archives, there was alarm at the detrimental effect this was having on the other core functions of records retention, storage and disposal.

John Cross was promoted to Principal Archivist in October 1980, following the retirement of Ian Maclean in July. Just before his appointment, Cross was invited by the Church of the Latter Day Saints to present papers at a World Conference on Records held in Salt Lake City, and like Russell Doust in 1967, took advantage of this trip to visit national archives in USA and Canada.

JOHN CROSS – PRINCIPAL ARCHIVIST, 1980-1999

Douglas John Cross, AM, BA, DipLib, ALAA was born in Arncliffe on 29 March 1940. His father was a builder, who became Mayor of Kogarah and later was elected as a Liberal Member of NSW Parliament for 22 years. John (as he was always known, because his father's first name was also Douglas) was educated at Hurstville South Primary School and Sydney Grammar School. After completing his BA degree, John Cross commenced work with the Public Library of NSW in 1963, initially in the Dixon Library, but transferring to the Archives Office in 1970. Appointed Senior Archivist with the Archives Authority of NSW in 1971, he became Chief Archivist in 1979. In 1980 he was appointed Principal Archivist.³³³

John Cross took accumulated leave from 1 June 1998, prior to retirement from the Public Service on 30 March 1999, just after the State Records Act took effect. He was then able to pursue his life-long interest in vintage cars, especially the *Alvis* marque. On Australia Day 2000, John Cross was awarded Membership of the Order of Australia (AM) for his "service to archival administration and records management, to professional associations, and to the community through the facilitation of greater public access to genealogical records."

The internal organisation of the Archives Authority was restructured in 1981, with the Archives Office divided into three Divisions: Reference Services, Technical Services, and Repository Services. Although the Records Management Office was a separate entity conducted for the Public Service Board, both Offices were under the direction of the Principal Archivist (John Cross) and the Assistant Principal Archivist (Dawn Troy). The total staff establishment was then 51 people, plus six temporary positions in the Repository Services Division.³³⁴ The total staff establishment soon was expanded to a permanent establishment of 56 positions, where it remained frozen for several years, despite the increasing demand for services.

"ARCHIVES THAT SAVED MY LIFE"

Jenni Stapleton was working in the repository at Shea's Creek with other staff on the morning of 21 August 1981 when a violent windstorm partly unroofed the building. Nobody was injured, but 4,500 cartons of records were exposed to the weather.³³⁵

According to the State Emergency Services the only reason the whole building did not collapse was the massive weight of volumes stacked two metres high against the back wall. These were Treasury records from the 1880s, which Jenni said were "the heaviest, ugliest, dirtiest books I've ever seen", but they became her favourite archives because they saved her life.³³⁶

Not only did staff have to cope with growing usage of the Search Room, but they were also faced with a corresponding increase in the number of letter and telephone enquiries. By 1982 it became necessary to limit each client to one research enquiry per year, and to restrict the time spent on any enquiry to a maximum of thirty minutes. A Government decision to allow public access to the pre-1900 births, deaths and marriage indexes created a surge in demand at the Archives Office as well as other institutions where this information was available on microfiche. As a result, the number of items issued to readers doubled temporarily.³³⁷

Family history continued to boom. In 1983 there were believed to be twenty-four genealogical societies in Australia, with a combined membership of around twenty-four thousand. Over the next five years this increased to about 120 societies with a total membership exceeding 40,000. Because the NSW archives contain a unique

collection of records about the arrival, treatment and disposition of convicts as well as free immigrants, the archival staff and resources were just about overwhelmed by the influx of inexperienced amateur researchers who had to be coached through every step, or wished to recount anecdotes about their family.

By then, around eighty per cent of the users of the archives were conducting genealogical or local history research, displacing the traditional core of academic scholars, authors, and research students. On many days the Search Room at The Rocks had lengthy queues to obtain material, because at this time microform material was not on open access. Readers who knew exactly what they wanted but were forced to wait could become irritated, although efforts were made to 'fast-track' their requests.³³⁸ Some archivists found this a stressful experience, and were provided with training in customer relations.³³⁹

Although to the outside world the Archives Office appeared to be serenely going about its tasks, there were sometimes vigorous professional debates between the staff and the Authority, whose members could be equally obdurate. An example occurred in 1983 following a review and report on Land Board Office files, and the subsequent Disposal Recommendation. The disagreement centred on the question of whether the historical significance of 9,000 boxes of files justified their retention in the repository at a notional cost of \$11,000 a year. Under the legislation, it was necessary for disposal recommendations to be determined by the Authority, but after several months of negotiation within the Archives Office, a consensus could not be achieved.³⁴⁰ The eventual compromise satisfied nobody.

Shortly after the Archives Authority was given responsibility for managing the repositories, the NSW Treasury asked it to look at the possibility of charging for storage of records. Until then, government departments and statutory authorities had been able to use these facilities without any direct cost. Treasury argued that at least those agencies such as the Housing Commission and the Government Insurance Office that were financially autonomous could be asked to pay for the service. The Authority had no experience in operating a commercial venture, but agreed to investigate this proposal.³⁴¹ After stalling for four years, the proposal was still being investigated, partly because of uncertainty whether the terms of the agreement with the Public Service Board would permit charging. It transpired that there was no restriction on doing this, and Authority members felt that it would have benefits beyond producing revenue: if departments paid for space they would be more inclined to rationalise their storage needs, and this in turn would place constraints on the pressure for additional repository buildings. At the end of 1982, the Authority finally took the plunge, and began charging for repository services.

The Archives Authority was placed in a quandary again when the Premier's Department suggested that one or two floors in the new Library Building to be built in Macquarie Street as a bicentenary project could be used as a repository for semi-active records until the space was needed by the Library. The Principal Archivist had a number of objections to this scheme, but conscious of the political ramifications, the Authority decided that discussions between the parties should nevertheless take place.³⁴² One danger was that the Government might see this as a cheap alternative to constructing a new repository building. The proposal soon crystallised into an offer from the Library for the archives to return to the space they previously occupied in the old building; this seemed an even worse suggestion and would probably have provoked a revolt by staff who had worked there. Eventually the Library decided that it needed more space itself, and in a clever tactical move, the Archives Authority

agreed that it would forego the area allocated to it in the Library, provided that the Library removed all the Mitchell Library manuscripts currently stored at Kingswood.³⁴³ This released 3,000 metres of air-conditioned storage at Kingswood for use by the archives, and permanently killed any suggestion that the two organisations should again share facilities.

The Archives Act did not define public hospitals or local government authorities as “public offices”, yet obviously the records created by these bodies contained information of great historical and personal interest, but the total quantity of records held by these organisations was unknown. In 1980 the Department of Local Government suggested that all municipal councils should be proclaimed as public offices under the Act, but this was not pursued.³⁴⁴ However, during the early 1980s the Government did embark on a program of closure of some older public hospitals, such as Crown Street Women’s Hospital. Under these circumstances, all the property of these institutions was transferred to the Department of Health, and thus indirectly the hospital records would find their way into the Archives.³⁴⁵ New South Wales in 1986 listed 192 public hospital plus 217 local government councils, but the total quantity of records held by these organisations was unknown. Although the Archives Authority was in no position to handle all this material, it could nevertheless envisage a time in the future when it might be required to do so. As a first step, the Authority adopted a policy that permanently valuable records of public hospitals and local councils could be stored in the Government Records Repository on a cost-recovery basis. A representative of the Authority sat on working parties and committees that were developing retention and disposal protocols for local government, and it planned to provide a consultancy service to help councils with their records management procedures.³⁴⁶

With the opening in 1983 of Phase II of the Stage 2 development at Kingswood, all the records stored at Shea’s Creek could be relocated at last. This massive task was accomplished under the supervision of John Burke and Jenni Stapleton, whose “determination and energy made the closure possible.”³⁴⁷ The risk of losing irreplaceable material in a major conflagration no longer existed, and staff would have a more congenial working environment, even if it meant additional travel. To celebrate the occasion, a “Creek Closure Party” was held in Shed 67 at Alexandria on Friday 13th January 1984. The invitation suggested jocularly that guests bring a can of petrol and a match.³⁴⁸

The Kingswood extension provided adequate space for the storage of paper records in the medium term, and was accompanied by more efficient methods of handling records, such as a roll-on roll-off container system for the transfer of material between public offices and the repository.³⁴⁹ Government departments were actively encouraged to review their holdings and retention periods in order to reduce their space requirements and storage costs. Through rigorous culling it was hoped to achieve the goal of destroying one metre of records for every three metres accessioned. In fact, the performance in 1984 was much better than this, with the total holdings of semi-active records actually declining.

It was expected that the cost of the building could be partly recouped from the sale of more than half of the Kingswood site for residential housing development. Because the overall design concept had altered from widely separated individual buildings with fixed shelving to a complex of linked structures with mobile compact shelving, the twenty hectare site was obviously much larger than could conceivably be required in the future.³⁵⁰ Members of the Authority had opposing views about the sale. Some

argued forcefully for disposal of surplus land, while others were adamant that assets should be retained at all costs.³⁵¹ Although the Land Commission of NSW (“Landcom”) agreed to purchase half the site for \$450,000, the sale never took place following a downturn in the economy, and the surplus land remains vacant in 2011, despite other offers. When the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation expressed interest in the site in 1994, it was informed that the land was not on the market because the Authority had engaged a consultancy firm to make an economic appraisal of the storage facilities.³⁵²

Following the death in office of the Attorney-General, the Hon.D.P. Landa, at the end of 1984, the question of ownership of Cabinet documents in a Minister’s possession provoked discussions between the Archives Authority and the Premier’s Department. Eventually, Premier Neville Wran informed all Ministers unequivocally:

These documents are the property of the New South Wales Government. They are issued to Ministers in their capacity as Ministers of the Crown and as members of Cabinet. Cabinet documents do not form part of the personal papers of a Minister.³⁵³

Readers of this book may have a sense of *déjà vu*; these instructions were similar to those issued to Colonial officials in 1822. It was now clear that a Minister’s Cabinet papers were State archives whose disposal was in the hands of the Archives Authority.³⁵⁴

Suitable storage of electronic records was rapidly becoming an important issue as archivists recognised that these records were impermanent. Constant developments in hardware and software, coupled with the inherently short storage life of magnetic or digital media meant there was a very real risk that society would lose its memory. This was less important when early computers concentrated on simple ‘housekeeping’ functions like processing payrolls and mailing lists, but when they began to be used for the generation and storage of vital administrative and legal information the challenges became very real. The Archives Office itself only moved into this territory in 1983, when it acquired what was then regarded as “one of the most sophisticated word processing systems” which had a storage capacity of 10MB.³⁵⁵ Its primary purpose was to prepare a revised edition of the *Concise Guide*, but it also proved useful in the preparation of reports and other documents.

A Task Force “to develop guidelines and standards for machine readable records in the NSW Government sector” began to meet under the chairmanship of the Principal Archivist in 1985. Representatives of other major agencies took part, with an interim report presented in August 1986, recommending legislative amendments.³⁵⁶ These proposals were overtaken by the altered administrative climate after the 1988 election, as well as the rapid evolution of new technology.

1988 was a significant year for Australia, as it marked the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet under Governor Arthur Phillip to form a penal settlement on the shores of Sydney Cove. The bi-centenary of colonisation led to a resurgence of interest in Australian history. With this in mind, between 1986 and 1988 the NSW Government made special grants of \$292,000 to the Archives Authority to assist in the development of three projects.

One of these was to be the publication of the *Colonial Secretary’s Papers, 1788-1825*. This comprised a printed index to all the papers, plus publication of the documents in microform, thus making them more readily accessible to researchers.³⁵⁷ These documents are the largest and most comprehensive collection of public records

relating to the early years of European settlement in the eastern half of Australia. The second project to be funded was a Bicentenary Exhibition titled “Punishment, Pardon and Promise: Government and the People, 1788-1988”, using documents, maps and photographs to show how the decisions of government officials have affected the daily lives of the inhabitants of New South Wales.

The other project was completion of the *Genealogical Research Kit* that was begun by Dawn Troy in the 1970s to provide printed guides to the most frequently used series of records, such as convict records and the Colonial Secretary’s correspondence, as well as microfilmed copies of irreplaceable documents that were already suffering damage from over-use. The first stage of the *Kit* was published in August 1984, with three further instalments issued over the next four years as part of the Archives Authority’s Bicentennial program. In its final form the *Genealogical Research Kit* comprised 523 reels of microfilm and 416 microfiche, including for instance the official pre-1856 registers of baptisms, burials and marriages. The cost of preparing the *Kit* had been recouped by 1990 through sales to libraries and other institutions throughout Australia. As one of the Authority members observed, it was “a very neat exercise in demand management” by diverting readers from the search rooms to other locations.³⁵⁸

The NSW Bicentennial Council made an additional grant of \$300,000 to the Archives Authority for the administration of three archival projects that were not part of the public archives of the State. These involved arranging and listing the extensive records of the NSW Branch of the Australian Labor Party; organising the archives of St. Mary’s Cathedral; and preparing a General Disposal Schedule for the records of local government. The first two projects got away to a slow start due to the resignation of initial research staff, as well as the idiosyncrasies of the respective institutions.³⁵⁹ This meant that John Burke, as program co-ordinator, had to spend a disproportionate amount of time dealing with the difficulties that arose. Despite these delays, all three projects were completed successfully, with the first two culminating in publications that have made those records more accessible to researchers, and with the Minister for Local Government approving the mandatory adoption of the Disposal Schedule by councils.

After the Services Building at Kingswood opened officially in December 1987, seven extra archivists and clerical support staff were employed, so that it became possible to provide a full reference service at that location for 38 hours per week, in addition to the City Search Room which opened for 50 hours each week, including two evenings.³⁶⁰ Many of the key documents were available at Kingswood on microfilm, while the originals remained at The Rocks. John Cross had some misgivings about the inevitable concentration of a growing proportion of the archives at the relatively remote Kingswood, believing that a more flexible approach was preferable to splitting the resources.³⁶¹ On the other hand, the Kingswood search room had the potential to reduce the overcrowding in the city premises. As occurred when the building in The Rocks first opened, there was an immediate surge in reader visits, including many from surrounding suburbs as well as western regional towns who previously found the long trip to the city and the lack of parking to be daunting obstacles.

By 1988 the authorised staff establishment for the two locations was 72, although the actual number employed at this date was only 63. It proved difficult to fill the remaining positions, causing excessive workloads when staff were diverted to search room duties instead of processing the flow of accessions from Government agencies. As John Cross observed, “a cycle had been established in which more and more

people were using an ever-decreasing proportion of the Authority's holdings."³⁶² Although staffing levels were below strength, for the first time since 1961 the Archives Authority was able to report that it had adequate accommodation for its clients, staff and records, and now believed that it was better placed than most other archives in Australia.³⁶³

A frenetic round of popular Bicentennial activities was not enough to save the Labor Government at the March 1988 election. The incoming Coalition government was led by a Harvard-educated company director and business consultant, Hon. Nick Greiner. It turned out to be a memorable year for government officials in NSW because on 2 September the once-powerful Public Service Board was abolished, to be replaced by an Office of Public Management under the Premier's direct control.³⁶⁴ At the same time, a major restructuring of many government departments took place. "Like a beaten army, they retreated leaving their baggage behind", which meant that the Archives Authority acquired a lot of documents from the disbanded agencies.³⁶⁵ A typical example was the Government Printing Office, which after privatisation bequeathed 64,000 priceless items, including a collection of glass plate photographic negatives. Staff from the Archives Office spent months in the deserted building at Ultimo, sorting, processing and packing this material for transfer to Kingswood.³⁶⁶

The new Government demanded more accountability from its departments and agencies, to ensure that their activities were in line with Government priorities, under a guiding principle of "downstream autonomy". A Senior Executive Service was established, intended "to improve the working environment of senior managers in the public sector and to reward them for their efforts."³⁶⁷ Five-year plans for Program Performance Evaluation were introduced, which the Archives Authority duly prepared, with the assistance of two staff seconded from the Department of Planning. Their report, with the challenging title *Archives: Culture or Business????* highlighted the dilemma that has always confronted the organisation. The authors concluded that there was scope for commercialisation of certain activities, recommending that the Authority should be restructured with a subsidised Archival Services Division, while the Records Management Office and a Repository Services Division could both be classified as commercial enterprises competing in an open market. Several revenue-raising activities were also proposed, including charging for use of the search rooms, and even more controversially, selling "unwanted" public records at auction.³⁶⁸ Understandably, the members of the Archives Authority were cautious about the trend towards commercialisation, and were conscious that the Authority must never lose sight of its true functions and service obligations.³⁶⁹ Another obstacle was Treasury, which prevaricated about how commercialisation should be implemented in the Archives Authority.³⁷⁰

Program Evaluation Plans were described later as "a systematic process of assessing on the basis of evidence, how well a program is doing."³⁷¹ To bolster support, an officer from the Ministry for the Arts addressed the Archives Authority, asserting that "corporate plans ... should be seen as an assistance to management, not a burden."³⁷² Not everybody was convinced of the value of these activities. State Governor Sir David Martin publicly criticised the "mumbo-jumbo of modern technocratic charlatans" involved in management consultancy.³⁷³ Time-consuming formal Programs of Evaluation were rescinded in 1994, although performance improvements still had to be described in annual reports.³⁷⁴

Suggestions that readers should be charged for accessing records were quickly dismissed following vigorous protests, but fees were introduced for research or

advisory services, and attracted little reaction. Reference staff gained better knowledge of the collection, and appreciated the opportunity to do detailed research for clients who valued their work and were willing to pay for it.³⁷⁵ Although staff were allowed to provide no more than half an hour of free research per year to any individual enquirer before charging for the service, this proved difficult to impose. Still in penny-pinching mode, the Government then suggested that voluntary contribution boxes could be provided in the Search Room foyers to solicit donations from readers, which as the Principal Archivist pointed out, was unlikely to generate much revenue. He felt that a better option would be to charge a fee for an annual reader's ticket, but on past experience this would cause a lot of adverse publicity.³⁷⁶

From the perspective of many researchers, there was a decline in services at this time, when the Authority somewhat reluctantly resolved that "readers will be required to use State archives at their place of storage." No longer would documents be transported between Kingswood and The Rocks on request.³⁷⁷ This was particularly inconvenient for people working with material from both collections, who would now have to travel between these widely separated locations. On the other hand, it freed archivists for other duties, and helped to prevent damage to delicate records. The decision was condemned by the President of the Professional Historians Association, and led to meetings between the parties and a series of articles in *Phanfare*, the Association's newsletter, setting out the arguments.³⁷⁸ After this bruising experience, the Archives Authority recognised that improved dialogue with clients was essential, from which the concept of a 'user group' was born.³⁷⁹ A broadly representative Customer Council was established in June 1992 as an advisory body to provide the Authority with feedback on existing services and to provide information about client needs.³⁸⁰ This became the first move towards active involvement with the community, which later extended to the recruitment of volunteers at the Kingswood repository to assist with tasks like indexing of records.

With the Bicentennial projects safely out of the way, the Authority could begin to look towards the future. Not unexpectedly, there was a noticeable decline in public usage of the archives following the wave of interest in family history that had been generated by the Bicentenary. Partly this could be explained by the availability of alternative sources for this information at the State Library and at the numerous other institutions that had acquired the *Genealogical Research Kit*. This meant that attention could now be given to the accumulation of unprocessed archival records. The Bicentenary had been a distraction from this essential activity, but at least the Authority had the satisfaction of receiving the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations' Niel T. Hansen Award for meritorious service to family history.³⁸¹ Staff were also gratified when senior positions within the organisation were regraded to provide a rewarding career structure, following the finalisation of a new Industrial Agreement for archivists separate from that for librarians. Professional archivists had struggled for ten years to achieve recognition as a discrete occupation.³⁸²

The perennial question of amending the Archives Act arose again in 1989, when the Principal Archivist recommended that a review was necessary, particularly in relation to Section 14 and Section 17 of the Act, as well as clarifying the uncertain powers relating to the repository and the Records Management Office. In his view, the Act was "a dated piece of legislation which does not always succeed in its primary aim: the preservation and maintenance of the State's permanently valuable public records."³⁸³ Although the Archives Act had been groundbreaking in its day, it had now fallen behind the newer legislation in other jurisdictions, particularly Tasmania

and the Commonwealth.³⁸⁴ Once again, the Board was reluctant to take any action unless it had specific proposals and options to consider.³⁸⁵ At the next Authority meeting John Cross argued that it was time to introduce “second generation” legislation that would mandate transfer of records, regulate records management and control access. He suggested that it might be preferable to start afresh rather than attempting to modify the existing Act. The Board relented to the extent of agreeing to establish a sub-committee and gaining the Minister’s support for a review of the Act, which by then had been in operation for nearly thirty years.³⁸⁶

One of the driving forces in this review was the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act, which sanctioned the right of persons to access official records.³⁸⁷ Furthermore, the focus of the Archives Act was almost exclusively on the final phase - archives, rather than the continuum of government records from their creation and storage to their preservation or disposal. Ian Maclean had made this point in a 1978 report to the Archives Authority, and it was a notion actively promulgated by the leading Australian archivist Chris Hurley from Public Records Office Victoria.³⁸⁸ It was a concept that would involve a change in direction and responsibilities for the organisation, and preferably a new name that would encompass the broader vision.

The sub-committee drew on international best practice as outlined by UNESCO in its several Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP) studies.³⁸⁹ Three discussion papers were prepared between 1990 and 1992, arguing that new legislation would “produce modern and cost effective methods for managing NSW records.”³⁹⁰ Spirits rose when the Ministry for the Arts said it wanted to “fast track” the legislation, requesting that a Cabinet Minute be prepared for the Budget session of Parliament in September 1992, but that fizzled out.³⁹¹ Twelve months later another attempt was made, with Chris Hurley engaged as a consultant to assist with re-drafting the Cabinet Minute, with all indications that an exposure bill would be presented at the Autumn 1994 session of Parliament.³⁹² Initially the sub-committee proposed that this should be termed a Public Records Act, but the nomenclature soon changed to State Records Act. ‘State Records’ was a term that had been introduced in other States to get away from the fusty connotation of “archives” in an electronic age as well as the broader responsibilities envisaged.³⁹³ Although the proposed new Act would contain stronger regulatory powers, the emphasis was to be on “persuasion and flexibility, rather than direction and rigidity.”³⁹⁴ The first step was to convince government agencies that the proposals were desirable. Some didn’t think so but the majority didn’t care. After further discussions to assuage the fears of a few doubters, supporters expected that the new legislation would be implemented in 1995.³⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the quaintly named Task Force on Guidelines for Machine Readable Records had been resuscitated in April 1990, with representatives of major government agencies. Much had happened since the original Working Party submitted its interim report four years previously, which had looked at records solely from the archival perspective. The aims of the new body were much wider, considering records from the point of view of the creator:

To develop guidelines and standards for machine readable records in the NSW Government sector, with particular reference to their creation, format, updating, maintenance, storage, disposal, access, and, in respect of records identified as having long-term value, their permanent preservation.³⁹⁶

The Task Force agreed that it should not try to predict technological developments, but should set standards for what it wanted to achieve. It was an era of rapid change that archivists, governments and commercial firms throughout the world were

coming to terms with. The risks were identified succinctly by the Director-General of the Premier's Department, who wrote to all Departmental heads,

It would be ironical if our descendants in 200 years were to understand less about our society than we do about our first European settlers.³⁹⁷

The Task Force surveyed current practices within NSW public offices and collected a wealth of printed material from overseas. This information was useful, but did not lead to any recommendations that could be applied across all government agencies, partly because the existing legislation was not amenable.

Throughout this period, the RMO continued to develop its keyword classification and indexing systems which facilitated the identification, storage and retrieval of records. Known as the General Administrative Thesaurus (GADM) and the Keyword-Out-of-Context (KWOC) method, these initiatives attracted interest from other States. An innovative joint venture was negotiated with a commercial firm to develop and market this software.³⁹⁸

In response to the Government's policy of devolution, the RMO and the GRR moved "off-Budget" from 1 July 1990, hoping to be financed from their own income as commercial entities rather than through the State's Consolidated Fund. The "user pays" principle proved to be remarkably effective, to the extent that the Archives Authority of NSW generated more income than all the other State and Federal archival institutions combined.³⁹⁹ In achieving this result the Authority was fortunate to have the services of John Burke as Manager of the GRR. Besides being a professional archivist and a trained librarian, Burke displayed an uncommon entrepreneurial flair and commercial nous. This success reinforced the advantages of being independent of the State Library with its very different obligations, but raised concern that the Authority might lose sight of its primary purpose in the pursuit of revenue.

The Minister himself attended the Archives Authority Board meeting in February 1991. He commented that he "was very impressed with the Authority's corporate strategy and its initial commercialisation efforts," and looked forward to tabling a discussion paper on new archival legislation in the next session of Parliament.⁴⁰⁰ Soon after this meeting, the Principal Archivist amalgamated the Technical and Reference Services Divisions into a single unit with five specialised sections, under the direction of the Assistant Principal Archivist, Frances Lemmes.⁴⁰¹ This allowed more flexible allocation of resources in response to changes in demand. From the end of March 1991 the Research Service that had operated for thirty years was abolished, so that staff could be deployed more productively.⁴⁰²

The RMO ended its financial year with a shortfall of \$143,000, which Treasury agreed to write off on condition that the RMO was combined with the GRR as a commercial enterprise. This risked the viability of the repository by absorbing its surplus, so the Principal Archivist reduced staff in the RMO by dismissing temporary staff; because of the tight financial situation, staff in the Archives Office also had to be reduced.⁴⁰³ It will be recalled that the RMO was not part of the Authority's responsibilities under the Archives Act, but had been supervised by the Authority through an agreement with the now-defunct Public Service Board, and thus *de facto* fell within the Authority's jurisdiction.⁴⁰⁴

Plainly the RMO was not commercially viable as a separate entity, which led to consideration of whether it should be disbanded, leaving the setting of records management standards to the Archives Office.⁴⁰⁵ Management of the RMO reverted

to the Archives Office, while former Assistant Principal Archivist Dawn Troy was engaged as a consultant to evaluate the RMO programs and recommend future directions.⁴⁰⁶ She found that although the original objectives were sound, they needed refining. The RMO had lost its focus on the NSW public sector while seeking external consultancies to clients throughout Australia, which were not recovering the true costs.⁴⁰⁷ The Archives Authority wanted the services re-oriented, particularly as the State Library was planning to set up a competitive records consultancy and scheduling service on a commercial basis.⁴⁰⁸

David Roberts from the National Archives was appointed as Manager of the RMO, to revive the sagging fortunes. He reported to the Authority meeting in August 1993 that he intended to place greater emphasis on training and publications such as the keyword thesaurus products. He believed that improved and better-marketed products would offset any immediate decline in revenue over the longer term.⁴⁰⁹ Because Roberts was an acknowledged expert on electronic records, the Archives Office also decided to recommence work on developing guidelines for the management of electronic records, possibly by reviving the Task Force that had only met sporadically.⁴¹⁰

Regional repositories were established on a more formal basis once a large amount of archival material became available on microfilm and microfiche. From the early 1980s the Universities of Newcastle and Wollongong, the University of New England in Armidale and Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, and later the Newcastle Region Library became part of this decentralisation strategy. When "The Outback Archives" opened at the Charles Rasp Library in Broken Hill in 1991, there were six regional repositories, storing over 3km of State archives and more than 1,000 maps and plans, in addition to local public and private records. At last, original documents could be loaned to an appropriate institution located in the area where they were created. It remains the only successful state-wide archival network in Australia, even though the regional institutions at times faced difficulties in sustaining their operations.⁴¹¹

It was only after the appointment of John Cross as Principal Archivist that some internal opposition to regionalisation had been overcome, but by the end of 1991 even he was beginning to have reservations. In a report to the Archives Authority he described the network as "incomplete, flawed and probably uneconomic", although he conceded that it provided a useful service to country residents, and should be supported because of the favourable publicity it generated.⁴¹² The Authority sought additional funding to enable small annual grants to the regional repositories, and following a meeting with the Hon. Peter Collins, Treasurer and Minister for the Arts in March 1994, he agreed to include \$100,000 in the next budget for this purpose.⁴¹³ It seemed reasonable that regional repositories which were providing a free service to the State Government by housing part of their archives should seek some reimbursement. However, no funding was allocated in the budget, and the proposal lapsed after the Government was defeated the following year.

The enduring uneasiness about ownership of the repository land at Kingswood was finally relieved in 1992, when the property was transferred from the Minister to the Authority, following the commercialisation of the Department of Public Works. One can read an almost audible sigh of relief in the Board minutes when the Principal Archivist tabled the Certificate of Title at a meeting.⁴¹⁴ At the same meeting it was agreed to ask the Premier for approval to begin immediate site work in preparation for an expansion of the repository using funds generated from its commercial

activities. Also under consideration was the possibility of expanding the capacity of the original Stage 1 building by replacing the fixed shelving with the mobile compact variety, and even the construction of an additional storey.⁴¹⁵ These extensions would allow the Archives Office to move some of its operations at Kingswood and reduce its requirements for expensive city accommodation.

The Premier replied that it would be premature to expand the facilities before the Government's overall capital works program was finalised. The minutes clearly show the Principal Archivist's frustration with the situation, when he said:

If, after 30 years of effort, the Authority could not succeed in persuading Treasury of the need for adequate and timely reserves of storage space it probably should pull out of the repository storage business and dispose of most of its land.⁴¹⁶

This comment echoed Russell Doust's sentiments eighteen years earlier.⁴¹⁷ After all, the Authority was only seeking approval to spend its own money. Still, John Cross's reaction was a little hasty, for a week later Treasury approved the Stage III extensions, partly funded by the Government and partly by the Authority, with the balance raised by loan borrowings.⁴¹⁸

Storage for the ever-growing volume of paper records remained an ongoing worry for the Authority. Completion in 1995 of a small extension to the original building at Kingswood just kept pace with current demand, but did not provide space for anticipated growth. Accommodation problems were exacerbated by the high rental costs for the city headquarters, which represented almost one-third of the expenditure budget. It was hoped that increased use of electronic recordkeeping in the public sector would alleviate some of this pressure, and the Authority actively promoted strategies to encourage this, but the 'paperless office' forecast by computer devotees proved a chimera.⁴¹⁹ At the same time, high city rentals indirectly increased pressure on the repository, as it forced CBD-based departments to look elsewhere for storage of their files. Increased demand for off-site records storage also flowed from extensive restructuring and rationalisation of accommodation needs throughout the public sector.

The systems that managed the intellectual and physical control of NSW archives since the 1950s clearly were not going to be suitable for the new millennium. They had been developed in isolation from other archival institutions, using the record group approach where archival series are listed under agencies or clusters of agencies. During his term as Principal Archivist, Ian Maclean had advocated introduction of the more flexible Australian 'series system' as used in the Australian (National) Archives as well as most of the other government archives.⁴²⁰ Under this system, records are documented in context by comprehensive cross-referencing and indexing which shows the relationship between the series and the agency that created the records.⁴²¹

Although the concept was accepted, conversion of the records proved to be a formidable task with limited available resources, and so work proceeded in a desultory fashion from 1994.⁴²² When John Cross as Principal Archivist became increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress by 1996, David Roberts offered the *Tabularium* database that he developed as a private project.⁴²³ This was tailored to fit the New South Wales government context, and in 1999 work could begin in earnest entering essential data on current and historical agencies. In due course this material provided the nucleus for *Archives Investigator*, and for a comprehensive computerised physical control system.⁴²⁴

The much-deferred legislation encountered another delay when the Cabinet Office considered that the proposals were too interventionist, at a time when Government was trying to reduce regulations and allow agencies more freedom to manage their own affairs.⁴²⁵ The Minister again attended a Board meeting in August 1994, and after commenting that “the Authority is run impeccably,” said that the legislation probably would not go to Parliament before the election the following year, as it was not regarded as a “life or death situation”. Although the Archives Authority felt some disappointment at the lack of enforcement provisions, the Minister felt it was better to settle for what was achievable, rather than attempt further amendments; it would be an improvement on the existing legislation in any case.⁴²⁶ As it happened, the Government lost the election seven months later, and the draft legislation was shelved.

A life or death situation nearly did arise shortly after the meeting with the Minister, when new steel shelving in the Stage III repository at Kingswood suddenly collapsed. Fortunately nobody was hurt, but because it was an industrial accident, WorkCover became involved, and recriminations over liability were exchanged between the installation contractor, Public Works Department as the client, and the Archives Authority as owner.⁴²⁷ This incident inevitably raised doubts about the safety of other shelving in the complex. Although Public Works assured the Authority that rectification had been completed satisfactorily, the Board was not convinced and asked for an independent engineering assessment, but this was inconclusive.

Storage for the ever-growing volume of paper records remained a preoccupation of the Authority, as it did at its inception over thirty years earlier. The ‘paperless office’ forecast by computer enthusiasts had been a chimera. Completion in 1995 of a small extension to the original building at Kingswood just kept pace with current demand, but did not provide space for anticipated growth. Accommodation problems were exacerbated by the high rent being paid for the City headquarters, which represented almost one-third of the expenditure budget.⁴²⁸ Greater use of electronic recordkeeping in the public sector could alleviate some of this pressure, and the Authority actively promoted strategies to encourage this.⁴²⁹ Transfer of some functions, such as archival processing, from the City to Kingswood was another approach to reducing rent for expensive premises. At the same time, high city rentals operated to the benefit of the GRR, as it forced CBD-based departments to look elsewhere for storage of their files. Increased demand for off-site records storage also flowed from extensive public sector restructuring and rationalisation of accommodation needs.⁴³⁰ These circumstances resulted in the GRR achieving a profit of \$1.2M in 1996-7 on revenue of \$3.5M, within a highly competitive market where private firms were offering similar services.

When Hon. Bob Carr became Premier and Minister for the Arts after winning the 1995 election, he supported the previous Government’s push for new public records legislation and urged the preparation of an amended Cabinet Minute.⁴³¹ Drafting of legislation commenced the following year. Carr also sought to extend his predecessor’s user pays policy to reader services provided by the Archives Office.⁴³² He favoured a discriminatory policy that gave ‘serious’ researchers free access, but charged family historians and the casual user. The Archives Authority pointed to difficulties in making this distinction, and indicated it would prefer to charge on the basis of material used, rather than categories of user.⁴³³ The Premier eventually agreed to a daily fee of \$10 for readers of microform material, but with free access to original documents in the search rooms. Dr Hilary Golder, the independent historian member of the Authority Board, objected to this proposal, pointing out that many

historians and postgraduate students needed to use both types of records concurrently. She believed that the relatively small revenue would not offset the loss of goodwill.⁴³⁴ This view was emphatically endorsed by the Customer Council, which saw this as the abandonment of a long-standing Australian tradition of free access to cultural resources. The Premier was somewhat taken aback by the vehemence of the opposition to his proposal, so quietly abandoned it in February 1996.⁴³⁵

In 1996 the Archives Authority had confidently asserted that it “is a dynamic organisation responding to change, whether professional, technological, administrative, legislative or political. It is a very different organisation from the one established in 1961 and is continuing to evolve.”⁴³⁶ Certainly it had changed, but some outsiders were frustrated by a perceived lethargy. In a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission, Lucy Taksa and Rosemary Webb from the University of NSW described the Archives Office of NSW as “the most backward archival institution in the country in terms of its management and control processes.”⁴³⁷

Changing technology was beginning to influence the way archives are accessed as well as how they should be stored. An electronic version of the *Concise Guide* was introduced, which soon became available for public use in the Search Rooms as *FindIt!* In July 1996, the internet website went on line and immediately began attracting enquiries from overseas as well as Australia.⁴³⁸ This would become an important medium of communication in the future, but there was still a place for complementary paper-based finding aids such as the *Archives in Brief* series launched in 1999.⁴³⁹

Public awareness about the social disadvantage of indigenous people also was deepening around this time, particularly following publication of the *Bringing them home* report.⁴⁴⁰ In response to growing interest the Archives Office began microfilming the correspondence files of the Aborigines Welfare Board for the twenty-year period 1949-69. Over 400,000 pages of documents relating to NSW Government policy and practice were copied to improve access. In the same period, a touring exhibition *My Heart is Breaking* displayed the story of the Aboriginal people in Victoria through that State’s official records.⁴⁴¹ Workshops on tracing Aboriginal family history were arranged around the State to raise the profile of archives as cultural resources.⁴⁴² Issues of social justice would later become very significant in the Authority’s activities, as will be seen in the next chapter.

With legislation imminent, in May 1998 the Records Management Office and the Disposal Services section of the Archives Office were amalgamated to become a Government Recordkeeping section. The aim of the unit was to improve the standard of records management in public agencies, through advice as well as regulation. The consultancy role was phased out because of potential conflict with the regulatory function. Other internal restructuring followed. Preservation Services and Collection Services were combined to form the Archives Control and Management Branch, Reference Services became the Public Access Branch, while the Corporate Information and Communications Unit absorbed the activities of Information Management and Technology, Library and Publications. A separate co-ordinating Executive Unit was retained. These structural changes dealt with existing functional anomalies and clarified lines of responsibility.⁴⁴³

Rationalisation of the Authority’s accommodation implied not only expansion of the repository at Kingswood, but also the desirability of finding a less expensive city location. With the lease for the city property due to expire early in 1999, external consultants were engaged to advise on the feasibility of moving to the rehabilitated

Bond Store 3 in Windmill Street, Millers Point.⁴⁴⁴ Financially it was viable, but the project became entangled in the highly political Walsh Bay redevelopment scheme and relocation of Sydney Theatre Company. The delay meant that fitout of the Bond Store could not be completed before the lease of the building in The Rocks expired.⁴⁴⁵ Under those circumstances, the project had to be abandoned. At the same time, the Government Architect raised the possibility of the Police Service sharing the existing building at The Rocks with the Archives Authority. This would have been a strange alliance, given the strained relations between the two organisations for many years because of disagreement about the ownership and disposal of police records.⁴⁴⁶

As soon as the legislation was passed, but before it was implemented, Premier Bob Carr issued a memorandum to all Ministers and Chief Executives informing them that all public offices would be required to “make and keep full and accurate records of their activities and to establish and maintain a records management program in conformity with standards and codes of best practice.” He left no doubt that the Government expected all agencies to comply.⁴⁴⁷ They had barely six months to prepare for the new regimen.

With the legislation finally in place, John Cross retired as Principal Archivist with some feeling of satisfaction, after almost twenty years in the position. He had worked strenuously to achieve modern legislation; it was time for others to implement it.

CHAPTER 5 – The Digital Revolution 1999 to 2011

“We owe to the future a presentation of the life of the present and a preservation of a record of the life of the past”⁴⁴⁸

With this succinct rationale for keeping archives, Legislative Assembly member David Hunter spoke in support of the original Archives Act in 1960. Thirty-eight years later, when Parliament was debating the State Records Act the sentiments had not altered, even if expressed less eloquently. Members from all political parties supported the legislation that finally became law on 2 June 1998. Behind the scenes, however, there were some misgivings.⁴⁴⁹

Nevertheless everything was ready for the State Records Authority to begin work on 1 January 1999.⁴⁵⁰ In the last months of the previous year the Principal Archivist David Roberts was appointed as Director, the organisational structure was modified, stationery was printed, signage was altered, a new emblem adopted and the internet website revamped.

DAVID ROBERTS – THE FIRST DIRECTOR OF STATE RECORDS

David Hugh Roberts, BA, DipArchAdmin, the son of a Presbyterian minister, was born in Melbourne in 1955 and educated in Sydney at Knox Grammar School and the Universities of Sydney and NSW. In 1980 he commenced working in the Sydney office of the Australian Archives, where after gaining experience in most facets of archival practice, he specialised in audio-visual and electronic records. From 1987 he worked in managerial positions.

In 1993 David was appointed Manager of the Records Management Office at the Archives Authority of NSW. He succeeded John Cross as Principal Archivist in June 1998, becoming the first Director of the State Records Authority when the new legislation came into effect on 1 January 1999. He was made a Fellow of the Australian Society of Archivists in 2000. After ten years as Director he declined the offer of a further contract and is now the inaugural Archivist for Newington College in Sydney, where he remains an active participant in the recordkeeping profession.

David’s uncle, Ian Maclean, recommended an archival career as being appropriate for his nephew’s interests in history and politics. Like his uncle, David began his career in what became the National Archives of Australia.⁴⁵¹

Introducing the new legislation in the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. R. Debus described it as a Bill “to make provision for the creation, management and protection of the records of public offices of the State”.⁴⁵² That simple statement marked a radical extension of the powers available to the existing Archives Authority, because it gave the new body mandatory regulatory functions. A core principle of the State Records Act is that public access to the records of Government is a fundamental right in a democratic society. This implies that official agencies will keep records of their business and administrative transactions, and that all relevant records of enduring value will be preserved and become publicly available in a reasonable time.

The scope of the new Act was broadened to recognise the trend for official records to be created in formats other than traditional paper documents, and the likelihood that technological developments will continue to change the way information is stored.⁴⁵³ Only Aboriginal relics are excluded. Another significant change was extending the definition of a public office to include local government councils, State owned

corporations, universities and public hospitals. Potentially this would result in a vast expansion of the documents to be stored, even though implementation was deferred for twelve months for those bodies that had not been subject to the previous Archives Act.⁴⁵⁴

Parliamentary records, as well as those of the Governor, and the judicial records of courts and tribunals, were in a different category because of the principle of separation of powers between government, executive and judiciary.⁴⁵⁵ The New South Wales Parliament maintains the only separate legislative archive in Australia. Nevertheless, from December 1980 until June 1991 the Parliamentary Archivist was seconded from the staff of the Archives Office. After lengthy negotiations a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Clerks of the Parliament and State Records in March 2008 to enable records of archival value to be placed in the care of State Records without transferring ownership.⁴⁵⁶ Agreements had been reached earlier with the Supreme Court and, more readily, the Office of the Governor.

The nine-member Board of the State Records Authority comprises nominated representatives of Parliament, government departments, law enforcement agencies, local government, other declared authorities, State-owned corporations, the private sector, the history profession, and a judge nominated by the Chief Justice. They are appointed for three years, but can hold office for only two terms, unlike the previous Authority where appointments were for four years, and with no restriction on reappointment.⁴⁵⁷ The Chairperson is nominated by the Minister to whom the Authority is responsible.

Eight members of the Archives Authority continued on the new Board until their term of office expired. Although the numbers were the same, composition of the future Board altered profoundly when new members were appointed. The majority were public officials of one form or another, while the traditional users of archives – historians and educators – had less influence. This suggested there would be a change of emphasis from historical archives to current official records. It is an imbalance which the current Chairperson, Professor Lucy Taksa, wishes to redress. Professor Taksa is also disturbed by the low representation of members who, like herself, have a non-English speaking background, given their significant numbers in Australian society.⁴⁵⁸ This issue crystallised early in 2009 when the Minister vetoed the appointment of a local government representative who had an ethnic upbringing.⁴⁵⁹

Another disadvantage of the existing Board structure is the frequent turnover of members who when they accept different positions within the public sector find they can no longer devote time to the Board. This is in marked contrast with the former Archives Authority, whose members generally provided continuity, often serving for several terms without remuneration. Unlike the Boards or Trustees of other cultural bodies that have formal management functions, the Board of State Records has restricted but important responsibilities, related mainly to the approval of Appraisal Reports and recordkeeping standards, as well as determining the policies and strategic plans of the Authority.⁴⁶⁰ The Board has no responsibility for financial management, yet many Board members have considerable expertise in this area. The disjunction between knowledge and duty can be frustrating for all concerned. Draft budgets and financial reports are presented to the Board for information rather than approval, but to allow the financially oriented members to maintain a watching brief, a Finance and Audit Sub-Committee was established in 2001.⁴⁶¹ In order to assist the Board with its important function of considering retention and disposal authorities, Professor Taksa has introduced the practice of seeking an opinion from external

experts who can advise on the significance of records, and their potential value for a wide range of disciplines.⁴⁶²

Because of the composition of the Board, members no longer saw themselves in an advocacy role, as was the case when Archives Authority members often were high-profile members of the community, independent of the Government. Members tend to restrict their activities to the formal meetings six times a year, and rarely are seen at other functions.⁴⁶³ The exception has been the three people who have chaired the Board of State Records – Justice David Levine, Dr Shirley Fitzgerald, and Professor Lucy Taksa – all of whom have been passionate advocates for the historical value of archives.

In his capacity as Director, David Roberts was supported by the former Assistant Principal Archivist, Frances Lemmes, as Deputy Director and Secretary of the Authority. In January 2000 this arrangement was modified to create two positions of Associate Director, with Frances Lemmes based in the city facility and John Burke located at the Western Sydney repository.

One of the most significant provision in the Act was the statutory open access to records over thirty years old, subject to an ‘access direction’ made by the public office responsible. State Records maintains a register of access directions on its website, but it has been a struggle to get agencies to make those decisions because one or two considered that they were a special case that should be exempted from the provisions. Even as recently as June 2010, barely 43 per cent of public offices had made access directions. David Roberts recalls that when the terms of the Act were being finalised, the archival consultant stated that agencies should “have an unfettered discretion to determine grounds for access to their records”. It was a principle that then Principal Archivist John Cross accepted, although David Roberts believed it was a backward step compared with the 1983 Commonwealth Archives Act, because effectively the records were closed unless they were specifically opened. Roberts preferred a regime where all records were assumed to be open, unless specifically closed for reasons of privacy or security.⁴⁶⁴ That followed the thinking of the Australian Law Reform Commission, which stated in 1998 that “The fundamental premise from which any consideration of access rights should flow is that the records of government are created and held in trust for the people.”⁴⁶⁵ Board member Dr Hilary Golder, speaking on behalf of the History Council of NSW, argued that the draft guidelines were too prescriptive, so some modifications were made.⁴⁶⁶

As something of a compromise, the NSW Attorney-General was required to issue guidelines to help public offices determine whether records should be open or closed to public access. In practice, these guidelines are often interpreted too cautiously.⁴⁶⁷ This danger was foreseen by the Professional Historians Association, which pointed out that “the public officials who are making the decisions on access are not required to have any background in research.”⁴⁶⁸ Prudent officers would tend to follow the prescription that no access means no risk. To minimise this possibility, amendments to the legislation in 2005 gave State Records the power to request a review by the responsible Minister when an access direction was considered unreasonably restrictive, although changes usually are achieved through tactful consultation without resorting to coercion.⁴⁶⁹

The enlarged powers and responsibilities contained in the State Records Act of 1998 revitalised the organisation. Over the next decade new systems were introduced, publications launched and innovative outreach programs commenced. This chapter

can only mention a few of the achievements during those early years of the twenty-first century. Perusal of the *Annual Reports* will reveal many more accomplishments.

Following the 1998 restructuring, there are four complementary strands of activity constituting the State Records Authority, supported by small administrative, corporate information and special projects units:

- Archives Control and Management
- Reference and Access
- Government Recordkeeping (GRK)
- Government Record Repository (GRR)

In essence, the activities of State records comprise the documentation, storage and preservation of official records, which includes setting guidelines for their creation and consistent management – the “records continuum” to which David Roberts as Director was committed.⁴⁷⁰

The Government Recordkeeping program resulted from an amalgamation of the former Records Management Office with the Disposal section of the old Archives Office. It was given a regulatory function that its predecessor lacked. As Manager of the RMO, David Roberts began planning a revised structure in the two or three years before the new Act was introduced. This set him thinking about the direction the whole establishment should take. Although the strands were conceptually different, they were related to each other. He believed the Archives Office, the RMO and the GRR functioned almost as independent organisations, with little interaction, even to the extent of having different computer systems. The changes Roberts advocated were not always popular, which caused him to be referred to as “the dictator from the other office”. As a relative newcomer, his subsequent appointment as Director of State Records may not have been greeted with enthusiasm by every manager, but the staff supported him, even when limited resources made it difficult to achieve the revised priorities arising from a new corporate environment and an expanded range of stakeholders.⁴⁷¹

To help agencies understand their obligations under the legislation, the *Government Recordkeeping Manual* was launched in December 1998, providing a compendium of policies, standards and guidelines.⁴⁷² This publication received two significant awards for its contribution to archival practice.⁴⁷³ With local government now falling within the ambit of State Records, a *General Retention and Disposal Authority for Local Government Records* was issued in August 2000 to help councils manage their archives efficiently.⁴⁷⁴

Demand for storage services at the Government Records Repository continued to grow steadily because of departmental restructuring and downsizing of costly office accommodation. This created problems which the Board addressed by deliberately limiting the rate of growth through demand management measures such as reduced advertising and declining to accept new clients.⁴⁷⁵ Delicate balancing was needed in order to maintain profitability while continuing to provide clients with competitive storage and retrieval services. The benefits were excellent: agencies could retrieve records the same day they were requested, or delivered within one and a half hours in urgent cases. In addition, the GRR offered a range of consultancy services by professional archivists that commercial competitors in the private sector could not match.⁴⁷⁶

Because the lease of the premises in The Rocks expired in mid-1999, there was an incentive to reduce space and transfer archives as well some staff and ancillary services to Kingswood. Alternative locations for the city-based operations were suggested as a possible option, perhaps in a heritage building.⁴⁷⁷ In the event, a cheaper rental was negotiated for two floors within the existing building, which after refurbishment was re-named the Sydney Records Centre in December 2000. The buildings at Kingswood became the Western Sydney Records Centre, with portions refurbished to accommodate the relocated staff and the conservation laboratory, as well as to provide better facilities for public access to the archives, which included an enlarged space for 65 readers.⁴⁷⁸ The public spaces at both locations were renamed Reading Rooms rather than the rather forbidding 'Search Rooms'.

Arising from this consolidation of accommodation, State Records was able to donate several kilometres of surplus shelving to the regional repositories in Armidale and Wagga Wagga.⁴⁷⁹ The Charles Sturt University Regional Archives in Wagga Wagga was the most-used of the six regional facilities, and signed the first formal distributed management agreement in 2005. State Records retains control of the archives held at that location including the way in which they are managed.⁴⁸⁰ Distributed management agreements were later signed with the University of New England in Armidale (2007), the University of Newcastle (2007), and the Special Branch of the Police Force (2008), the first government agency to opt for this solution.⁴⁸¹ That breakthrough was facilitated by the presence of a representative from the Police Service on the Board. It was anticipated that this appointment would improve the tetchy relationships between the Authority and the police described in the previous chapter, and this proved to be the case.

As the *Annual Report* noted in 1999 the delivery of information is State Records' stock in trade, and consequently "making the best possible use of information technology and telecommunications is of fundamental importance." When microfiche and microfilm records became available on open access in the reading rooms, readers were encouraged to do their own research, and relished the opportunity.⁴⁸² This allowed the time-consuming paid research service to be terminated in September.⁴⁸³

With the spread of the internet and e-mail into many homes, State Records explored other opportunities for making the archives available to more people, particularly those living some distance from the Reading Rooms at Kingswood and The Rocks. In 2000, the searchable electronic database *Archives Investigator* was developed jointly by State Records and Sydney City Council, to make archival series accessible on personal computers. Following the successful introduction of this access to textual records, work began on a parallel *Photo Investigator* database so that users could access many of the photographs held in the archives. Both databases are based on the Business Operations System (BOS) that developed after the series system of archives control was introduced over a decade earlier.⁴⁸⁴

NSW Premier Bob Carr launched the "Access for All" initiative in March 2000, as a scheme to provide better access to the State's archives in regional and rural New South Wales. Thirty-nine community access points were established, mainly in public libraries, with financial support from the GRR.⁴⁸⁵ An additional access point was opened the following year. Under the *Archives in the Bush* program, regional repositories became eligible for grants to support infrastructure, preservation and documentation projects, with some \$950,000 distributed in the first three years. A second phase began in 2005, with \$100,000 initially available each year.⁴⁸⁶

State Records was very conscious that it could do more to help people from culturally diverse or disadvantaged backgrounds, and began interaction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through workshops, visits and talks. This program was consolidated when Kirsten Thorpe was appointed to the position of Archivist, Aboriginal Liaison in March 2000.⁴⁸⁷ She then became the first point of contact for Indigenous people. The relationship was strengthened on 19 August 2004 at a ceremony in Yass where eight specimens of Aboriginal hair that had been collected in the Binalong area in the 1850s were handed over to elders of the Ngunawal Aboriginal Land Council.⁴⁸⁸

For some time it had been obvious that methodologies which had evolved for keeping paper records were not particularly useful in managing electronic records. David Roberts was an influential member of the Standards Australia committee preparing an Australian Standard on records management that was adopted as AS.4390 in 1996, and gave his innovative work international recognition.⁴⁸⁹ Subsequently this became the basis for International Standard ISO.15489, which is the code of best practice for the NSW public sector. State Records staff concurrently were developing a manual and associated training course to facilitate what became known as DIRKS methodology (*Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems*). The National Archives of Australia was invited to participate in this project, which resulted in a joint exposure draft in February 2000. Since then the Manual has continued to develop.

September 2000 was memorable for Sydneysiders when the city played host to the Olympic Games. State Records maintained full services during this period, although demand declined while citizens participated in various ways in this unique event, including eleven staff members who served as volunteers.⁴⁹⁰ Hard on the heels of the Olympic Games came the activities commemorating the Centenary of Federation. State Records contributed by publishing a guide to Federation records and mounting a travelling exhibition of documents from the archives, *Unity and Nationhood*, which toured regional NSW throughout 2001.⁴⁹¹

Following the appointment of the former Mitchell Librarian, Alan Ventress as one of the two Associate Directors when Frances Lemmes retired in 2001, a program for volunteers began as part of the International Year of the Volunteer. The Olympic Games had shown that within the community there were untapped volunteer resources that could be mobilised for projects that captured the public imagination. Participation by knowledgeable supporters had proved its worth at the State Library of NSW, and soon provided useful assistance at State Records. "They provide the invisible glue that helps to connect people and service", in the words of Professor Taksa.⁴⁹² Starting with ten people, the program gradually expanded to some 50-60 volunteers, with a waiting list of people who would like to take part. Most of these index original records or compile lists of files, while others do conservation work, each typically working for one half-day every fortnight under the guidance of a designated staff member.⁴⁹³ Initially some staff were concerned that their jobs might be replaced by volunteers, and raised the issue with their union, but were reassured when all parties agreed that volunteers would only do work for which no permanent staff was available.⁴⁹⁴ In 2005 the program was recognised in the NSW Government Heritage Volunteer Awards.⁴⁹⁵ Under the guidance of Alan Ventress, the Outreach program begun by David Roberts developed in other directions as well.⁴⁹⁶ In March 2002 procedures to gather feedback from users were enhanced when the Customer Council was replaced by the Community Advisory Committee, comprising representatives from user groups such as historians and genealogists.

With the adoption of a new corporate plan in June 2002, there was a change in State Records' strategic focus, aimed at raising the profile of the collection and highlighting its relevance to contemporary society.⁴⁹⁷ David Roberts believed that the organisation needed "a cohesive promotion and communications program, which is both innovative and imaginative in order to capture the community's attention and interest." Although its regular stakeholders had a good understanding of the functions of State Records, the wider community found the title confusing.⁴⁹⁸ All too often visitors enquired whether the latest recording by the currently popular rock band was available.

When the Archives Office moved to The Rocks an area was set aside to show unique items from the collection. This display was encouraged by the Sydney Cove Development Authority, because it complemented the historical/recreational precinct they were creating.⁴⁹⁹ Although State Records later contracted its city presence to two floors and subsequently to a single floor, it retained an attractive exhibition space in the entry lobby that is accessible to passers-by in Globe Street as well as users of the Reading Room. Named the State Records Gallery in 2001 following the appointment of Susan Charlton as Creative Producer of Exhibition and Marketing Projects, the space has since become the venue for a continuous program of curated exhibitions.

EXHIBITIONS – STATE RECORDS GALLERY

April – June 2002	"[art meets archive]"
August 2002 – March 2003	"Sydney: Resort of Thieves"
March 2003 – November 2003	"The House of Exquisite Memory"
February 2004 – January 2005	"In the Realm of the Censors"
March – June 2005	"Natura Morta"
August 2005 – February 2006	"Romance & Industry"
September 2006 – 2011	"in <i>living</i> memory"

In Living Memory is an outstandingly successful exhibition featuring photographs from the records of the former Aborigines Welfare Board taken between 1919 and 1966, combined with contemporary images of families, elders and communities by Indigenous photographer Mervyn Bishop. Under the guidance of an Indigenous advisory group, State Records' own Aboriginal Liaison staff researched and developed the exhibition with the Creative Producer Care to ensure that cultural protocols were respected. *In Living Memory* opened in September 2006 and was still on display in 2011. From May 2008 a touring version of the exhibition visited eighteen regional galleries and cultural centres over a period of two and a half years, attracting wide interest and evoking a deep emotional response from local Aboriginal communities.⁵⁰⁰ Steve Collins from Griffith told how he "was in the exhibition when one of the Elders recognised herself as a young girl in a photo on the wall and said 'that's me'. It was a very powerful moment."

Susan Charlton also edited and produced the glossy 24-page magazine *Vital Signs* between 2002 and 2006 that replaced the printed newsletter *Now and Then*, and was intended to establish a distinctive identity for State Records. Because of high production costs and the widespread adoption of electronic media, publication ceased after nine issues. Professor Taksa expressed the disappointment of many people when she remarked, "books and magazines have enduring significance as artefacts of

our society.”⁵⁰¹ From April 2003 an email version of the revived *Now & Then* newsletter was distributed regularly to holders of readers’ tickets and other interested people, giving information about current activities as well as practical suggestions for users of the archives.⁵⁰²

NEWSLETTERS AND MAGAZINES

For more than twenty-five years a newsletter or magazine has been distributed to holders of readers’ tickets and other interested people, giving information about current activities as well as practical suggestions for users of the archives. Over this period the publications have appeared in different formats, under different titles:

<i>ARCHEION: the newsletter/magazine of the State Archives</i>	1983 – 1995 (Annual)
<i>ARCHIVISTA: news and views from the State Archives</i>	1988 – 1999 (Quarterly)
<i>NOW AND THEN: news of the past, present and future from State Records</i>	1999 - 2001
<i>VITAL SIGNS</i> (glossy magazine - subtitle varies)	2002 – 2006
<i>NOW & THEN: news from State Records</i> (electronic)	2003 – present

A specialised newsletter is published for clients of Government Recordkeeping. *FOR THE RECORD: managing records in the New South Wales Public Sector* appeared in printed format from February 1994 until August 2005, when it was replaced by an electronic version published bi-monthly.

AD INFINITUM was a newsletter for NSW public sector Chief Executives, published from 2003 to 2005. The *FUTURE PROOF* newsletter targeted at the same readers, first appeared in November 2008.

An electronic newsletter for State Records staff - *OFF THE RECORD* - commenced in 1999.

The risks inherent in electronic recordkeeping were brought before the public dramatically when newspapers reported that the NSW Police Commissioner told the Police Integrity Commission that records relating to the establishment of the Crime Management Support Unit were missing. Police representatives assured State Records that a corporate records management system was being introduced progressively which included procedures for the preservation of emails as records. Nevertheless, in view of past experiences with the NSW Police, State Records decided to monitor progress with the new system. The police were not the only offenders in 2002. The NSW Ombudsman identified serious problems with recordkeeping by the Department of Community Services, while the Audit Office discovered deficiencies in the bus maintenance records of the State Transit Authority. Again, State Records was assured that rectification plans were well advanced, but decided to monitor the situation.⁵⁰³

But the official watchdogs were not perfect either. Later in 2002 it emerged that the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) had destroyed the original transcripts of Commission hearings between 1989 and 2001. These were clearly State archives. When this was raised with ICAC, the Commissioner initially adopted a defensive position, but later agreed that the destruction had been unauthorised and undertook to reconstitute the transcripts from backup tapes still held by ICAC.⁵⁰⁴

Microfilming of frequently used records had been continuing steadily for many years when resources were available, but it was already apparent that digitisation of the

archives would be the way of the future. After additional staff became available in 2001 it was possible to begin trial projects to gain experience in digital copying. The first major digitisation project to be completed was the scanning and transcription of the *Registry of Flash Men, 1841-46*, a record of Sydney's criminal underworld in that period.⁵⁰⁵ These projects were financed entirely by funds from the commercial activities of the GRR.

Following a scoping study in 2002, work began the following year on a long-term project to catalogue and copy the Colonial Secretary's Papers from 1826-56. These important archives, which consist of more than 2,000 boxes of letters are a major primary source for information about Australian history in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁶ The documents had been difficult for researchers to use, partly because of re-arrangement and damage over the years. When eventually completed, this challenging project will improve access and assist with locating individual letters.

When the Audit Office of NSW conducted a compliance review it found that a number of government agencies were performing poorly in their records management practices. This was particularly the case with smaller agencies that did not employ specialist staff for this purpose. Dr Shirley Fitzgerald, then Chairperson of the State Records Authority reacted vigorously: "State Records must encourage, set standards, monitor and cajole to ensure that public sector bodies make and manage the records they need ... to function efficiently."⁵⁰⁷ Archivists discussed the results of the review with senior staff in the agencies, and provided advice and guidance about suitable remedial action. Specifically, a *Better Skills Strategy* was developed, which included short training courses in recordkeeping that were delivered in regional areas as well as the city.⁵⁰⁸

State Records itself carried out a compliance survey of government recordkeeping in 2004, it achieved a remarkable one hundred per cent response from the 348 public offices subject to the Act, including all local government bodies and universities. The survey showed that seventy per cent of public offices used dedicated storage facilities, while a slightly higher percentage employed skilled records management staff. These results were notably better than reported in the Audit Office survey two years earlier, but they still showed there were significant gaps in observance. Even more disturbing was the revelation that almost one quarter of public offices were not able to use some of their records that are dependent on equipment or technology; effectively these records were already lost. There still was a long way to go before New South Wales could claim to meet acceptable standards as stipulated in the legislation.⁵⁰⁹

Obsolescence of technology is a worldwide problem for archivists in an era of rapid change. Since the 1990s, State Records had been advising public offices on digital recordkeeping. In 2008 it launched the revitalised *Future Proof* strategy to ensure that trustworthy digital records remain accessible over time. There are two objectives: firstly, to improve digital recordkeeping across government, and secondly, to implement a digital archiving facility for NSW government agencies. Guidelines and an ever-growing suite of related publications were prepared to enhance understanding of digital recordkeeping in the public sector.⁵¹⁰ In September 2008 these publications were complemented by an interactive *Future Proof* website.⁵¹¹

The Digital State Archives project captured the imagination of State Records' staff and Board members. A business case for funding the project was prepared and submitted to Government in September 2003. Although the initial bid was unsuccessful, it continued to be refined and pursued each year as the need became more urgent with the records of government business increasingly being 'born

digital'.⁵¹² The aim was to create a whole-of-government archiving solution by providing a centralised facility to accept, preserve and store digital records. Records would be converted into stable, long-term preservation formats that would ultimately be findable and accessible online. The project was estimated to cost \$3.7 million over the first three years, with a recurrent annual cost of \$900,000 afterwards.

Despite the overwhelming financial benefits, funding for the project kept falling to the end of the queue, in favour of proposals to expand the storage of the Art Gallery of NSW and to digitise the State Library card catalogue.⁵¹³ State Records always seemed to be the poor relation within the Arts portfolio. Perhaps it was a difficult concept to promote amongst politicians and bureaucrats whose vision was focussed on immediate results and visible achievements.⁵¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Premier issued a memorandum to government agencies in May 2009 directing them to observe the minimum requirements of the NSW Standard on digital recordkeeping, and giving a timetable for doing this.⁵¹⁵ This only increased the pressure on State Records to provide a solution.

Disappointment at the annual rejection of funding requests was intensified by the knowledge that the Public Record Office of Victoria had received a grant of \$60 million from their State Government for a similar project. Disappointment turned to serious concern when the Crown Solicitor advised the Board of State Records that if it did not create a Digital State Archive it could be in breach of its responsibilities under the legislation.⁵¹⁶ That opinion was reinforced by the Auditor General, who stated unequivocally that the Authority must establish a government digital archiving solution.⁵¹⁷ It was an obligation that could not be met unless the Government provided funding; this support materialised in February 2011, and recruitment of staff began immediately.

Recurrent annual funding cuts and the inability to obtain financial support for essential projects became an issue of increasing concern. The Board agreed to a proposal by David Roberts that State Records seek an independent review of its operations in an attempt to find a circuit breaker for this debilitating cycle.⁵¹⁸ When the current corporate plan expired in June 2005, the Government commissioned a performance review by the Council on the Cost and Quality of Government (CCQG). State Records deferred the preparation of a fresh corporate plan pending the outcome of that enquiry. The delay was disruptive because the process absorbed a disproportionate amount of executive time. Some staff found the prospect of change rather threatening, even though a moderating influence on the review panel was exerted by Alan Ventress as the State Records representative.⁵¹⁹ Of particular concern was the prospect that the Government Record Repository would be sold. Ultimately, CCQG concluded that State Records NSW was an 'efficient and prudently run organisation', and they endorsed the Digital State Archives project.⁵²⁰ This was reassuring, but did not lead to increased Government funding as hoped.

As early as 1994 the idea that New South Wales should establish a position of State Historian was first mooted. After all, the Sydney City Council had employed a City Historian since 1987, and it seemed ironic that the 'Premier State' in Australia could not also employ a prominent historian to advise the Government and document its affairs. The Government rejected that proposal, but did agree to the formation of the History Council of NSW in 1995 as a peak advisory body representing the history community. In 2002 the Chairperson of State Records (Dr Shirley Fitzgerald), who was also City Historian, together with Dr Lucy Taksa as President of the History Council, revived the proposal with the Ministry for the Arts. After several months'

consideration the Government again declined, ostensibly on the grounds that it could not make a long-term financial commitment of this nature. However, the Director General of the Ministry encouraged State Records to engage a practising historian to write an administrative history, and this is exactly what happened three years later.⁵²¹

The Colony of New South Wales had been granted responsible government in 1856, and as the 150th anniversary of that event approached in 2006, State Records decided to publish a two-part history of the administration of New South Wales, in conjunction with UNSW Press. Besides being a useful contribution to the historiography of the State, this was seen as providing essential background for those researchers who wish to understand the context in which the archives were created. Dr Hilary Golder was commissioned to write the first volume, published in 2005 as *Politics, Patronage and Public Works*, which covered the colonial period 1842-1900. The second volume, *Humble and Obedient Servants*, was written by Dr Peter Tyler and dealt with the post-Federation period, 1901-1960. This was published in 2006, with financial support from the Government's Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government Committee.

There was much excitement later in 2006 when the convict records held by the Authority (and those held by Archives of Tasmania and State Records Office of WA) were inscribed onto the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.⁵²² The records are one of the most important and extensive penology archives in the world. Their survival is remarkable considering the strong pressures early in the twentieth century to expunge the "convict stain" from Australian history, particularly by community leaders who wished to conceal possible convict ancestry.

For more than seventy years the Aborigines Protection Board and later the Aborigines Welfare Board collected wages and other entitlements due to Aboriginal people under their control, and placed portion of this money in trust fund accounts for them. In many cases the full amount owing was never repaid, until a public campaign caused the NSW Government to acknowledge the debt and establish the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme (ATFRS) in 2005.⁵²³ It then became necessary to establish the validity of many claims for reimbursement. ATFRS funded State Records to engage staff who would index and digitise the extensive records that could provide this evidence in a readily accessible format, and could carry out research into the claims.⁵²⁴

Meanwhile there were celebrations marking the opening of a state of the art building at the Kingswood complex in 2005, designed to meet the storage needs for non-current records until at least 2011. The self-funded Stage 6 incorporates the latest technology such as geothermal air conditioning, high thermal mass insulation and an argon gas fire suppression system.⁵²⁵ The building subsequently received a number of environmental awards, including the "Green Globe" as NSW Energy Champion.⁵²⁶

This table documents the inexorable growth of the Kingswood facility since the first building opened in 1975.

THE WESTERN SYDNEY RECORDS CENTRE

BUILDING	YEAR	SHELVING	PURPOSE
<u>ARCHIVES AUTHORITY</u>			
Stage 1	1975	45km	Archival standard storage (15 cells)
Stage 2, Phase 1	1978	15km	Temporary records

Stage 2, Phase 2	1983	60km	Temporary records
Services Building	1987		Search room, exhibition space, vaults
Stage 3	1994	39km	Archival standard storage, plus office
Stage 1 Annex	1995	20km	Temporary records
Stage 4	1998	100+km	Low use and short-term records
<i>STATE RECORDS</i>			
Stage 5	2000	65km	Archival standard storage
Stage 6	2005	137km	Non-current records
<i>TOTAL</i>	2011	481+km	

Six rented premises nearby in the Penrith area provide extra space for non-current records. Eventually, demand will reach a plateau as agencies shift to digital recordkeeping, but it is difficult to estimate long-term storage needs. However, the initial consequence has been a marked increase in requirements as agencies retire all their inactive paper records to the Western Sydney Records Centre. There is also a tendency to retain records longer to provide evidence for an increasingly litigious society.⁵²⁷ Many worthwhile activities of State Records are dependent upon funding from the Government Records Repository, which has become a life raft to support the Treasury funded activities.⁵²⁸ Accordingly, the Repository will need to develop new services in order to remain viable.⁵²⁹

Because the Repository operates in a highly competitive environment it is essential to provide a fast and reliable service for clients, so once again technology has come to the rescue. A sophisticated electronic inventory system known as RS-SQL has been installed, supplemented in 2009 by *GRRWeb*, giving clients access to information about their records through the internet, and allowing them to order services online as needed.⁵³⁰ This innovation is supplemented by a scan-on-demand service where clients can request a scan and receive direct electronic transmission of non-current records held in the Repository.⁵³¹

Faced with annual cutbacks in its allocation from NSW Treasury, the Board began to look at other ways to gain income so that it could maintain or even expand existing services. The Government Records Repository had been able to supplement the revenue allocation from its own surplus, but this was sometimes at the expense of their own projects. In 2006 a consultant was engaged to examine the feasibility of establishing a State Records Foundation; she concluded that the costs would not be commensurate with the possible returns. Once again, State Records would be in competition with the high-profile collections of the Art Gallery and State Library for the limited amount of philanthropy available. The Board somewhat reluctantly agreed that it was not in a position to set up a Foundation, but would pursue the limited fundraising strategies recommended as an alternative.⁵³² At its next meeting, the Board adopted the Director's proposal that the surplus land at Kingswood should be sold, provided that it could be rezoned for residential development, and that State Records could retain the full proceeds of the sale, estimated to be \$3.4 million.⁵³³ This possibility has been advanced periodically since the early years of the Authority and has always been contentious, but has never eventuated.

Increasing city rental costs, and expansion of the facilities at Kingswood acted as push-pull factors in the decision to transfer more of the records (and archivists), to the fringe of the metropolitan area. By 2006 the Sydney Records Centre had

contracted to a single floor in what is now known as Foreshore House. Since 2004 all original material had been located at Kingswood, but with an extensive collection of copied records, mostly microfilmed available for researchers in the city.⁵³⁴ The move caused some disquiet amongst staff and users, depending largely on where they lived. Access to the Western Sydney Records Centre by public transport is difficult, and for those with cars who live in eastern or southern suburbs of Sydney it can be a long trip. The Board even contemplated providing a shuttle bus service from the city.⁵³⁵ Only some executive staff, the Government Recordkeeping section and part of the Public Access section stayed at Globe Street, together with the reading room and exhibition gallery.

Reflecting frequent changes in the organisation of NSW public administration, the State Records Authority and its predecessor the Archives Authority have functioned within various departments or agencies, and thus reported to different Ministers from time to time - fifteen since its inception fifty years ago.⁵³⁶ In the same period there have been nine Board chairpersons and six chief executive officers. An intriguing sidelight is that three of those six chief executives had clergymen as fathers.⁵³⁷

When the State Records Authority was formed it was a statutory authority within the Arts portfolio, but from 1 November 2006 it reported to the Department of Commerce, under the broader umbrella of NSW Procurement, while from 10 December 2007 the Director reported to the Government Chief Information Officer, also within the Department of Commerce, and later re-named the Department of Services, Technology & Administration. The Council on the Cost and Quality of Government had recommended the transfer from the Arts portfolio to the Commerce portfolio because it placed State Records in the administrative mainstream, where most of its clients functioned. Alan Ventress soon observed the improved credibility of State Records amongst chief executives of other government agencies, who were reluctant to accept recordkeeping regulations promulgated by an arts body.⁵³⁸ It only reinforced the opinion of John Cross back in 1992 that there was a prevalent view “that Archives are only cultural tails attempting to wag administrative dogs.”⁵³⁹ Nevertheless, some traditionalists felt the move indicated where the Government stood on the old dilemma as to whether archives were a cultural or business activity.

Alan Ventress succeeded David Roberts as Director in June 2008. His appointment provided a neat symmetry with the first Principal Archivist, Gordon Richardson, who also had been Mitchell Librarian. This gave them extensive experience in dealing with original records, even though their training was as librarians rather than archivists. David Roberts had served as the inaugural Director for ten years since the creation of the State Records Authority in 1999, and he had been working with the former Archives Authority since 1993. To the surprise of most people, he decided he would not renew his employment contract, believing that “ten years was enough”. He had achieved his goals, with the obvious exception of the Digital State Archive. In his view, the *State Records Act* had proved its worth, despite some misgivings about the access provisions, and had served as a model for other jurisdictions.⁵⁴⁰

ALAN VENTRESS – THE CURRENT DIRECTOR

Alan Ventress, BA, DipLib, was appointed Director of the State Records Authority in June 2008, having previously been Associate Director (City) and Secretary to the Board since 30 April 2001. Born into a Yorkshire farming community in 1950, family circumstances compelled him to leave school at fifteen. He served with the British Army in Europe, then travelled extensively in Africa, South America and Asia before migrating to Australia.

Always an avid reader, he worked briefly as a library technician before being accepted for mature-age entry into University of New South Wales, where he majored in Asian History, while working as a truck driver and helping in his wife's small business.⁵⁴¹

After completing his library training, Alan worked at UNSW as a librarian, before becoming Collection Development Librarian at the State Library in 1987 and Mitchell Librarian in 1993.

He is active in many community and history advisory bodies, including *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, NSW Geographical Names Board, Dictionary of Sydney, Henry Parkes Foundation, and the History Council of NSW, of which he is a Life Member. He has been Vice-President of the Royal Australian Historical Society and was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2003 for "service to the Centenary of Federation celebrations in New South Wales."

Arriving from outside the archival profession, Alan Ventress was able to bring a fresh perspective to the organisation. He was fortunate to have a team of experienced managers whom he could rely upon to conduct their respective operations with considerable autonomy.⁵⁴² This suited his relaxed management style, and ensured a notably harmonious working environment. The long-serving John Burke, who had been Associate Director (Western Sydney), became Deputy Director of State Records under a revised management structure, based at Kingswood, while the Director remained in the city. The two positions of Associate Director were abolished at this time.

There are challenges on the horizon. One of the important statutory functions of State Records is cataloguing the archives collection, which in 2009 occupied 60km of shelving, with some ten million items in 20,000 series. A review of collection documentation was undertaken that year, which revealed the disturbing fact that large backlogs had developed in processing archives recently taken into custody, while there had been little progress in reducing long-term cataloguing arrears. Minor staffing adjustments could alleviate the situation, but the Director estimated that twenty people would take ten years to complete the task. The Government was unlikely to provide resources on this scale.⁵⁴³

MANAGERIALISM IN ACTION

Reading through the annual reports for the past thirty years, one is struck by the changing fashions in managerial practice. Over that period, almost every phrase in the management consultants' lexicon is dutifully pronounced, changing every three or four years. These reflect radical changes within NSW public service reporting practices, and were not initiated by State Records.

Beginning in 1961, annual reports documents were sober, bland descriptive reports to Parliament about the activities of the Authority over the preceding twelve months. In 1982 the title 'Functions' crept in, to be replaced in 1984 by a 'Charter', a schedule of 'Objectives' and a 'Programme'.

By 1992 these phrases had become 'Aims and Objectives', 'Purpose', and 'Corporate Goal', expanding in 1999 to include 'priorities', while by 2009 these headings had been superseded once again by 'Charter', together with 'Vision', 'Aims' and 'Values'.

Whether such innovations have had any impact on the quality of the services is a moot point. State Records owes its success to dedicated employees who believe in the importance of their work; people who in many cases have devoted their entire working life to the organisation. They have not required motivation by slogans.

In line with legislation and community expectations, recent annual reports have expanded to include sections devoted to Freedom of Information, Privacy, Equal Employment Opportunity, Occupational Health & Safety, an Action Plan for Women, Ethnic Affairs Priority, and the Disability Action Plan. State Records is very conscious of its responsibility in these areas, and performs exceptionally well.

It is hardly surprising that after their earlier experiences working in unsatisfactory places such as Shea's Creek, some staff displayed a healthy scepticism about the relevance of fashionable management jargon in an organisation whose primary purpose is the control of official records. This led to parody, as in this 'direction' from a mythical Office of the Objectives Organiser ("OOOO") -

*"It is a present management objective to encourage and facilitate easier communications, to instil non-discriminatory naming practices and to take affirmative action for those in a minority appellation situation. It has been noticed that a large number of male persons employed to work in the Archives Office of N.S.W. have the given name of John. It is, therefore, suggested that all male persons be encouraged to adopt voluntarily the first name of John ..."*⁵⁴⁴

We should look at State Records in a wider context. For many years there had been little communication between the various State archival organisations and their Commonwealth counterpart. Gradually, however, the chief executives of the State archives began meeting regularly as a semi-formal group under the auspices of the Australian Council of Archives to exchange ideas and compare problems. When the National Archives joined the group it became the Council of Federal, State and Territory Archives (COFTSA) whose aim was to achieve consistency in the management of records. This in turn became the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA) in 2004 when Archives New Zealand joined. At a more practical level there has been co-operation between State Records and National Archives in joint projects, and for a period an archivist from National Archives was stationed at Globe Street to assist researchers access material from the national collection. A dedicated computer terminal at the City Reading Room still provides direct access to the National Archives' databases.

State Records is an organisational member of the Australian Society of Archivists, the Records Management and Information Professionals of Australasia, the Australian Library and Information Association, and the International Council on Archives. Several individual staff members have been active in their relevant professional associations and are frequently invited to speak at local and international conferences or seminars, sometimes doing so at their own expense. Sharing of information at these functions ensures that State Records remains at the forefront of best practice. Over the years, senior executives have been sponsored for extensive investigations of overseas archival institutions.

Outsiders are surprised at the scale of the operations managed by the State Records Authority. At 30 June 2010 the total assets belonging to the people of New South Wales were valued at nearly \$62 million. Most of this sum is represented by land and buildings; obviously no cash value can be attributed to the irreplaceable records because there is no legal market for these documents. More than 130 staff are employed (61% women) to handle this activity. About 25% of these employees are professional archivists or are qualified in related disciplines such as librarianship. The operating surplus of \$2.9 million generated by the repository would be creditable

in many commercial businesses and is certainly unexpected for a government undertaking.⁵⁴⁵

Belying the common stereotype of archivists as recluses working in dusty backwaters – “loveable eccentrics” in David Roberts’ words⁵⁴⁶ - State Records staff are exemplary users of the latest technology to spread information through the community. In addition to the traditional contact through lectures, exhibitions and more recently, online databases, State Records has become an enthusiastic user of Web 2.0 technology, communicating through the World Wide Web, RSS Feeds, Blogs and social networking sites YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr. While surveys have shown that users of archives are mostly in an older demographic group, these initiatives with new media have enabled State Records to reach younger people. The number of visitors to the website consistently places it amongst the top five per cent of NSW government web sites, while the ‘Archives Outside’ Blog provides a forum for managers of archival collections around New South Wales and beyond.⁵⁴⁷

Archives were once regarded as a cemetery for old records, but there has been nothing static about the State Records Authority of New South Wales. It has moved from being a rather conservative, even reactionary, organisation to a very progressive one.⁵⁴⁸ It is an organisation responsive to public needs, and has sought to be at the forefront of archival practice, even though its ambitions are sometimes thwarted by niggardly governments.

One of the most striking features of State Records is the loyalty which the organisation generates. Many people have spent their entire careers working for the Archives Authority and its successor. At the beginning of 2011, with the exception of the current Director who is a relative newcomer, all seven senior managers had more than thirty years service. Several other senior archivists have served for more than twenty years, while one current employee, Dianne Morgan, has been with the Authority since its inception in 1961.⁵⁴⁹ Many graduated around the same time and developed a camaraderie that enabled them to persevere despite the unsatisfactory working conditions of earlier years. Some, like Christine Yeats, who is described by the current Director as “the high priestess of public access,”⁵⁵⁰ and her team of archivists willingly work beyond their normal hours of duty at weekends and in the evenings, visiting suburban and regional areas proselytising about State Records and the services that are offered, as well as accepting executive positions in historical societies and professional associations in order to spread the gospel. This contrasts with the attitude twenty years previously when community outreach was discouraged because it led to increased pressure on resources.⁵⁵¹

Some of these people are soon likely to retire from the workforce. While efforts are being made to capture some of the corporate knowledge with which they are imbued, it remains to be seen whether the generation that will succeed the “*ancien régime*” will show the same qualities of persistence in an era when organisational allegiance has lost its attraction and people seek a balanced lifestyle.

Only a few of many accomplishments could be mentioned in this history, yet it is plain that a sound foundation has been built during the half-century since the original legislation was enacted. Undoubtedly there will be further changes in coming years when current plans come to fruition. From the vantage point of this jubilee year

one can look forward to the centenary of State Records NSW with great optimism, as it continues “documenting our past; informing our future.”⁵⁵²

CHAPTER 1

- ¹ Sir Ninian Stephen, Governor-General of Australia, International Archives Week, 1984.
- ² *Historical Records of Australia (HRA)*, Series 1, Volume 1, pp.1-16. Commission and Instructions dated 12 October 1786. These have been reproduced from copies, as the originals cannot be traced.
- ³ *HRA*, Series 1, Vol.1, p.15, dated 25 April 1787.
- ⁴ The duties of the Commissary are described in G.D. Richardson, ‘The early archives of NSW...’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)*, Vol.59, Pt.2, June 1973, pp.83-4. Unlike many of his ilk, Andrew Miller was regarded as a diligent and honest incumbent.
- ⁵ ‘History of the Office (of Colonial Secretary)’, State Records website, www.records.nsw.gov.au.
- ⁶ *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)*, Volume 1, MUP, 1966, pp.236-240.
- ⁷ Governor King discovered that the Secretaries were tampering with convict sentencing records in return for a bribe. About 200 convicts benefitted from this practice until King kept the indents in his own possession. See Richardson, *op.cit.*, p.82. See G.D. Richardson, ‘The early archives of NSW...’, *JRAHS*, Vol.59, Pt.2, June 1973, p.82.
- ⁸ *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 4, p.538.
- ⁹ A. Hutchins & B.J. Stuckey, ‘The development of correspondence registration and record-keeping systems in New South Wales Government Departments, 1788-1910’, in *Papers of Library Association of Australia 13th Biennial Conference, Canberra*, LAA, Sydney, 1965, p.323. This article gives an exhaustive account of the procedures used in various departments during the nineteenth century.
- ¹⁰ M. Steven, ‘Palmer, John (1760 - 1833)’, *ADB*, Vol.2, 1967, pp 309-311.
- ¹¹ J. Pelosi, ‘Governor Macquarie’s impact on record keeping’, *History*, RAHS, December 2005, p.11.
- ¹² R.F. Holder, ‘Campbell, John Thomas’, *ADB*, Vol.1, 1966, pp.199-201.
- ¹³ For a list of all the Secretaries from 1788 to 1856, see Richardson, *op.cit.*, p.94.
- ¹⁴ Hutchins & Stuckey, *op.cit.*, pp.323-4.
- ¹⁵ A. Ventress, ‘State archives in New South Wales 1788-1960: A tale of tension and neglect’, *Australian Library Journal*, Vol.56, Nos.3/4, November 2007, pp.428-443.
- ¹⁶ G.D. Richardson, The archives of the Colonial Secretary, unpublished MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1951.
- ¹⁷ Alexander Britton, ‘Preface’, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol.1, Part 2, Sydney, Government Printer, 1892, p.xi.
- ¹⁸ G.D. Richardson, ‘The early archives of NSW...’, *JRAHS*, Vol.59, Pt.2, June 1973, p.80.
- ¹⁹ E.W. Dunlop, ‘Ovens, John’, *ADB*, Vol.2, 1967, p.305.
- ²⁰ Earl Bathurst to Sir Thomas Brisbane, 30 April 1822, *HRA*, i, X, 800-1.
- ²¹ C. Liston, ‘Sir Thomas Brisbane’, in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Sydney, Federation Press, p.134.
- ²² Earl Bathurst to Governor Darling, 14 July 1825, *HRA*, i, XI, 18.
- ²³ State Records NSW: NRS 906 [4/991], Ralph Darling, Governor’s minute No.81, 10 October 1827.
- ²⁴ C. Shergold, ‘A Note on the Destruction of New South Wales Convict Records’, *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol.11, 2009, pp.220-226.
- ²⁵ ‘McLeay, Alexander’, *ADB*, Vol.2, 1967, pp.177-180.
- ²⁶ State Records NSW: 2/1844, Colonial Secretary, Special Bundles, Administrative and domestic papers, 1826-8.
- ²⁷ Unlike Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania), the convict conduct registers have not survived.
- ²⁸ State Records NSW: NRS 906 [4/991], Ralph Darling, Governor’s minute No.81, 10 October 1827.
- ²⁹ M. E. Osborne, ‘Thomson, Sir Edward Deas’, *ADB*, Vol.2, MUP, 1967, pp 523-527.
- ³⁰ *Deed Registration Act*, 1843.
- ³¹ State Records Archives Investigator – Agency Detail, Registrar General, Administrative history note.
- ³² The oldest English archive, the *Domesday Book*, dates from 1086.
- ³³ *SMH*, 12 July 1848, p.2.
- ³⁴ *SMH*, 2 February 1850, p.4. During a somewhat turbulent political career, “Slippery Charlie” Cowper served as Premier on five occasions. See H. Golder, *Politics, Patronage and Public Works*, UNSW Press, 2005.
- ³⁵ *SMH*, 9 December 1852.

- ³⁶ Emperor Justinian (483-565AD), quoted by T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives. Principles and Techniques*, Melbourne, 1956, p.1.
- ³⁷ Australian Law Reform Commission, *Report No.85*, 1998, Chapter 2.
- ³⁸ 'History of the Office (of Colonial Secretary)', State Records website, www.records.nsw.gov.au.
- ³⁹ *SMH*, 16 April 1858, p.5. The letter refers to the Premier's speech the previous evening, justifying the delay.
- ⁴⁰ *SMH*, 15 April 1858, pp.1 & 5.
- ⁴¹ Golder, *op.cit.*, p.143.
- ⁴² *SMH*, 29 August 1860, p.2.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *SMH*, 10 July 1861, p.8.
- ⁴⁵ G. Powell, 'The origins of the Australian Joint Copying Project', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.4, No.5, November 1971.
- ⁴⁶ *SMH*, 27 July 1863, p.2.
- ⁴⁷ This was the forerunner to the present State Library of New South Wales, and was created when the colonial Government took over the bankrupt Australian Subscription Library.
- ⁴⁸ *SMH*, 23 December 1878, p.3.
- ⁴⁹ A. Britton, 'Preface', *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol.1, Part 2, Sydney, Government Printer, 1893, p.viii. As in NSW, many of the early documents had to be transcribed from originals or copies held elsewhere, although in the case of Canada this meant both England and France.
- ⁵⁰ J.H. Heaton to H. Parkes, July 1879, Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, NRS 905 [1/2452]. George Heap Stanley came to Sydney in 1853 to form the first Unitarian congregation in Australia. Already a British graduate, he became one of the first law students of the University of Sydney, graduating as Doctor of Laws in 1866. *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, 1958, Vol.9, p.73. In 1864 he became headmaster of a boys' school. E. Wilson, *The Story of Sydney Unitarian Church*, c.1974, p.3.
- ⁵¹ J.H. Heaton to H. Parkes, 28 March 1882, Parkes Papers, Vol.18, p.106, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW [ML A.875]. After returning to England, Heaton became a politician and postal reformer as Sir John Henniker Heaton. *ADB*, Vol.4, 1972, pp.372-3.
- ⁵² A. Garran (ed.), *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, Vol.1, 1886, p.80.
- ⁵³ For example, see the speech of D. Hunter MP, during debate on the introduction of the Archives Bill, 19 October 1960, NSW Parliament, *Hansard*. There were said to be prominent citizens who were relieved that some convict records were destroyed.
- ⁵⁴ Potter's predecessor as NSW Government Printer, Thomas Richards, directed the publication in 1883 of the 800-page *An epitome of the official history of New South Wales, from the foundation of the colony, in 1788 ... compiled chiefly from the official and parliamentary records of the colony...*
- ⁵⁵ G.B. Barton, *History of New South Wales from the Records*, Vol.1, 1889, Preface, p.v.
- ⁵⁶ G.B. Barton to Hon. T.W. Garrett, Henry Parkes Correspondence, Vol.6, p.39, 26 July 1888. Mitchell Library [ML A876]
- ⁵⁷ John M. Ward, 'Barton, George Burnett (1836-1901)', *ADB*, Vol.3, 1969, pp.113-115. The dispute was not all one-sided; the government insisted on having censorship rights over the text, which Barton strongly opposed. See Ann Mitchell, 'Doctor Frederick Watson and *Historical Records of Australia*', *Historical Studies*, Vol.20, No. 79, October 1982, p.172.
- ⁵⁸ Britton, *op. cit.*, p.vi.
- ⁵⁹ *SMH*, 20 January 1894, p.4. The un-named reviewer may have been the Editor of the newspaper.
- ⁶⁰ B.H. Fletcher, 'Bladen, Frank Murcott (1858-1912)', *ADB*, Supplementary volume, MUP, 2005, pp.33-34. There are actually eight books in the series, because Volume 1 was published in two Parts.
- ⁶¹ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1903, p.5.
- ⁶² Guy Featherstone, 'Bonwick, James (1817-1906)', *ADB*, Vol.3, 1969, pp.190-192.
- ⁶³ Ventress, *op. cit.* Lord Brabourne was a distant relative of Sir Joseph Banks, and sold to the NSW government papers and letters of Banks, Flinders and Bligh, amongst others, for £375.
- ⁶⁴ Henry Parkes Correspondence, Vol.2, p.363, Bonwick to Parkes, 8 May 1885. Mitchell Library [ML A872]
- ⁶⁵ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, *op.cit.*
- ⁶⁶ R.F. Doust, The administration of official archives in NSW 1870-1960, M.Lib. thesis, UNSW, 1969, p.45. Also see R.F. Doust, 'James Bonwick, Archivist of New South Wales', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.3, No.8, May 1969, pp.9-15. For more information about the limitations of Bonwick's work, see Powell, *op.cit.*, p.12.
- ⁶⁷ A. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p.183.
- ⁶⁸ Parkes correspondence, Vol.5, p.47, 2 November 1891. [ML A875].
- ⁶⁹ Bonwick to Parkes, 2 October 1892, Parkes Papers, Vol.5, p.45. [ML A875].

- ⁷⁰ *SMH*, 11 August 1887, p.4.
⁷¹ *SMH*, 24 October 1890, p.4.
⁷² D.S. MacMillan, 'Archives in New South Wales – the situation in 1956', *American Archivist*, Vol.20, January 1957, p.50.
⁷³ F.M. Bladen, Manuscript notebook on archives, p.12. Mitchell Library [ML MSS C710]. Bladen represented the new Commonwealth Government at a Congress on Historical Studies.
⁷⁴ Schellenberg, *op. cit.*, p.17.
⁷⁵ D.J. Jones, 'State Librarians I have known since 1826', *Australian Library Journal*, Vol.55, No.4, November 2006, p.348.
⁷⁶ Fletcher, *ADB*, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER 2

- ⁷⁷ H.L. White, Foreword to T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives. Principles and Techniques*, Melbourne, 1956, p.viii.
⁷⁸ Russell Doust, 'The administration of official archives in New South Wales 1870-1960', MLib thesis, UNSW, 1969, pp.65-70, and see Appendix B of Doust's thesis for the full text of the report. MacCallum was Professor of Modern Languages and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Sydney, but ceased to be President of the Trustees in 1912 and could not follow-through on his recommendations.
⁷⁹ *ibid*, p.78.
⁸⁰ Records "dealing with the antecedents of early settlers" were excluded from this directive, and no search of other records lodged with the Library would be permitted without approval from the relevant Minister. Premier's Department file 10/3547, 18 August 1910, quoted in Doust, *op.cit.*, p.93. The current location of some files cited by Doust is unknown.
⁸¹ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.90. This disregarded one of the core principles of archival practice.
⁸² Alan Ventress, 'State archives in New South Wales 1788-1960: A tale of tension and neglect', *Australian Library Journal*, Vol.56, Nos.3/4, November 2007, pp.428-443.
⁸³ H.J. Gibbney, 'Prehistory of an archives', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.4, No.6, February 1972, p.4. . For a detailed account of Watson's long-running disagreements with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Committee, see Ann Mitchell, 'Doctor Frederick Watson and *Historical Records of Australia*', *Historical Studies*, Vol.20, No.79, October 1982, pp.171-197.
⁸⁴ Ann M. Mitchell, 'Watson, James Frederick William (1878-1945)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)*, Vol.12, Melbourne University Press, 1990, pp.398-399.
⁸⁵ Ida Leeson, Mitchell Librarian, 'Archives in New South Wales', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, Vol.1, No.2, October 1940, p.98. Miss Leeson describes several other transcription projects carried out for Mitchell Library.
⁸⁶ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.80. Holman had been Acting Premier on the occasion of the first deputation.
⁸⁷ Ventress, *op.cit.*
⁸⁸ Bessie Threadgill, 'Development of archival work in Australia', *Report of Proceedings, Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, 18th meeting, Perth, 1926, p.433.
⁸⁹ A.G. Kingsmill, *Witness to History*, Sydney, Alpha Books, 1972, p.2.
⁹⁰ Ida Leeson, Mitchell Librarian, 'Archives in New South Wales', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, Vol.1, No.2, October 1940, p.96.
⁹¹ Parliament of NSW, *Archives Act No.46*, 1960, S.14(1).
⁹² Doust, *op.cit.*, p.89.
⁹³ *ibid*, p.109.
⁹⁴ Sir Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archives Administration*, 1937, p.11
⁹⁵ T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives. Principles and Techniques*, Melbourne, 1956, p.16. The author's initials are sometimes shown as "E.R." because of the mistaken belief that his nickname, "Ted" was an abbreviation of Edward, rather than Theodore.
⁹⁶ Probably written by Michael Allen.
⁹⁷ Threadgold, *op.cit.*, p.434.
⁹⁸ *ibid*, p.96.
⁹⁹ Quoted by Doust, *op.cit.*, p.113.
¹⁰⁰ H. Selkirk, 'National archives', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol.4, No.9, 1919, p.470.
¹⁰¹ Ventress, *op.cit.*
¹⁰² Doust, *op.cit.*, p.119.
¹⁰³ Threadgold, *op.cit.*, p.434.

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- ¹⁰⁴ J.W. Ferguson, Premier's Department, letter to Royal Australian Historical Society, 6 June 1940, RAHS Archives, correspondence files 2.64.17, 6/2.
- ¹⁰⁵ Secretary, Royal Australian Historical Society to Prime Minister R.G. Menzies, 10 September 1940. RAHS Archives, correspondence files 2.64.17, 6/2. Similar letters were evidently sent to all State Premiers, although the only response filed in the RAHS archives is from Queensland, 23 September 1940, stating that there was no proposal that historical records should be destroyed.
- ¹⁰⁶ B. Smith, 'Lost memory: the paper drives of World War II', *Australian Library Journal*, 47(4), November 1998, p.311.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ventress, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁰⁸ B. Fletcher, *Magnificent Obsession*, Sydney, 2007, p.144. This move took place in December 1941, almost immediately after Japan entered the war, and the threat to Australia became manifest. For further details see D.J. Jones, *A Source of Inspiration & Delight*, Sydney, 1988, p.97.
- ¹⁰⁹ P.R. Eldershaw, 'Archives and the winds of change', *Papers of Library Association of Australia Conference*, No.14, 1967, p.124.
- ¹¹⁰ Ventress, *op.cit.*
- ¹¹¹ G. Powell, 'The origins of the Australian Joint Copying Project', *Archives & Manuscripts*, Vol.4, No.5, November 1971, pp.22-23.
- ¹¹²
- ¹¹³ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.133.
- ¹¹⁴ Public Service Board [52/14770]. Now at State Records NSW [14/6710].
- ¹¹⁵ Quoted by Fletcher, *op.cit.*, p.179.
- ¹¹⁶ M. Jacobs, 'Lobbyists for the archives: Some reminiscences', *Record*, 2006, p.8.
- ¹¹⁷ "Goldsbrough (Mort) House" was an office and commercial building at 11 Loftus Street, sometimes known as 5 Macquarie Place. It was demolished in 1974 as part of the Gateway development.
- ¹¹⁸ D.S. MacMillan, 'The future of Australian archives', *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, No.25, November 1955, p.82.
- ¹¹⁹ H.J. Gibbney, 'Reflections on Australian archives', Library Association of Australia Conference No.13, 1965, Vol.1, p.250.
- ¹²⁰ Ventress, *op.cit.* This trend was particularly noticeable in the USA State of Wisconsin.
- ¹²¹ Allan Horton became University Librarian at the University of New South Wales in 1965, following the retirement of his mentor, J.W. Metcalfe.
- ¹²² Doust, *op.cit.*, p.141.
- ¹²³ A. Horton, Library Association of Australia Archives Section, *Occasional Paper No.1*, 1954, p.5.
- ¹²⁴ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1956, p.7.
- ¹²⁵ Schellenberg, *op.cit.*
- ¹²⁶ Sir Hilary Jenkinson, *Selected Writings*, Gloucester, 1980, p.342.
- ¹²⁷ M. Jacobs, 'A new approach to departmental records', *Public Administration*, Vol.XIV, March 1955, p.122.
- ¹²⁸ J.W. Metcalfe, 'Miss Jacobs and archives', *Public Administration*, Vol.XIV, December 1955, pp.250-254.
- ¹²⁹ M. Jacobs, 'Miss Jacobs and the archives', *Public Administration*, Vol.XV, 1956, p.66.
- ¹³⁰ P.R. Eldershaw, 'Archives', *Public Administration*, Vol.XV, December 1956, p.334.
- ¹³¹ Ventress, *op.cit.* R.J. Heffron was Minister for Education at this time, and in October 1959 became Premier.
- ¹³² J.W. Metcalfe, letter to Hon R.J. Heffron, Minister for Education, 1 August 1956. Copy in Department of Works, Buildings Files, SRNSW [10/3029], Public Service Board file B1502/22.
- ¹³³ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.157.
- ¹³⁴ Quoted in Archives Authority of NSW, *Government Records in New South Wales from 1788 to the 21st Century. A proposal for public records legislation for NSW*, November 1990, p.27. Under Secretary and Permanent Head of the Attorney-General's Department was S.W. Ramsay.
- ¹³⁵ Fletcher, *op.cit.*, p.239. After the death of Wurth in 1960, the power and prestige of the Public Service Board began to decline until it was disbanded in 1988.
- ¹³⁶ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.170.
- ¹³⁷ State Records Archives Investigator – Agency Number 103, Administrative history note. In fact, the Library had been a statutory body since 1899.
- ¹³⁸ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1957, p.7. For the first time, the sub-heading "State Archives" appeared in this annual report.
- ¹³⁹ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1958, p.8.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Daily Telegraph (DT)*, 24 July 1957, p.7.
- ¹⁴¹ *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 2 August 1957, p.2.

- ¹⁴² Ministerial note on Education Department file 55/622/62471, 20 August 1957. Quoted by Doust, *op.cit.*, p.179.
- ¹⁴³ M. Jacobs, 2006, p.12. Documentary evidence of this meeting cannot be located, and Russell Doust points out that Jacobs' article appeared almost fifty years after the events in which she took part. Other evidence suggests that it may have taken place in 1959 rather than 1957.
- ¹⁴⁴ *SMH*, 29 December 1957, p.2. The 'special correspondent' was probably one of the activists, who was prohibited by Public Service Board regulations from expressing views on policy issues in the press.
- ¹⁴⁵ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.178. David MacMillan and Alan Birch of the Department of Economic History at the University of Sydney set up the Business Archives Council in 1954.
- ¹⁴⁶ O.H. Wyndham, Letter to the Editor, *SMH*, 23/5/56. The Principal Librarian, who described it as an historical museum, not an archive, ridiculed this proposal.
- ¹⁴⁷ D. MacMillan, *SMH*, 8 January 1958, p.2.
- ¹⁴⁸ J. Metcalfe, *SMH*, 14 January 1958, p.2.
- ¹⁴⁹ A. Horton, 'Archival backgrounds in New South Wales', *American Archivist*, Vol.22, January 1959, p.46.
- ¹⁵⁰ D.S. MacMillan, 'Archives in New South Wales – the situation in 1956', *American Archivist*, Vol.20, January 1957, p.51.
- ¹⁵¹ Principal Librarian to Minister for Education, 4 September 1959. Education Department [59/622/60748]
- ¹⁵² RAHS archives, Records Survey Committee, correspondence file 1959, Series 2.108.41. The Committee was actually formed in 1958, but did not meet until 1959.
- ¹⁵³ RAHS, *Annual Report...1958*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1959, p.7.
- ¹⁵⁴ RAHS archives, Records Survey Committee, Report to Council, 14 April 1961. Series 2.123.48.
- ¹⁵⁵ Letter, Aubrey Halloran, solicitor, to Secretary, Royal Australian Historical Society, 30 September 1959, in which he refers to an article in the previous day's *Daily Mirror*. RAHS archives, Correspondence files, 1959. Series 2.108.41. Halloran identified the wrong newspaper. It was actually an article by David Frith, 'Our history is in a shocking shed', in *The Sun*, 29 September 1959.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1959, p.12. This is different to the argument used previously, when it was claimed that departments were reluctant to place records in the hands of the Trustees.
- ¹⁵⁷ Doust, *op.cit.*, p.184. Education Department minute, 16 February 1960 [59/622/60748]. If not written by Wyndham, certainly approved by him.
- ¹⁵⁸ RAHS, *Annual Report...1960*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1961, p.14.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 21 September 1960, p.2.
- ¹⁶⁰ *NSW Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Session 1960-61, pp.1186-1188; 1333-1340; 1376-1385.
- ¹⁶¹ NSW Parliament, *Archives Act, No.46*, 1960.
- ¹⁶² R. Appleton (ed), *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, 5th edition, Vol.1, 1988, p.190. Also see website – www.text.archives.sa.gov.au/about/history.html
- ¹⁶³ *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1961, pp.14-15.
- ¹⁶⁴ *NSW Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Session 1960-61, p.1383.

CHAPTER 3

- ¹³⁵ Russell Doust. 'The administration of official archives in New South Wales 1870-1960', MLib thesis, UNSW, 1969, p.190.
- ¹⁶⁶ Archives Authority of New South Wales, *Report to Parliament of NSW*, April 1962.
- ¹⁶⁷ P.J. Tyler, *Humble and Obedient Servants*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2006, p.227.
- ¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.217.
- ¹⁶⁹ Public Service Board, *65th Annual Report*, 30 June 1961, p.10.
- ¹⁷⁰ NSW Parliament, *Archives Act, No.46*, 1960, S.13(1).
- ¹⁷¹ D.J. Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
- ¹⁷² Doust, *op.cit.*, p.214.
- ¹⁷³ State Records Archives Investigator – Agency Detail, Agency number 103, Administrative history note. Also see B. Fletcher, *Magnificent Obsession*, Sydney, 2007.
- ¹⁷⁴ Archives Authority of NSW, Minutes of meeting, 29 June 1961, Item 4(a).
- ¹⁷⁵ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1961*, Sydney, 1962, p.2.
- ¹⁷⁶ R.F. Doust, interview, 10 February 2010.
- ¹⁷⁷ Fletcher, *op.cit.*, p.242.
- ¹⁷⁸ G.D. Richardson, 'The Archives Act of 1960', *Bibliotexts*, Vol.17, Nos. 1-2, January-February 1964, p.5. The Act did give the Authority the right to purchase documents that were offered for sale.
- ¹⁷⁹ See, for example, Archives Authority, Minutes, 12 March 1962, Item 5(a).

¹⁸⁰ D. Troy, interview, 8 March 2010.
¹⁸¹ Archives Authority of New South Wales, Minutes, 11 September 1961, Item 7(B).
¹⁸² Minutes, 9 April 1962, Item 7(a).
¹⁸³ Doust, interview, 10 February 2010.
¹⁸⁴ D. Troy, interview, 8 March 2010.
¹⁸⁵ A. Ventress, interview, 17 December 2010.
¹⁸⁶ Archives Authority, Minutes, 18 October 1966, Item 6(B).
¹⁸⁷ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1966*, Sydney, 1967, p.2.
¹⁸⁸ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1972*, Sydney, 1973, p.4.
¹⁸⁹ J. Cross, interview, 22 February 2010. John Cross commenced working at the Public Library in 1963, and later became Principal Archivist for nearly twenty years.
¹⁹⁰ B. Berzins (Irving), 'AONSW reminiscences', correspondence with author, 7 October 2010. Baiba Berzins became Mitchell Librarian, 1980-87.
¹⁹¹ Cross, interviews, 22 February 2010 and 20 January 2011.
¹⁹² *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales*, 1905, para.15.
¹⁹³ State Records Archives Investigator – Agency Detail, Archives Authority of New South Wales, Administrative history note.
¹⁹⁴ Doust, interview, 10 February 2010.
¹⁹⁵ Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
¹⁹⁶ Archives Authority of NSW, Disposal Recommendation DR 292, approved 11 December 1961.
¹⁹⁷ *Archives Act*, 1960, S.10.
¹⁹⁸ Reported in Minutes, Archives Authority, 9 July 1972, Item 7(A).
¹⁹⁹ Minutes, 12 November 1962, Item 7(B). This site was located in Kelly's electorate.
²⁰⁰ The recommendation to the Minister was made in 1963; see Minutes, 8 April 1963, Item 5(C). At this stage the repository was seen as a joint venture with the Public Library.
²⁰¹ Doust, interview, 10 February 2010. Dr Wyndham attended Doust's clergyman father's church at Turramurra, so their relationship extended beyond official spheres.
²⁰² The State Office Block was built on the original site of the Public Library of NSW, diametrically opposite the Mitchell Library.
²⁰³ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1964*, Sydney, 1965, p.3.
²⁰⁴ This property was at the rear of 24 Jamison Street.
²⁰⁵ *Report ... for 1965*, Sydney, 1966, p.5.
²⁰⁶ Archives Authority, Minutes, 12 April 1965, Item 5(C).
²⁰⁷ R. McGreal, Acting Principal Librarian, letter to R.F. Doust, Acting Principal Archivist, 22 March 1965. (SRNSW file AO.69/745)
²⁰⁸ See AO.69/745 for this correspondence between 1965 and 1980; the file is 10cm thick.
²⁰⁹ Minutes, 14 February 1966, Item 6(D).
²¹⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 5 July 1963.
²¹¹ Archives Authority, Minutes, 8 July 1963, Item 7(B).
²¹² Minutes, 9 October 1967, Item 6(A). Transcripts of the talks are held in SRNSW file 67/968.
²¹³ Doust, interview, 10 February 2010. Ross Bonthorne later had a distinguished architectural career in private practice, and as a local government Alderman.
²¹⁴ *Report ... for 1964*, Sydney, 1965, p.3.
²¹⁵ Archives Authority, Minutes, 14 June 1974, Item 6(A).
²¹⁶ *Report ... for 1972*, Sydney, 1973, p.6.
²¹⁷ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1973*, Sydney, 1974, p.2.
²¹⁸ Department of Education file 59/622/60748. Quoted by Doust, 1969, *op.cit.*, p.183. These confidential files were made available to Doust by Wyndham for the purposes of his thesis research.
²¹⁹ *NSW Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Session 1960-61, pp.1186-1188; 1333-1340; 1376-1385.
²²⁰ A detailed account of this debate may be found in Don Boadle, 'Origins and development of the New South Wales regional repositories system', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.22, No.2, November 1995, pp.274-288.
²²¹ A. Horton, 'A further note on the problem of local records', *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, No.27, November 1956, p.335.
²²² Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
²²³ Minutes, 14 October 1963, Item 5(A). The University accepted this offer on 10 August 1964. University of New England had statutory representation on the Archives Authority, but the newer universities of Macquarie and Newcastle did not.
²²⁴ Minutes, 10 August 1964, Item 5(C).

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- ²²⁵ Minutes, 9 October 1967, Item 8. This discussion arose in connection with a proposal by the Department of Attorney General and Justice to transfer certain court records to Nundle Historical Society.
- ²²⁶ Minutes, 14 December 1970, Item 6(A).
- ²²⁷ J. Burke, correspondence to author, 20 October 2010.
- ²²⁸ G.D. Richardson, 'A note on the practice of the Archives Authority of New South Wales', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.3, No.4, May 1967, p.16.
- ²²⁹ Doust, 1969, *op.cit.*, Chapter XVI, pp.210-219.
- ²³⁰ D. Troy, personal correspondence, 9 March 2010. Russell Doust and John Cross give slightly different accounts. See also Archives Authority of NSW, Disposal recommendation DR631, 12 April 1965.
- ²³¹ Babette Smith, *Australia's Birthstain*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2008.
- ²³² Minutes, 13 December 1965, Item 5(D).
- ²³³ *Report ... for 1968*, Sydney, 1969, p.4. Also see Minutes, 8 April 1968, Item 8.
- ²³⁴ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1973*, Sydney, 1974, p.10.
- ²³⁵ This may raise a wider question for future research – what is the link between archives, religion and genealogy? It is noteworthy that three of the six holders of the position of Principal Archivist/Director, had fathers who were clergymen (Doust, Maclean, Roberts).
- ²³⁶ Troy, interview, 8 March 2010.
- ²³⁷ Major-General J.R. Stevenson, who was Clerk of the Parliaments, asked this question. Minutes, 9 February 1970, Item 8(C).
- ²³⁸ (Sir) Charles Cutler, the Minister for Education, was also Deputy Premier. G.F. Freudenstein, the Minister for Cultural Activities was the second-lowest ranking Minister in Cabinet.
- ²³⁹ *Archives (Amendment) Act*, 1973, S.3.
- ²⁴⁰ Minutes, 11 October 1971, Item 6(B).
- ²⁴¹ Minutes, 14 February 1972, Item 8.
- ²⁴² Minutes, 10 April 1972, Item 5(A).
- ²⁴³ Minutes, 12 February 1973, Item 6(B). Legally, the Archives Authority did not own the land, which was vested in the Department of Public Works on behalf of the Authority.
- ²⁴⁴ See Archives Authority correspondence file, 'Government Records Repository, Kingswood', (SRNSW file AO.69/745)
- ²⁴⁵ *Report ... for 1972*, Sydney, 1973, p.1.
- ²⁴⁶ *Report ... for 1974*, Sydney, 1975, p.13.
- ²⁴⁷ Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
- ²⁴⁸ D.J. Jones, *A Source of Inspiration & Delight*, Sydney, 1988.
- ²⁴⁹ Archives Authority, Minutes, 13 June 1975, Item 3.
- ²⁵⁰ Troy, interview, 8 March 2010.
- ²⁵¹ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1973*, Sydney, 1974, p.2.
- ²⁵² *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1972*, Sydney, 1973, p.1.
- ²⁵³ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1974*, Sydney, 1975, p.2.
- ²⁵⁴ Doust, interview, 10 February 2010.
- ²⁵⁵ D.J. Jones, *A Source of Inspiration & Delight*, Sydney, 1988.
- ²⁵⁶ R.F. Doust, correspondence to author, 11 February 2010.
- ²⁵⁷ R.F. Doust, personal correspondence to the author, 11 February 2010.
- ²⁵⁸ Fletcher, *op.cit.* Also Doust, interview, 10 February 2010.
- ²⁵⁹ *Who's Who in Australia*, Melbourne, Herald and Weekly Times, 1977, p.295.
- ²⁶⁰ Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
- ²⁶¹ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1974*, Sydney, 1975, p.5.
- ²⁶² Minutes, 13 December 1974, Item 6(C).
- ²⁶³ H.J. Gibbney, 'Reflections on Australian archives', Library Association of Australia Conference No.13, 1965, Vol.1, p.258.
- ²⁶⁴ SRNSW file 72/390.
- ²⁶⁵ Minutes, 11 October 1974, Item 6(B).
- ²⁶⁶ Minutes, 12 December 1974, Item 4. Also J. Burke, correspondence to author, 29 November 2010.
- ²⁶⁷ *Task Force Report on Records Management within the New South Wales Public Service*, 1975, p.41, Recommendation 27.
- ²⁶⁸ Cross, interview, 20 January 2011.
- ²⁶⁹ Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
- ²⁷⁰ Minutes, 12 December 1975, Item 6(A).

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- ²⁷¹ It was rumoured that to avoid repercussions, timid officials would set the retention date to coincide with their retirement from the public service.
- ²⁷² Minutes, 12 December 1975, Item 6(B).
- ²⁷³ P.R. Eldershaw, 'Archives and the winds of change', *Papers of Library Association of Australia Conference*, No.14, 1967, p.124.
- ²⁷⁴ Archives Authority of NSW, Disposal Recommendation DR 292, approved 11 December 1961. This procedure pre-dated the establishment of the Archives Authority. The first Disposal Recommendation was recorded in October 1955, when the Principal Librarian approved the destruction of a Botanic Gardens postage stamp account book but required a groundsman's diary to be preserved permanently.
- ²⁷⁵ Hansard – Legislative Assembly, 18 March 1975.
- ²⁷⁶ The client was actually the Public Service Board, which was responsible for staffing and accommodation of State instrumentalities such as the Archives Authority. Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority (now the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority) was established in 1970 to manage the redevelopment of a run-down historic part of Sydney on the western side of Sydney Cove.
- ²⁷⁷ Archives Authority, Minutes, 12 December 1975, Item 3.

CHAPTER 4

- ²⁷⁸ I. Maclean, 'Australian experience in record and archives management', *American Archivist*, Vol.22, No.4, October 1959, p.387.
- ²⁷⁹ Archives Authority of New South Wales, Minutes of meeting, 13 February 1976, Item 3. Following interviews in December, the position was re-advertised and additional candidates were considered by the Public Service Board.
- ²⁸⁰ Maclean's achievements are commemorated in S. McKemmish & M. Piggott, *The Records Continuum. Ian Maclean and Australian Archives first fifty years*, Clayton, Ancora Press, 1994.
- ²⁸¹ National Archives of Australia, 'Your story, our history', internet website <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/research-grants>
- ²⁸² Obituary, *The Age*, Melbourne, 26 March 2003.
- ²⁸³ D.J. Cross, interviews, 22 February 2010 and 20 January 2011.
- ²⁸⁴ D. Roberts, interview, 12 December 2010.
- ²⁸⁵ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1978*, Sydney, 1979, p.5.
- ²⁸⁶ D. Troy, interview 8 March 2010, and D.J. Cross, interview 20 January 2011.
- ²⁸⁷ Maclean, op.cit.
- ²⁸⁸ D. Patenall, interview 6 December 2010.
- ²⁸⁹ Archives Authority, Minutes, 11 June 1976, Item 3. Priorities had to be established in order to meet the demand.
- ²⁹⁰ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1978*, Sydney, 1979, p.4. There were 131 disposal recommendations in 1976, 176 in 1977, and 380 in 1978.
- ²⁹¹ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1976*, Sydney, 1977, p.2. The building was located at 8-18 Bent Street.
- ²⁹² Archives Authority, Minutes, 10 December 1976, Item 8(F). The Minister was Hon. W.H. Haigh.
- ²⁹³ Records Reduction Campaign. Progress report prepared for Archives Authority meeting of 12 August 1977, p.1.
- ²⁹⁴ The Type 1 (T1) records storage box is 18 x 25 x 40cm. Five boxes fit neatly on a standard 900mm shelf.
- ²⁹⁵ *Report ... for 1977*, p.2.
- ²⁹⁶ State Records NSW, *Vital Signs*, No.5, December 2003, p.14.
- ²⁹⁷ Minutes, 9 December 1977, Item 8(F).
- ²⁹⁸ Archives Authority of NSW, *Government Records in New South Wales from 1788 to the 21st Century. A proposal for public records legislation for NSW*, November 1990, p.27.
- ²⁹⁹ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1978*, Sydney, 1979, p.3.
- ³⁰⁰ Cross, interview 22 February 2010. Antipathy between senior staff became so serious that the Board had to intervene, Archives Authority of NSW, Minutes of meeting, 14 July 1978, Item 5(C).
- ³⁰¹ Archives Authority of NSW, Minutes of meeting, 10 August 1979, Item 1.
- ³⁰² I. Frykberg, 'Wran seeks curb on secret dossiers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 March 1978.
- ³⁰³ Minutes, 14 April 1978, Item 8(B).
- ³⁰⁴ Minutes, 14 July 1978, Item 3(B). [SRNSW file 78/358]
- ³⁰⁵ M. Brown, 'Big gaps in police files, ICAC told', *SMH*, 7 October 1993, p.8.
- ³⁰⁶ Reported in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 March 1997. Archives Authority, Minutes, 11 April 1997, Item 6(xi).
- ³⁰⁷ Archives Authority, Minutes, 9 December 1998, Item 6(v).

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- ³⁰⁸ Archives Authority, Minutes, 14 October 1983, Item 5(B). Another circumstance in which this issue arose related to the records of children who had been acquitted of an alleged offence.
- ³⁰⁹ D.J. Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
- ³¹⁰ Errol Simper, 'Two centuries of NSW's history moves to a new home', *Canberra Times*, 7 November 1978.
- ³¹¹ D. Troy, interview, 8 March 2010. Christine Shergold did the detailed planning for the move.
- ³¹² *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.7, No.4, April 1979, pp.181-3.
- ³¹³ This proposal was first proposed by Dr Lionel Gilbert from University of New England, at an Archives Authority meeting on 9 June 1978.
- ³¹⁴ For a review of the archives documents kits, see C. Murray, *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.7, No.5, November 1979, pp.284-6. Murray was a little critical of the reproduction quality, and the lack of transcripts for handwritten material in the kits.
- ³¹⁵ Archives Authority, Minutes, 14 February 1992, Item 6(ii). That age limit still applies.
- ³¹⁶ "Stroke numbers" refer to the shelf and item number, separated by an oblique stroke. These numbers have no subject or classification significance.
- ³¹⁷ Troy, interview, 8 March 2010.
- ³¹⁸ *Report ... for 1979*, p.14. John Davies' engagement was subsequently extended.
- ³¹⁹ The Registrar General's Department did much of this work.
- ³²⁰ D. Patenall, 'Records management: three years' experience at the Records Management Office of New South Wales', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.7, No.5, November 1979, p.254.
- ³²¹ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1979*, Sydney, 1980, p.17.
- ³²² B. Berzins, correspondence with author, 7 October 2010. Baiba Berzins (Irving) was a leader in the pioneering feminist movement, who had worked as an academic as well as an archivist. In 1980 she was appointed Mitchell Librarian.
- ³²³ Hon. Justice M. Kirby, Peter Wilenski Memorial Lecture, 8 September 1995. During his relatively short life (1940-1995), Professor Wilenski headed four Federal Departments as well as the Commonwealth Public Service Board, and later became Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations.
- ³²⁴ G. ("Gerry") Gleeson was Secretary and Permanent Head of the Premier's Department from 1977 to 1988, virtually coinciding with Neville Wran's term as Premier. Starting his career as a teacher, Gleeson became a Public Service Board Inspector before appointment as Assistant Director of Technical Education. Following his retirement, Gleeson became a trenchant critic of changes to public administration introduced by Premiers Greiner and Carr. *NSW Spann Oration 2010*.
- ³²⁵ Archives Authority, Minutes, 9 February 1979, Item 6(C).
- ³²⁶ Minutes, 13 August 1982, Item 3(B)(ii).
- ³²⁷ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1979*, Sydney, 1980, p.14.
- ³²⁸ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1979*, Sydney, 1980, p.3.
- ³²⁹ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1978*, Sydney, 1979, p.4. A total of 24 additional staff were sought, but only 10 were approved by the Public Service Board, although 7 temporary clerical assistants were engaged under a special Youth Employment Training Programme to support the final stages of the Records Reduction Campaign.
- ³³⁰ *Report ... for 1979*, p.4.
- ³³¹ Minutes, 8 February 1980, Item 5A(iii).
- ³³² Minutes, 11 April 1980, Item 7(B).
- ³³³ Information from D.J. Cross, interview, 22 February 2010.
- ³³⁴ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1981*, Sydney, 1982, p.4.
- ³³⁵ 'Huge damages bill in wind storms', *SITREP*, State Emergency Services of NSW, Summer 1982, pp.17-19.
- ³³⁶ J. Stapleton, 'Staff Pick', State Records 'Archives Outside' blog, 24 March 2010.
- ³³⁷ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1982*, Sydney, 1983, pp.6-7.
- ³³⁸ *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1983*, Sydney, 1984, p.4. Demand for these records declined the following year, as people realise the information could now be accessed in libraries throughout the State.
- ³³⁹ F. Lemmes, interview 23 June 2010.
- ³⁴⁰ Minutes, 10 June 1983, Item 3. See also minutes for meetings in August and October 1983.
- ³⁴¹ Archives Authority, Minutes, 10 November 1978, Item 5(C).
- ³⁴² Minutes, 14 October 1983, Item 5A(vii).
- ³⁴³ Principal Archivist, letter to Hon. R.J. Carr, Minister for Heritage, 8 January 1987. (SRNSW file 83/153P)
- ³⁴⁴ Archives Authority of NSW, Minutes of meeting, 10 October 1980, p.4, item (vi).
- ³⁴⁵ Archives Authority, Minutes, 11 February 1983, Item 5(B).

346 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1985*, Sydney, 1986, p.21. The *State Records Act, 1998* included local government councils in the definition of “public office”.

347 *Report ... for 1983*, p.3.

348 ‘Shea’s Creek – Repository to the Gentry!’ announced the invitation.

349 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1983*, Sydney, 1984, p.18.

350 *Report ... for 1984*, p.4.

351 J. Stapleton, correspondence to author, 29 November 2010.

352 Archives Authority, Minutes, 16 December 1994, Item 5(ii).

353 N. Wran, Premier of New South Wales, ‘Disposal of Cabinet Documents. (Memo to all Ministers)’, 30 September 1985.

354 Archives Office of NSW, Disposal File 85/50D, ‘Disposal of Landa’s Cabinet Papers & Other Ministers who have vacated offices’.

355 *Report ... for 1983*, p.4. The storage capacity was primitive by comparison with modern cheap personal computers.

356 NSW Government Working Party on Machine Readable Records, Interim Report, August 1986. (PSB Ref 86/163, SRNSW file 89/27P)

357 There are 316 volumes and 63 bundles of documents in this collection, reproduced on 72 reels of microfilm and 312 microfiche.

358 D. Richmond, Archives Authority, Minutes, 15 June 1990, Item 6(i).

359 Archives Office of NSW, ‘NSW Bicentennial Council – Supervision of Projects’, File 85/167P.

360 The Kingswood Search Room was open for two mornings a week from 30 June 1987 until extra staff were appointed.

361 Cross, interview 22 February 2010.

362 Minutes, 9 October 1987, Item 5A(ii).

363 *Report ... for 1987-1988*, p.2.

364 P.J. Tyler, *Humble and Obedient Servants*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2006, p.228.

365 Cross, interview 22 February 2010.

366 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1989-1990*, Sydney, 1990, p.24. Also comments by Christine Shergold and Amanda Barber.

367 R.G. Humphry, Director-General, Premier’s Department, *Executive Bulletin*, Vol.1, No.2, Summer 1988.

368 P. Jeckeln & S. Webb, *Archives: Culture or Business????*, 1988, p.27.

369 Minutes of Special meeting, 16 September 1988, Item 4(i).

370 The Principal Archivist expressed frustration with the delay in a memorandum, 22 March 1990. (AO 88/215P)

371 Humphry, Memorandum No.91-3 to all Ministers and Chief Executive Officers, 24 December 1990. (SRNSW file 91/29P).

372 Mrs Jennifer Lindsay, reported in Archives Authority, Minutes, 14 December 1990, Item 6(ii).

373 *Daily Mirror*, 10/8/1989, p.11.

374 C. Gellatly, Director General, Premier’s Department, Memorandum No.94-22, 21 July 1994. (SRNSW file 91/29P)

375 Archives Authority, Minutes, 11 August 1989, Item 5(i).

376 Minutes, 12 April 1991, Item 6(iv).

377 Minutes, 10 June 1988, Item 5B(i).

378 Letter from Dr Carol Liston to Principal Archivist, 14 December 1988.

379 Archives Authority, Minutes, 10 February 1989, Item 3. Liaison with historical societies and other user groups commenced at this time.

380 *Report ... for 1992/93*, p.8.

381 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1989/90*, Sydney, 1990, p.3.

382 Archives Authority, Minutes, 9 December 1988, Item 7(D).

383 Principal Archivist, Report to Archives Authority, 18 January 1989. (SRNSW file 89/34P)

384 Archives Authority of NSW, *Government Records in New South Wales from 1788 to the 21st Century. A proposal for public records legislation for NSW*, November 1992, p.9.

385 Archives Authority, Minutes, 10 February 1989, Item 3(ii).

386 Archives Authority, Minutes, 14 April 1989, Item 5B(i).

387 NSW Parliament, *Freedom of Information Act*, No.5, 1989.

388 Chris Hurley was at various times Keeper of Public Records in Victoria and Acting Chief Archivist for Archives New Zealand. He has published extensively on archival practice.

389 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conducts a Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP) which publishes guidelines and specialised reports.

390 Each of the discussion papers bore the same title: *Government Records in New South Wales from 1788 to the 21st Century. A proposal for public records legislation for NSW*, issued with small amendments in November 1990, September 1991, and November 1992. The sub-committee comprised David Richmond, Associate Professor Beverley Kingston, Dr Kenneth Knight, Justice T.W. Waddell, Evan Williams, together with the Principal Archivist and the Deputy Principal Archivist. The three discussion papers each used these words, p.1.

391 Minutes, 12 June 1992, Item 6(ii).

392 Archives Authority, Minutes, 13 August 1993, Item 3.

393 Cross, interview 22 February 2010.

394 Archives Authority of NSW, *Government Records in New South Wales from 1788 to the 21st Century. A proposal for public records legislation for NSW*, November 1992, p.12.

395 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1992/93*, Sydney, 1993, p.7.

396 Minutes of Task Force, 18 April, 1990. (SRNSW file 89/27P).

397 R.G. Humphry, Director-General, Premier's Department NSW, Circular No.90-17. (File 85-1030).

398 "KWOC-IT" was a joint venture between the Records Management Office and Ortex Australia Pty Ltd, was launched by the Minister on 12 August 1988. It was soon superseded by more advanced hardware and software.

399 *Report ... for 1989/90*, p.7.

400 Minutes, 8 February 1991, Item 1.

401 Mrs Lemmes had been Head Librarian at Sydney Technical College before joining the Archives Authority in 1987.

402 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1990/91*, Sydney, 1991, p.7.

403 Minutes, 14 June 1991, Item 3.

404 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1991/92*, Sydney, 1992, p.16.

405 Archives Authority, Minutes, 11 October 1991, Item 6(i).

406 Minutes, 14 February 1992, Item 3. Mrs Troy had been a member of the Task Force which recommended the establishment of the RMO.

407 D. Troy, Program Evaluation – Records Management Office. (SRNSW file 92/49A).

408 Archives Authority, Minutes, 9 October 1992, Item 5(iv).

409 Minutes, 13 August 1993, Item 6(i).

410 Archives Authority, Minutes, 13 August 1993, Item 6(ii).

411 Don Boadle, 'Origins and development of the New South Wales regional repositories system', *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol.23, No.2, November 1995, pp.274-288.

412 D.J. Cross, 'Regionalisation of the State Archives: A policy review', Report to the Archives Authority of NSW, 21 November 1991. (SRNSW file 90/80P).

413 Letter from E. Williams, Secretary, Ministry for the Arts, 21 March 1994. (SRNSW file 90/80P).

414 Minutes, 10 April 1992, Item 6(i).

415 Archives Authority, Minutes, 10 April 1992, Item 3. Consulting engineers reported that these options were feasible.

416 Minutes, 12 June 1992, Item 4(iv).

417 Minutes, 13 December 1974, Item 6(C).

418 Letter from Treasury 19 June 1992, reported in Archives Authority, Minutes, 14 August 1992, Item 6(ii).

419 A discussion paper, *Documenting the Future: Policy and Strategies for Electronic Recordkeeping in the New South Wales Public Sector* was released in July 1995.

420 The radical Series System was initiated by Peter Scott, and further developed by Ian Maclean at the Commonwealth Archives Office.

421 H. Golder, *Documenting a Nation*, Australian Archives, Canberra, 1994, p.33.

422 State Records Authority, *Annual Report 2004-2005*, p.84.

423 D. Roberts, personal correspondence, 20/1/11.

424 Information from C. Shergold, R. Gore & M. Allen.

425 Archives Authority, Minutes, 17 June 1994, Item 3.

426 Minutes, 12 August 1994, Items 3 & 6.

427 Archives Authority, Minutes, 21 October 1994, Item 6(i)(a).

428 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1995-96*, Sydney, 1996, p.7.

429 A discussion paper, *Documenting the Future: Policy and Strategies for Electronic Recordkeeping in the New South Wales Public Sector* was released in July 1995.

430 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1996-1997*, Sydney, 1997, p.10.

431 Minutes, 21 April 1995, Item 2.

432 Archives Authority, Minutes, 21 April 1995, Item 2.

433 Minutes, 30 June 1995, Item 5(ii).
 434 Archives Authority, Minutes, 12 August 1994, Item 5(v).
 435 Letter from Secretary, Ministry for the Arts, 28 February 1996. (SRNSW file 95/P163).
 436 *Report ... for 1995-1996*, p.7.
 437 Taksa, L. & Webb, R. Submission to Australian Law Reform Commission on projected review of (Commonwealth) Archives Act 1983, University of New South Wales, 21 April 1997.
 438 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1996-1997*, Sydney, 1997, p.12.
 439 At January 2011 there were 122 *Archives in Brief* leaflets. They are also available on State Records' website, www.records.nsw.gov.au
 440 *Bringing them home. Report of the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families*, Sydney, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997.
 441 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1996-1997*, Sydney, 1997, p.12.
 442 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1997-1998*, Sydney, 1998 p.9.
 443 Archives Authority of New South Wales, *Annual Report 1997-98*, p.5.
 444 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1997-1998*, Sydney, 1998, p.7.
 445 Minutes, 12 August 1998, Item 6(i).
 446 Archives Authority, Minutes, 20 June 1997, Item 3.
 447 Premier of New South Wales, Memorandum No.98-16, "Records Management Standards and Practices", 9 June 1998.

CHAPTER 5

448 D. Hunter MP, second reading debate on Archives Bill, NSW Legislative Assembly, 19 October 1960. David Hunter (1905-1981) was the Liberal Party Member for Ashfield-Croydon.
 449 A senior Minister and an officer of the Archives Authority had an altercation inside the Legislative Council Chamber, apparently due to a misunderstanding about the scope of the legislation.
 450 Archives Authority of NSW, Minutes, 9 December 1998, Item 6(iii). Because of public holidays, the new Authority actually commenced business on 4 January 1999.
 451 D.H. Roberts, interview 12 December 2010, and personal correspondence.
 452 Hon. R. Debus, Minister Assisting the Premier, NSW Legislative Assembly, *Hansard*, 6 May 1998, p.4503.
 453 NSW Parliament, *State Records Act 1998*, No.17, Ss.3-4.
 454 State Records Authority, 'Implementing the State Records Act', (SRNSW files 99/0651 & 04/0282).
 455 *State Records Act 1998*, S.9.
 456 State Records Authority NSW, Board Minutes, 15 October 2007, and circulated report 'Agreement with the Houses of Parliament' (SRNSW file 04/0117).
 457 *Archives Act 1960*, No.46, S.4(4).
 458 L. Taksa, interview 31 December 2010. Professor Taksa is an historian, who is Head of the Department of Business at Macquarie University. She was appointed Chairperson of the State Records Authority of NSW on 7 February 2007 as the representative of the history profession. She migrated from Poland as a child with her parents and maternal grandparents.
 459 State Records Authority, Board Minutes, 16 April 2009, Item 3.2.
 460 *State Records Act 1998*, S.70.
 461 This was later re-named the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, but was disbanded in 2009 when those functions were handed over to the Department of Services, Technology and Administration.
 462 Taksa, interview 31 December 2010. As an example, see Board Minutes, 16 December 2010, Item 6.
 463 A. Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.
 464 Roberts, interview 12 December 2010.
 465 Australian Law Reform Commission, *Report No.85*, 1998, Ch.15.
 466 Board minutes, 19 April 2000, Item 6.7.
 467 NSW Attorney General's Department, *Making Access Directions under Part 6 of the State Records Act 1998*. The most recent version of these guidelines is dated August 2005.
 468 C. Liston, 'Access to historical records – the Yes, Minister scenario', *Phanfare*, December 2000, p.3.
 469 NSW Parliament, *State Records Amendment Act*, No.8, 2005, S.55A. *Archives in Brief* Nos. 9, 96, 97 give an overview of these provisions.
 470 Roberts, interview 12 December 2010, and personal correspondence.
 471 Roberts, personal correspondence, 20 January 2011.

472 State Records Authority NSW, *Annual Report 1998-1999*, p.51.

473 These were the Australian Society of Archivists' Mander Jones Award and the Premier's Public Sector Award for Ethics.

474 *Annual Report 2000-2001*, p.14.

475 *Annual Report 2000-2001*, p.69. This policy was not favoured by John Burke, who was Manager of the Government Records Repository at that stage. Personal remarks, 15 November 2010.

476 *Annual Report 1999-2000*, Sydney, p.54.

477 Board Minutes, 14 April 1999, Item 6 (iii).

478 *Annual Report 1998-1999*, p.18.

479 *Annual Report 1999-2000*, p.15.

480 *Annual Report 2004-2005*, p.20.

481 *Annual Report 2007-2008*, p.41. See also report 'Archival management of Police Special Branch records' (08/0146).

482 *Annual Report 1998-1999*, p.20.

483 The research service had been under review since 1997. Board minutes, 9 June 1999, Item 6 (ix).

484 BOS is a custom-built enterprise system that replaced the State Records Control System (SRCS), which in turn was a modified version of *Tabularium*, introduced in 1996.

485 *Annual Report 1999-2000*, p.15.

486 *Annual Report 2004-2005*, p.59.

487 Ms Kirsten Thorpe is from the Worimi people of NSW. She worked at State Records on a cadetship while completing her postgraduate qualification as an archivist. In 2009 she left to take up a research position at the University of Technology, Sydney.

488 Board minutes, 18 August 2004, Item 7.

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490 *Annual Report 2000-2001*, p.14.

491 *Annual Report 2000-2001*, p.14.

492 L. Taksa, Message from the Chairperson, State Records, *Annual Report 2009-10*, p.8.

493 www.records.nsw.gov.au/about-us/support-us/volunteers

494 Board Minutes, 16 June 2004, Item 5.4.

495 *Annual Report 2005-2006*, p.78.

496 Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.

497 *Annual Report 2002-2003*, p.7.

498 S. Charlton, 'Raising State Records' public profile: preliminary response & strategies', 6 November 2001, p.4.

499 See internal memorandum prepared by D. Troy, "Developments in 1978".

500 State Records NSW, *in living memory*, exhibition catalogue, March 2009.

501 Taksa, interview 31 December 2010.

502 *Now and Then* is the State Records newsletter which succeeded *Archivista*, and was published in hardcopy from 1999 until 2001; it reappeared electronically as *Now & Then* from 2003.

503 *Annual Report 2001-2002*, p.55.

504 Board Minutes, 19 February 2003, Item 7.1. Also see *Annual Report 2002-2003*, p.80, and File 97/0445.

505 *Annual Report 2001-2002*, p.60.

506 *Annual Report 2002-2003*, p.19.

507 *Annual Report 2003-2004*, p.7.

508 *Annual Report 2002-2003*, p.56.

509 *Annual Report 2004-2005*, p.82.

510 *Annual Report 2008-2009*, Sydney, p.33. At June 2009 there were 24 of these Guideline publications.

511 <http://futureproof.records.nsw.gov.au>

512 *Annual Report 2003-2004*, p.62.

513 Board Minutes, 15 December 2004, Item 3, and 15 October 2007, Item 7.1. See also the circulated report 'Business case for a whole of government digital archiving solution' (07/0389). The Board noted that there was surplus land on their Kingswood site that could be used to fund the development phase.

514 Board Minutes, 20 August 2009, Item 9.1.

515 Premier, N.S.W. *NSW Standard on Digital Recordkeeping*, Memorandum M2009-11, 19 May 2009.

516 Board Minutes, 17 December 2009, Item 7.1.

517 NSW Auditor General Peter Achterstraat, reported in *The Australian*, 18 November 2010.

⁵¹⁸ Roberts, personal correspondence, 20 January 2011.
⁵¹⁹ C. Yeats, conversation 12/1/11. CCQG had a reputation for being a “razor gang” intent on recommending drastic economy measures. This was the final enquiry conducted by the Council.
⁵²⁰ *Annual Report 2006-2007*, p.6.
⁵²¹ Board Minutes, 21 August 2002, Item 7.3.
⁵²² ‘Timeline of archives in New South Wales’, *Wikipedia*.
⁵²³ V. Mawuli, ‘Stolen wages. Evidentiary challenges for claimants’, *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, Vol.7, No.17, March/April 2010, pp.8-11.
⁵²⁴ C. Yeats, ‘Tracking the evidence of past government action: the operation of the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme’, paper delivered at Association of Canadian Archivists annual conference, 2009.
⁵²⁵ *Wikipedia*, ‘State Records Authority of New South Wales’, Expansion of Government Records Repository.
⁵²⁶ *Annual Report 2006-2007*, p.26.
⁵²⁷ J. Burke, reported in Board Minutes, 21 August 2002, Item 7.2.
⁵²⁸ A. Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.
⁵²⁹ Government Records Repository, ‘5-year Business Plan 2010-1015’, 6 October 2010. See also Board Minutes, 14 October 2010, Item 7.3.
⁵³⁰ *Annual Report 2008-2009*, p.25.
⁵³¹ Board Minutes, 17 December 2009, Item 7.2.
⁵³² Board Minutes, 21 June 2006, Item 7.1. See also Director’s report, ‘Fundraising & Bequest Plan 2006 to 2010’, circulated before that meeting, and V. Brooke, ‘Study into the Feasibility of Establishing a State Records Foundation’, March 2006.
⁵³³ Board Minutes, 16 August 2006, Item 7.1. See also Director’s report, ‘Disposal of surplus land’, circulated before that meeting.
⁵³⁴ The remaining original archives were transferred to Kingswood in March 2004.
⁵³⁵ Board Minutes, 22 October 2003, Item 3.2.
⁵³⁶ Of that fifteen, Hon. Bob Carr was the responsible Minister on two occasions, firstly as Minister for Heritage and later as Premier and Minister for the Arts.
⁵³⁷ Russell Doust’s father was a Methodist minister, while both Ian Maclean and David Roberts had Presbyterian ministers as fathers. Both of David Roberts’ grandfathers also were clergymen, as were two other uncles.
⁵³⁸ Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.
⁵³⁹ D.J. Cross, Archives Authority of NSW, *Minutes*, 12 June 1992.
⁵⁴⁰ Roberts, interview 12 December 2010, and personal correspondence 20 January 2011.
⁵⁴¹ Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.
⁵⁴² Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.
⁵⁴³ Board Minutes 17 June 2010, Item 7.5. See also report by Richard Gore, Manager, Archives Control, ‘Review of collection documentation’, 3 June 2010, File 09/0108.
⁵⁴⁴ This document was given to the author by D. Troy, 8 March 2010.
⁵⁴⁵ *Annual Report 2009-2010*.
⁵⁴⁶ D. Roberts, *Vital Signs*, No.2, August 2002, p.2.
⁵⁴⁷ *Annual Report 2007-2008*.
⁵⁴⁸ F. Lemmes, interview 23 June 2010.
⁵⁴⁹ Dianne Morgan started work as a typist with the Public Library in 1959, and later transferred to the Archives Office, where she has worked ever since, now on a part-time basis.
⁵⁵⁰ Ventress, interview 17 December 2010.
⁵⁵¹ Lemmes, interview 23 June 2010.
⁵⁵² Janet Knight, winning entry in a staff competition to devise a memorable slogan for the Jubilee year.

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Russell Doust, Canberra, 10 February 2010

Frances Lemmes, Sydney, 23 June 2010

Dianne Patenall, Sydney, 6 December 2010

David Roberts, Leichhardt, 12 December 2010

Lucy Taksa, Leichhardt, 31 December 2010

Dawn Troy, Sydney, 8 March 2010

Alan Ventress, Sydney, 17 December 2010

In addition to formal interviews, many conversations and discussions took place with members of the State Records staff, as well as users of the archives.

INTERNET WEBSITES:

Archives Investigator	http://investigator.records.nsw.gov.au
Australian Dictionary of Biography	www.adb.online.anu.edu.au
Australian Society of Archivists	www.archivists.org.au
Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities	www.caara.org.au
Future Proof	http://futureproof.records.nsw.gov.au
National Archives of Australia	www.naa.gov.au
National Library of Australia	www.nla.gov.au
State Library of NSW	www.sl.nsw.gov.au
State Records NSW	www.records.nsw.gov.au
Trove (National Library)	http://trove.nla.gov.au/
Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/