

The Role of the National Archives of Australia in Recordkeeping by Australian Government Agencies

by

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Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour to be invited to speak to such a distinguished audience, here in Tokyo. I would like to express my great appreciation to the National Archives of Japan, especially President Mitsuoki Kikuchi, for their kind invitation.

It is also a great honour for me to share a podium with Mr. Ian Wilson from Canada.

This afternoon I will be speaking to you about the role that the National Archives of Australia has in making sure that all agencies of the Australian Government make and keep good records of their business. I shall give you some information about government in Australia and the history of the National Archives and our legislation. I shall explain the history of records management in government agencies, and I will talk about the Australian standard on recordkeeping, which has been turned into an international standard. I will end by explaining some of the new ways that the National Archives is addressing electronic records issues, and the Australian government's expectations of what we can do. I shall raise some issues that we face in Australia and I hope you will recognise some of these as issues that are relevant in Japan.

Government in Australia

The national government in Australia is only 103 years old. Until 1901 Australia was six separate British colonies. But after three attempts, the Australian people voted to join together as a single country, and on 1 January 1901 the Commonwealth of Australia came into being as part of the British Empire. Like the United States, Australia has a House of Representatives and a Senate; the Prime Minister of Australia is the leader of the political party that has the most seats in the House of

Representatives. Ministers of the Government can come from either the House or the Senate.

As well as having a central government, there are six states in Australia, and two federal territories. The constitution of Australia approved in 1900 lists which are the matters in government that are the responsibility of the central government, such as defence, foreign affairs, posts and telegraphs, and trade, and everything else is the responsibility of the states, such as transport, health and education. When the central government was established, the records that were in existence about functions that had become the responsibility of the new government were transferred. So, there are records from the old British colonies in the records of the National Archives.

Often there is duplication of activities between the central government and the state governments. For example, each state and territory in Australia has its own archives, as well as there being a National Archives.

The population of Australia is only 20 million people, in a country that is the same geographic size as the United States. So, there are a very few people in a very large country, and almost all Australians live close to the sea; much of the centre of Australia is either very large farms, or desert. Most Australians live in the big cities, so not many Australians live in 'the bush' as it is called; we do not often see koalas and kangaroos, except in zoos!

The History of the National Archives

The central government in Australia had no Archives authority until 1944. Until that time, each government agency was expected to keep its own records as long as they needed them.

In 1942 certain senior members of the public service started to be concerned that the records of Australia's involvement in World War II may not be kept. The historian who had written the official government history of Australia's involvement in World War I had complained that the records he needed to write his history had not always been kept, and he was concerned that this might happen again. So, in 1944 the Cabinet agreed to the appointment of the first Government archivist - only 60 years ago this year. At this time the Archives was part of the National Library, because the National Library - which used to be part of the Parliament - collected manuscripts.

The role of the archivist was to ensure that the records that would be needed for the official war history were identified and retained. After the war ended, government agencies wanted somewhere to deposit the large amounts of records they had created and collected. So, many of these records were put into government warehouses in the state capitals, as well as the national capital, Canberra.

For much of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s the role of the Archives was firstly to be a warehouse where any records no longer needed for the everyday government of the country could be stored cheaply, and retrieved as necessary. This role of the Archives - to be a cheap place to store old records of any value - was something that the Archives had to spent many years overcoming. In 1963 the Archives was separated from the National Library and became a separate part of our Prime Minister's Department. This was an important step in establishing the reputation and authority of the Archives.

During the 1970s in the West there was a move to make government more accountable to the people. Following the United States example, Australia introduced a Freedom of Information law which allowed the people to apply to see current government records. This was after the Government changed its policy on release of public archives from 50 years to 30 years. So, any record that was 30 years old could be released by the Archives unless it contained information that had to stay restricted, such as certain records about defence and foreign affairs, or personal information about individual Australians.

The government had decided that it was the Archives which would be responsible for managing the release of old records to the public. The government proposed that there be an Archives law introduced to Parliament at the same time as Freedom of Information law, so that they complemented each other. This did not happen, however, because many government agencies were worried about allowing an independent agency - the Archives - to decide which of their records the public could see.

So, it was not until 1983 that the Archives law passed the Parliament, almost 40 years after the appointment of the first national archives officer.

The Archives Act 1983

The Archives Act of 1983 established the National Archives as a part of a Department. There was nothing radical about this law - it only put in place a legal base for what had been happening for many years. But, some of the interpretation put on the law by both the Archives - with support of Ministers - and by lawyers slowly increased the power of the Archives.

There are three aspects of the Australian Archives law that I want to mention today. They are about which parts of government are covered by the law, which types of records are covered by the law, and the powers the law gives to the National Archives.

The Archives law in Australia covers all departments and agencies of the central government, including the records of the Defence Department and all the armed forces. It covers the office of the head of state, the House of Representatives and the Senate, and all courts controlled by the central government. It covers the records of government Ministers created or received as part of their official duties. And it covers the records of any trading company controlled by the central government, and external Australian territories.

So, the law is very broad in the records it makes the Archives responsible for. But, unlike many national archives in other countries - including Canada - the National Archives of Australia does not collect any records other than those of the central government.

The other very broad aspect of the law is what it means when it describes a 'record'. The law defines a 'record' to be in any format that holds information. So, not only is a record a written document, but it is also a film, a sound recording, a photograph, a map, a magnetic tape or any other medium on which you can record information.

For the National Archives of Australia this has been very significant - for example, it means that our collection of sound recordings and film is greater than that of the National Film and Sound Archive. We collect material from the government-owned national film making agencies and broadcasters of television and radio, while our colleagues in the National Film and Sound Archive collect material from private sector film makers and TV and radio broadcasters.

But, perhaps most significantly for the National Archives of Australia, it has meant that we have become vitally concerned about electronic records, because if an archives does not become involved with these records from the time they are created it is likely that the records will not survive to be kept as archives. I shall return to this aspect later on in my talk.

The National Archives of Australia in 2004

The National Archives gets all its funding from the national government. The budget for the financial year 2004-2005 is \$Aus65 million (or ¥5.135 billion). Of this amount, \$Aus12.5 million (or ¥987 million) is a special annual amount to spend on preservation of the collection.

The National Archives of Australia has a staffing of 494 staff at the end September, of whom 347 are full-time staff. 150 staff work in the Collection Preservation and Management branch, 36 staff work in the branch responsible for providing advice about records management, and 124 work in the public outreach branch (doing exhibitions, publications and websites, and providing a reference service to the public).

About 380 staff work in the main office in Canberra, the national capital. 110 staff work in National Archives offices in the state capital cities. The National Archives of Australia is the only national cultural agency that has offices in every state capital in Australia, and this is because of our original function of storing all old Government records. But in the last few years we have started to close our repositories in the smaller state capital cities and use these sites as access points for the public, with only small quantities of archives held there.

The holdings of the National Archives total 356,000 linear metres, in eleven repository buildings. Most of these buildings are specially built archives repositories. Over 90% of this material is in paper form - files and volumes, but we also have 13,500 linear metres of audio-visual material and 2,700 linear metres of photographs. We have 126 linear metres of electronic records, on disc and tape. We estimate that the whole collection has over 51 million items.

In its Corporate Plan for 2004 to 2006 the National Archives has set itself two goals:

1. To have a national archival collection that is preserved and accessible to all Australians, and
2. To ensure the creation and management of government records that support accountable government.

Most people understand that the a goal of an archives is to do the first of these. What has been a

change for the National Archives in Australia has been the emphasis in the last 8 or 9 years on doing the second of these goals.

Records management in Australian government agencies

The National Archives of Australia has not always had any responsibility for the way that government agencies have managed their records. Before the Archives existed, the Public Service Board, part of the Prime Minister's Department, advised agencies on how they should run registry systems and maintain their files. When the Archives was established it was given the power to advise which government records should be kept, and for how long, but it was to the Public Service Board as a central agency that the real power was given.

This was at a time when there was strong central control in the Australian government about how agencies managed all their resources, whether it be money, staff or information. During the 1980s and 1990s this began to change, with devolution of responsibility to individual agencies to manage their own affairs, within the law, with only general guidance provided by central agencies.

The Archives Act of 1983 gave the National Archives the power to provide advice and other assistance to agencies in how they should keep their records in an efficient and economical manner.

In 1997 the government commissioned a review of the Archives Act by the Australian Law Reform Commission. In 1998 the Commission reported to government that generally the Archives Act was satisfying the need of the government. But, it commented that the state of records management in the public service was 'parlous', and that the government was at risk of not being efficiently managed without there being good evidence of the business that agencies were undertaking. The Commission strongly recommended that the National Archives be given the power to establish standards that had to be complied with by the heads of all Departments and government agencies.

At around the same time, in 1997, Australia's Prime Minister announced the Government's commitment to having all appropriate government services online by the year 2001. Importantly, electronic service delivery relies on good recordkeeping. The National Archives saw this government decision as an opportunity to convince agencies that they needed to have good recordkeeping to meet the Government's commitment to electronic service delivery, and that it was the role of the National Archives to provide the tools to do this.

In the United Kingdom the National Archives has taken the same view in its approach to the British government's commitment to electronic service delivery by 2005, as well as the introduction of Freedom of Information legislation.

Why good records are important

The Archives has argued that good recordkeeping is fundamental to the operation of a democracy; records are evidence - the primary means by which government agencies explain what they have done and why they have done it. Records hold us accountable as public servants. Records also allow

recipients of goods and services from government to claim and defend their rights and entitlements.

Poor recordkeeping places government agencies in a very vulnerable position (even if they have actually been doing the right thing). Poor recordkeeping can actually encourage improper practices or even criminal activity.

Good recordkeeping is also fundamental to the efficient operation of day to day business. So fundamental, in fact, that it is easy to overlook its importance.

Every day agencies need to know what has been done by the hundreds of other past and present public servants and Ministers in whichever part of the Government is their responsibility. Not having the right records in the right form can mean time wasted, money unable to be recovered, and poor policies.

Of course, problems in recordkeeping are not new, but they have accelerated and been compounded by the way business is done in modern government. In my own work, for example, I receive almost no paper correspondence. Most of my communications, including some of the most formal ones, are by e-mail. Business is being transacted, decisions are made and documented, policies are developed and implemented, often with little or no paper being generated. Every document, every record, is, or can be, created electronically - correspondence, reports, photos, films, maps, plans.

A recent analysis of the National Archives' own records created into our electronic recordkeeping system revealed that 72% were electronic messages, many with attachments as Word or Excel documents. The International Data Corporation forecasts that the number of e-mails sent daily around the world will grow from 9.7 billion in 2000 to over 35 billion in 2005.

In Australia electronic systems have found their way into all areas of information management and recordkeeping and they have brought enormous benefits. However, electronic records are generally more fragile than paper records and they don't survive neglect as well as paper will. Also, some of the long-standing and well known practices associated with paper records have been lost in the transition. Filing a letter received might be a routine and automatic response, but somehow a critical email gets deleted by your computer after 15 days.

The pace of change and demands made on individuals in modern government are also making it harder and harder for people to make good records. Good recordkeeping is becoming more and more important at the same time as established recordkeeping practices and infrastructure are breaking down.

It is these arguments that we - as records professionals - need to make to Government and to senior managers to make sure that records management gets the attention it deserves in this new environment.

The Australian and international records management standard

Records professionals in Australia have the advantage that in 1993 we started to work on a records management standard, a standard that was issued in 1996. In September 2001 the International Standards Organisation adopted a new standard that has many similarities to the 1996 Australian Standard.

The National Archives used the local standard to guide development of a comprehensive set of new recordkeeping products. We point out to government and to senior public service managers that records management is important; it has to be, as there is now an International Standard dealing with it. We also use the Standard as a way to get software developers and records management consultancy firms to comply with the Archives' related policies, guidelines and standards. But, I should point out that software developers and consultants were involved in the development of the Australian Standard in the first place.

The four fundamental principles of the Australian Standard approach were:

1. that responsibility for recordkeeping is actively taken up within an agency.
2. that recordkeeping is based on a thorough understanding of the environment and functions of a government agency.
3. that recordkeeping is based on a systematic analysis of the needs of all stakeholders for records in relation to those functions and
4. that business systems should be built and records managed in accordance with the identified needs.

To add to the Australian standard, the National Archives set out to totally renew the advice we give to agencies about their recordkeeping. We have taken a strong role as a standard-setter within the public service, reinforcing our position in relation to records disposal and public access decisions. We have taken full advantage of the concern many feel about the use of e-mail, such as is it actually a record that can be used to hold you accountable (it certainly is, in Australia at least) and whether it is subject to the usual rules against unlawful destruction (again, yes).

We read all the reports issued by our national Auditor-General. We can tell senior public servants and Parliamentary committees that in over 60% of cases Auditor-General reports in some way or another comment adversely on recordkeeping practices. We go into agencies after they have been criticised by the Auditor-General, or committees of inquiry, or Parliamentary reports, and offer advice on how to rectify their recordkeeping problems.

Our approach as the recordkeeping experts in government is to talk to senior managers not about records management but instead about making the best use of their expensive technology. And we talk about business analysis and risk management, so they can make best use of their information assets. But, now we have the impetus of a national government committed to doing its business online.

So, how does a government archives fit in with this? In Australia, the National Archives sells ourselves as part of the solution, providing products that can assist with electronic service delivery.

On 30 March 2000 we launched a comprehensive set of products under the slogan of 'e-permanence: the new standard in recordkeeping'. These products are continuously updated and there are now more than 2000 pages of guidelines, standards, advice and training material on our website to assist government agencies.

The most important of the Archives' products is a manual for designing and implementing recordkeeping systems. It uses a logical approach which is taken from systems design methodology, so is familiar to most senior managers. There are eight steps in the approach being used. These are:

- A. Investigating the agency environment, including laws, government policies and social expectations;
- B. Analysing the functions of the agency and the activities it undertakes to fulfill those functions;
- C. Identifying recordkeeping requirements, such as where does the law require us to keep a record, and how do we need to be accountable for each activity;
- D. Assessing existing systems to see if they meet modern requirements - such as an ability to provide electronic service delivery;
- E. Selecting the recordkeeping strategy that best fits the needs of the agency;
- F. Designing the recordkeeping system, or buying one off the shelf for such things as asset control, warehouse control, personnel or finance systems;
- G. Implementing the recordkeeping system; and finally and importantly
- H. Evaluating the system's performance.

This methodology requires an agency to assess the environment in which it operates (such as laws, government policies and community expectations), and then to analyse the agency's functions and activities. From there agencies work out at what point decisions are made and how these decisions need to be documented.

Managers can then begin to assess what kind of records management system might best suit their needs - can they buy one, or do they need to build one themselves? They then design or buy, implement and evaluate.

The process is based on knowing your environment well, assessing the needs of all stakeholders, and assessing the risks.

Included in our advice are a range of other requirements. These include a standard for recordkeeping metadata, to allow agencies to identify, authenticate, describe and manage all their electronic records in a systematic and consistent way to meet business, accountability and archival requirements. These

metadata standards were written in co-operation with the records management industry. We also involved records management consultants and trainers, and key government agencies.

Every agency has nominated a senior officer with whom the Archives corresponds about records management matters. All of these officers have been invited to a range of functions at the Archives, from overview sessions to information sessions accompanied by drinks. In addition, the Archives is running regular training courses for agency staff to support our recordkeeping products. We see a strong and ongoing role for the Archives to be the promotion of records management and recordkeeping as a profession within the public service.

Strategic alliance with the Auditor-General

Earlier I spoke about the assessment that the National Archives made of reports by our Auditor-General over a number of years. The Auditor-General in the Federal government in Australia is an independent officer who reports to Parliament. The current Auditor-General is also very interested in recordkeeping issues. To have such allies always helps when you are trying to draw attention to issues such as poor recordkeeping practices. The head of our Public Service Commission is also very interested in recordkeeping issues. Every year the Commissioner reports to Parliament about major issues in the public service. Every year the Commissioner undertakes a survey of these issues to enable him to undertake this report. For the last three years, amongst other things he has decided to report about recordkeeping, and has included about a dozen questions about the matter in the survey that all agency heads MUST respond to.

The Archives approached the Auditor-General about the desirability of undertaking a quality and control assessment audit of recordkeeping in a number of public service agencies. The Archives offered to help develop the criteria for conducting the audit, we provided field work resources and advice for the auditors, and we joined a project management group that comprised the Auditor-General, the National Archivist and the Professor from an archives and records course at Monash University in Melbourne. The audit was to look at compliance not just with the 1983 Archives Act, but also with the Archives best practice guidelines as a benchmarking tool, and the Australian Standard.

The audit looked at five areas:

- Risk Assessment
- Control environment
- Control activities
- Communication and Information
- Monitoring and review

In all areas it found that there were some serious issues not being addressed by agencies. It made a number of recommendations.

Assessing recordkeeping needs

Organisations should undertake systematic, risk-based assessment of recordkeeping needs at a level to enable them to design systems to capture and maintain records in accordance with business and stakeholder needs, legal requirements (including those relating to privacy and security issues), and relevant government policies and records management standards.

Control environment

Organisations should develop and implement corporate-wide recordkeeping policies to define responsibilities and apply standards, for all formats of records. They should have specialist skills available to develop their recordkeeping systems, and assign responsibility at a very high level for co-ordinating these policies. In addition, information systems must be able to support recordkeeping.

Records Capture and classification

Organisations need to promote effective capture, retrieval and management of records by having guidance for staff, having methods for capturing records from websites, e-mail and other documents in personal and shared electronic workspaces, ensuring adequate classification to allow efficient search and retrieval, and having essential metadata.

Records disposal and preservation

Organisations need to assess the risks in disposal and preservation. These include physical storage, active management of disposal of paper files, preservation and migration of records in electronic form and capturing all business records into official systems.

Recordkeeping skills and awareness

Organisations need to enhance recordkeeping skills and awareness amongst all staff through adequate training and communications programs.

Monitoring and review

Organisations should promote continuous improvement in recordkeeping by constant systems monitoring and internal audit coverage.

The Audit Office thought that its recommendations relating to risk assessment, developing corporate-wide recordkeeping policies, guidance for staff and enhancement of recordkeeping skills were the priority.

The major recordkeeping issues in the Australian Government

Despite what auditors (and indeed the Archives) might say, we all know that recordkeeping is easily forgotten in the pressured world of government administration. In addition, new technologies are being introduced into government agencies at a very fast rate. And, unless we tell the designers that these technologies must have the capacity to create and capture records as evidence of what went on, it won't happen.

So, what do I think confronts records managers and those who manage them in a modern public service? Government today (in Australia at least) is big, diverse, decentralised, wanting to do things as cheaply as possible, customer-focused, results driven and subject to greater public scrutiny.

Within agencies (again in Australia at least) the everyone using records management is subject to constant technological and organisational change. These same clients are want lots of information and continuous productivity improvement. External clients are demanding, want immediate public access to government and its information.

To meet this new environment the National Archives needs to be providing guidelines and non-binding standards and working from the bottom up with areas within agencies who have to work with records. We provide assistance to agencies, and tell them we understand that they have too much work to do with constantly shifting priorities. The Archives knows that within government administration it will not have the final say; we need to work towards consensus about what is possible and not just provide direction.

The Archives is working with agencies to have a common sense view of document and records management that exists almost entirely in a distributed electronic environment. In agencies, especially amongst senior managers, there is a hostility to "paperwork". People dislike doing it, people want it eliminated and most people assume that the computers do it. There is a lack of planning for long-term documentation and records, and people are not really serious about electronic records.

The major message the National Archives gives to agencies is that document and records management is almost always done electronically now. It is an integral part of program management. It should not be viewed as a separate activity. How it is done is a question of risk. It is tied to the needs of agencies to do business, protect the rights of citizens and government, provide for accountability and where necessary to create an historical record of activities.

The National Archives knows that it is dealing in a very business-like environment in government now. Chief Executive Officers will not necessarily implement standards just because the Prime Minister or the Cabinet say that they must. Let alone taking any notice of the National Archives. All heads of agencies are concerned with the financial situation of their agency, perhaps more than they keep an eye on accountability. Therefore, the National Archives must keep pushing the benefits of good recordkeeping.

We argue that there are not significant additional costs imposed on agencies by complying with good recordkeeping practices. Government already has clear expectations that agencies would keep proper records of their activities and would manage their records effectively. The billions of dollars spent by government on information and communications technology in recent years in Australia would allow the technical capacity to provide government online. All the new standards require of them is to meet current best-practice obligations on a more formalised basis.

One of the major benefits of best practice recordkeeping will be the existence of better records. This enables agencies to do day to day business better through having the information they need readily

available, and reliable. Agencies will be able to draw on an excellent corporate memory in their daily work.

Having good records will ensure that agencies are able to explain their actions and decisions whenever they are required to do so. The agency head, an auditor, a parliamentary committee or even a court might require this explanation. Good records will allow agencies to prove what was done and why, as well as just explain it.

Agencies can also be confident that they have met requirements of the law and that they are protecting the rights and entitlements of the individuals they deal with, through appropriate documentation. There is considerable potential for public embarrassment for an agency if these needs are not met.

But, agencies can be assured that their core business will be undertaken more efficiently. And, in an increasingly corporate and financial culture in the public service, they will avoid financial losses by being able to prove that they did the right thing.

In the longer term, a small proportion of the 'full and accurate records' that agencies create will be retained as 'national archives' and support judgments of the way the Australian government worked and what it did.

So, the National Archives of Australia is positioning itself to be a major player in government in relation to the long-term impact of electronic recordkeeping. Increasingly it is being acknowledged as one of the agencies that knows about the issues associated with technology. We have developed a partnership with the Australian Government Information Management Office about issues such as cryptography and metadata standards. In Australia it is the responsibility of the National Library to collect all publications, and many websites are publications. It is the responsibility of the National Archives to collect archival records, and many items on websites are records. So, we have developed joint guidelines to assist agencies in deciding what to retain and how to do that.

Keeping electronic archives

A great challenge for a modern national archives is the need to collect, maintain and make accessible all those modern records of archival value that are created in a digital environment. Unlike paper records, or film, electronic records are not likely to survive until decisions are made either before they are created or at the moment of creation that they must be kept, and kept unchanged. The National Archives of Australia has always considered records created in an electronic environment to be 'real' records, and subject to all the requirements of the Archives Act. For ten years we told agencies that they had two options in dealing with electronic records - they could print out copies and put them on official files, or they could keep the records electronically and upgrade them to new versions of their software and hardware as they were introduced.

We said this because it was impractical for the National Archives to maintain all versions of hardware

and software to read old records. And, we were not prepared to pay the licence fees for old versions of software for many years, even if software companies were prepared to support old versions. It was the same response we made when it was suggested that we needed to keep machines to read obsolete types of video tape. We asked the national broadcasting company to use their old play machine to convert the tapes to current technology so that they could be read in the future.

In the 1990s we were confident that international standards and the force of the market place would ensure that solutions would be found to deal with old electronic records, driven by a market sector much bigger than the records management or archives sectors. And this is indeed what has happened.

We have looked at various Australian and international approaches to the issue of long-term preservation of digital records. Our research confirmed our thoughts that the best strategy is to convert digital records into a standard, stable format.

Over the last three years the National Archives has developed its own software that converts 90% of document formats we know of from proprietary software such as Microsoft Word, Excel or Outlook, or Lotus Notes, into XML-compatible documents that retain the 'look and feel' of the originals. This software has been made freely available under international open source standards, and it can be downloaded from the National Archives website to allow others to enhance the way the software works.

Our approach enables records to be read with computers now and into the distant future regardless of the format in which they were created. Agencies can transfer digital records of archival value to the National Archives once their immediate business needs have ended, for us to convert to the XML standard format and then store in our digital repository. Once digital records have been converted into a stable archival format, copies can be made available to users in a variety of formats including via the Internet. Our online collection database contains descriptive information about records in our custody, including digital records, to enable users to identify records of interest.

Conclusion

In Australia in the last ten years there has been a revolution in the way that the Archives sees itself, and how it is seen by both government agencies and many members of the public. For fifty years the Archives was seen only as a place where old records were stored, as a secret place where the records were locked away from the people. Firstly we had to change that view of the Archives - it is a public place where the people can see the history of the country and how the government ruled on behalf of the people. Secondly, we realised that with the digital revolution much of the history of the country being produced on computers was not going to survive. For many years important paper files were locked away in cupboards or in basements, only to be discovered and transferred to the Archives. With digital records, even if you put the records onto tapes and discs and put them in a cupboard, in years to come they would not be able to be read because the software and hardware to read them would have disappeared long ago.

At the same time, Government was starting concerned that many records being created in an electronic environment could assist in making services by government to the people cheaper and more efficient. But auditors and government enquiries were finding that many of the records were not being kept in an accountable way, or could not be found to support government decisions.

The Archives realised that here was an opportunity to do two things that were vital to the government and people of Australia - we could assist the government in ensuring full and accurate records of its decisions could be made at the same time as making sure that the vital archives were created, identified, kept and preserved.

To do these things the Archives had to change its priorities, its knowledge and its way of operating. In the last ten years we have made ourselves a vital part of ensuring that our democratic government has continued to be accountable to the people, run more efficiently, and leave to future generations a history of our achievements.

For the National Archives of Australia, these are vital goals. We hope to continue to do them for many years to come.

Arigatougozaimasu.