



Hon David Templeman MLA
Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts

Our Ref: 66-03693

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Chair

RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS - STATE RECORDS OFFICE

Thank you for your letter dated 12 December 2017 regarding the Petition No 22, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 12 September 2017 and referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs (the Committee).

The petition was submitted by Dr Pauline Joseph, Convenor of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) WA Branch.

The ASA has been campaigning against the change of administrative placement of the State Records Office (SRO) from the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries to the State Library of Western Australia since July 2017.

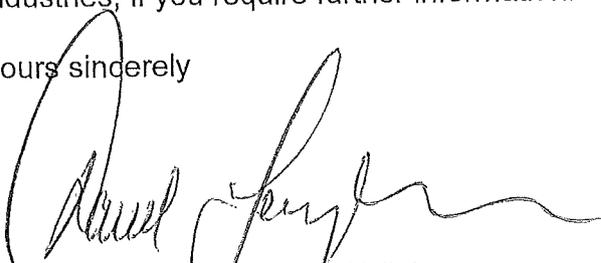
The Director General, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, has written to the ASA and held two meetings with its representatives to discuss the ASA's concerns with respect to this matter.

The petition and submission incorrectly advises of the merger of the State Records Office and the State library of Western Australia. This is a change of administrative placement only. The entities remain separate as required by legislation and there have been no amendments to the *State Records Act 2000* or the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951*.

Please find attached for the Committee's consideration my response to the specific matters raised in the ASA's petition.

I trust this information is of assistance. Please contact Ms Margaret Butcher, Assistant Director General, Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries, if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Templeman', written in a cursive style.

HON DAVID TEMPLEMAN MLA
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT;
HERITAGE; CULTURE AND THE ARTS

-4 JAN 2018

Response to issues raised in Australian Society of Archives submission: Petition No 22

1. Legislation

1.1 State Records Act 2000

The State Records Office (SRO) is established under section 72 of the *State Records Act 2000* (the SR Act).

The entity consists of the Director of State Records (the Director), a position established under section 70 of the Act, and any officers who may be appointed pursuant to section 71.

Section 71 of the Act specifies that officers may be appointed or made available under Part 3 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* to enable the Director to Perform the Director's functions.

The Director's functions are prescribed in section 73 of the SR Act.

1.2 Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951

The Library Board of Western Australia (Library Board) is established under Section 5(1) of the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951* (the Library Act).

Under section 7, the Library Board is a body corporate with perpetual succession.

The functions and powers of the Library Board are prescribed in Section 15 of the Act.

2. Background to the change of administrative placement

The impact of responding to achieve successive governments' savings measures put the SRO at risk of falling below a level of effectiveness that would put compliance with the *State Records Act 2000* at risk.

Due to competing priorities, the SRO introduced operational changes on 3 October 2016. While the SRO continues to provide support for urgent and critical matters, these changes were:

- The Search Room is closed every Monday.
- Reduced reference services now operate Tuesday to Friday, 10:00am to 4:30pm.
- Advice on recordkeeping and information management matters for government reduced to Monday to Wednesday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Although the SRO and the State Library of WA (SLWA) are separate entities, the operations of the two organisations are still intertwined. Both agencies are physically located in the Alexander Library Building, however, there are separate entrances to the SRO and SLWA and facilities for people using the two collections. The SLWA provides services such as storage management, conservation and preservation to the SRO.

The advantages of the SRO being administratively placed in the SLWA include:

- Creating a single workforce of specialist positions and the sharing of digital collections systems, resulting in greater flexibility and improved public service delivery and single access to the State's documentary heritage.
- Single point of service for researchers.
- No confusion for researchers as to whether the SLWA or the SRO holds the document.
- Material forming part of a collection that covers an event, a period of time or an individual is not split across two agencies.
- Removal of duplication of material.
- Efficiencies in collection acquisition, preservation, management, retrieval and storage.

In addition, the change of administrative placement will assist with the potential to integrate the National Archives research and the Aboriginal history functions, which were transferred from the now abolished Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), as part of the Government's Machinery of Government reforms.

3. Response to specific issues raised in the petition

The submission incorrectly advises of a "merger of the SRO (WA) and the SLWA".

There has been no merger. This is a change of administrative placement only. The entities remain separate as required by legislation and there have been no amendments to the *State Records Act 2000* or the Library Act.

There has been a change to the administrative placement of the SRO, from the former Department of Culture and the Arts (now the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)) to the State Library of Western Australia.

Previously the Director reported to the Director General, DLGSC. The Director now reports to the State Librarian.

The change of administrative placement does not fetter the independence of the SRO, nor its legislative responsibilities; including the role of the Director in servicing the Commission.

The SRO maintains distinct and separate information management systems, appropriate to its responsibilities under the SR Act. These systems are benchmarked against national and international standards, developed in consultation with other jurisdictions; both domestically and internationally.

The SRO's services to the Commission, Government and the public remain unchanged. The SRO continues to be located in the Alexander Library Building.

The SR Act does not expressly prescribe the administrative placement of the SRO. During the deliberations in Parliament on the *State Records Bill 1999*, it was contemplated that the SRO could be placed within the SLWA.

An extract of the second reading speech by the Hon Mrs Cheryl Edwardes in the Legislative Assembly is below:

"For administrative and resourcing purposes, the operational arm of the record-keeping functions - to be vested in a State Records Office - will remain in the structure of whatever ministry or department is the most appropriate. Those functions are aimed at supporting agencies in the continued improvement of their records and archives management activities. The allocation of ministerial responsibility for the State Records Office is not stipulated in the Bill, as this may be determined by administrative edict according to circumstances. The Library and Information Service of Western Australia is ideally suited for the purpose, as placement within that service agency of the Ministry for Culture and the Arts will enable the State Records Office to take advantage of existing support services such as conservation, microfilming, corporate support services, accommodation and storage facilities, and to benefit from the synergy associated with other services in that information network."

An extract of the second reading speech by the Hon Peter Foss in the Legislative Council is below:

"For administrative and resourcing purposes the operational arm of the record-keeping functions - to be vested in a State Records Office - will remain in the structure of whatever ministry or department is the most appropriate.

Those functions are aimed at supporting agencies in continued improvement of their records and archives management activities. The allocation of ministerial responsibility for the State Records Office is not stipulated in the Bill, as this may be determined by administrative edict according to circumstances. The Library and Information Service of Western Australia is ideally suited for the purpose as placement within that service agency of the Ministry for Culture and the Arts will enable the State Records Office to take advantage of existing support services such as conservation, microfilming, corporate support services, accommodation and storage facilities, and to benefit from the synergy associated with other services in that information network."

During the consideration of the proposal to administratively relocate the SRO, the Director General, DLGSC, consulted with the Chair of the State Records Commission, who in turn consulted with the Commissioners of the State Records Commission.

Approval to transfer the administrative placement of the SRO to report to the State Librarian was also approved by the Minister for Culture and the Arts.

As with any change by government, impacts will be constantly reviewed and adjusted as required to ensure the SRO is capable of undertaking its legislative responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The change of administrative placement of the SRO to the SLWA provides greater support for the SRO's business objectives which are more closely aligned with that of the SLWA than the DLGSC. This in turn affords a stronger foundation to enable the renewal and transformation of the SRO underway.

In 2014 the former Department of Culture and the Arts Director General established a working group to review the critical issues facing the SRO.

Chaired by the DCA Director General, the working group included representation from the SRO, SLWA, The Western Australian Museum, Art Gallery of Western Australia, National Archives of Australia (NAA) and Public Sector Commission.

The State's archive storage facility located in Dianella reached capacity in 2001, rendering the SRO unable to accept transfers of archives from State and local governments; in turn requiring them to pay the cost of storage for over 50 linear kilometres of identified State archives under their control.

Increasingly, State records are created in digital formats while currently the State has no digital archive facility. The SRO has therefore been unable to accept transfers of digital archives into the State Archives Collection.

Archives stored by government agencies are generally not available for access by the community except through FOI requests.

The DLGSC is progressing the following to achieve the key recommendations of the 2014 working group review:

1. development of a State Records Conservation and Archive Strategy; and
2. development of a Business Case for a solution for the State's hard copy and digital archival material, as part of the Strategy.

The State Records Conservation and Archive Strategy (the Strategy) will chart a path for the State Government to better manage both physical and digital State archives, and provide clarity for government agencies on records management and archiving requirements for digital records (both native digital records and those created by digitising physical records). It will also increase public access to the State's records and archives.

The Strategy is being developed in partnership with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) to ensure consistency of information governance and archival management with the Commonwealth Government with regards to: standards and best practice training in record keeping; the disposal of records and security for digital records; and the current issue of duplication between physical and digital records. Consistent standards and protocols across State Government for the disposal of records will assist agencies to update their records management systems in consideration of new developments in technology and the greater trend towards digitisation.

The Strategy would align with the *State Records Commission Standard 8: Managing Digital Information*, the *Digital WA: Western Australian Government ICT Strategy 2016-2020*; and, the NAA's *Digital Continuity 2020 Policy*; and other relevant policies released by the OGCIO.

The Business Case for a solution for the State's hard copy and digital archival material, to be developed as part of the Strategy, will examine the disposal of the existing repository at Dianella and the following options:

- Green-field Site: construction of a purpose built facility; to be built owned and maintained by the State, or procured by means of a public-private partnership and leased to the State.
- Adaptive Re-use: conversion and fit out of existing facility; to be owned and maintained by the State, or, procured by means of a public-private partnership and leased to the State.

Concluding remarks

The Hon Peter Foss referred to the stakeholder views during the second reading of the *State Records Bill 1999* in the Legislative Council on 9 November 2000, as follows:

"I don't know whether members realise how difficult it is to reach a consensus on legislation when people with significant vested interest have differing views. Even within the record-keeping area, I found two significant divergences of opinion between the Records Managements Association of Australia and the archivists."