

## Background to Australian Recordkeeping Metadata Standard

The *Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for Commonwealth Agencies* (RKMS) was issued in May 1999 (Version 1, current version) by the National Archives of Australia.<sup>1</sup> The goal of the RKMS is to “help agencies to identify, authenticate, describe, and manage their electronic records in a systematic and consistent way to meet business, accountability, and archival requirements.” The authors note that “while the standard is designed primarily for electronic recordkeeping systems, many of its concepts are also applicable to traditional paper-based or hybrid recordkeeping environments. It should be regarded as a basic foundation which agencies can build upon in order to satisfy any additional specialized recordkeeping requirements they may have.”

The RKMS supplements the *Australian Standard on Records Management (AS 4390)* and the *Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems (DIRKS) Manual*, and is designed to mesh with the Australian Government Information Locator Service (AGLS). Because of its linkage with AGLS, the RKMS is based in part on the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, which has seen wide adoption and is currently under consideration as an ANSI/NISO standard for resource discovery (Draft Standard Z39.85-200X).<sup>2</sup>

The National Archives of Australia actively promotes the RKMS in training courses since it is an integral part of its recommended recordkeeping scheme. However, use of the RKMS is not presently mandated by the Australian government and there is no formal mechanism for the National Archives to receive feedback on implementation. Despite the lack of usage information from the agency level, the Archives reports that the State Government of Victoria has adopted the RKMS and the State Government of New South Wales is using it as the basis for the development of its own recordkeeping metadata standard.

On the international side, the RKMS is receiving much positive attention as a valuable resource and model. The ISO (International Organization for Standardization) TC46/SC11 sub-committee plans on developing a metadata standard to complement ISO 15489, a draft recordkeeping standard that is based upon AS 4390. Committee member Michael Steemson is confident that the Australian Recordkeeping Metadata Standard “will undoubtedly be an important founding document” for such work.<sup>3</sup>

As for use of the RKMS in Minnesota, the National Archives of Australia is “very happy for other archival institutions or recordkeeping programs to copy or adapt the standard for their own purposes.”<sup>4</sup> The National Archives’ Publications Manager has granted to Minnesota state government groups explicit written permission to use the RKMS. Any form of use, including adaptation, must include acknowledgement of the National Archives of Australia as the source (including full name, full title of source publication, and website address of publication).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The standard is available online at: <http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/control/summary.html>

<sup>2</sup> ANSI (American National Standards Institute); NISO (National Information Standards Organization). The draft standard is available online at: <http://www.niso.org/Z3985.html>

<sup>3</sup> Michael Steemson to Shawn Rounds, 9 October 2000 (e-mail).

<sup>4</sup> Adrian Cunningham to Shawn Rounds, 14 July 2000 (e-mail).

<sup>5</sup> Alexandra Bellis to Shawn Rounds, 3 October 2000 (e-mail).