

Dear Colleague

## Invitation

On behalf of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA) I would like to invite you to participate in the Archives and Records Education Stakeholders (ARES) Forum to be held at the Public Records Office of Victoria, 55 Shiel Street, North Melbourne on 12-13 June 2003.

## ARES Forum

The Forum is intended to focus on education within a broad range of practices including archives, records, records management and recordkeeping. It will focus on the need to sustain specialist education within these fields rather than other areas which might be related to or necessary to support the education of an archives or records professional.

The ASA and the RMAA believe that there should be minimum educational qualifications to become a professional practitioner in their respective fields. The two associations also take the view that professional education includes a broad range of activities pursued over a professional working life. They are concerned to ensure that such education is sustained in a climate of considerable change in the educational landscape in Australia and New Zealand.

## Aims of the Forum

The aims of the Forum are:

1. to ensure that all stakeholders understand the current environment for professional education
2. to ensure that stakeholders understand each others' views on education
3. to develop a shared agenda for professional education which will benefit all stakeholders
4. to develop a list of actions for implementation which will sustain professional education which is valued by all stakeholders.

## Format and Programme

The ARES Committee has prepared a Background Paper for the Forum which is available on both the ASA and RMAA websites along with the programme and further information about the Forum. A number of people have been invited to prepare papers for the Forum to which they will speak briefly. However, the bulk of time at the Forum is available for discussion and development of ideas.

Paul Macpherson, a professional facilitator, has been engaged to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to put their views. He will assist participants to

draw up a list of actions to which they are committed. While some of these actions may involve all participants, others are likely to involve only some participants.

## Stakeholder Groups

You are invited to attend the Forum with a view to making a commitment to subsequent actions through which you can contribute to its aims.

The programme has been developed around five stakeholder groups: employers, employees, professional associations, regulators and educators. The committee has tried to invite a range of participants from all of these groups, from New Zealand as well as Australia.

You may have been invited as an educator in the university or Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The ARES Committee is keen to ensure that universities VET institutions including non government Registered Training Organizations (RTO) which teach in the field are represented. Invitations have also been extended to consultants who work extensively as trainers of professionals.

You may have been invited as an employer. The Committee has invited a representative from each COFSTA (Council of Federal, State and Territory Archives) institution. The Committee would like to ensure that consultants who provide employment services in the field are represented, as well as business government and local government employers of archives, records management and recordkeeping professionals. The committee has also extended invitations to some State and Commonwealth government bodies which have a strong interest in records management and recordkeeping or in archives as cultural heritage.

You may have been invited as a regulator. COFSTA institutions are responsible for the regulation of recordkeeping within government. The Committee has also tried to represent the views of some of the other regulators concerned with recordkeeping such as Privacy Commissioners, Freedom of Information Commissioners and Auditors.

You may have been invited to represent a professional association. The ASA and the RMAA will, of course, be represented, but representatives from allied or related professional associations are also being invited.

You may have been invited to represent employees in your particular area of the profession. The RMAA has nominated from their branches a number of employee representatives who have a strong interest in education. The ASA has invited a representative from each of their Special Interest Groups (for example, school archivists, religious archivists, reference archivists).

Many of you will operate in a number of these roles and will be able to bring a range of perspectives to the Forum. You are not required to confine yourself to a single role. The Committee has tried to ensure that a wide a range of stakeholders are represented, consistent with their wish to keep the Forum to a reasonably workable number thus facilitating vigorous debate, the development of a shared view of the issues and commitment to future actions which are valued by stakeholders.

## Participant Responsibilities

As a participant in the Forum you are asked to:

1. Read the Background Paper and other explanatory material available on the ASA and RMAA websites. A list of additional reference material is available at Appendix 7 of the paper.
2. Discuss the Forum with work colleagues, professional associates and members of the stakeholder groups to which you belong, to engage them in the ideas of the Forum and allow you to gain an understanding of their views. The aim is for participants to represent their stakeholder group, or at least, to come to the Forum with an understanding of the views of colleagues.
3. Prepare for the Forum by reading speakers' prepared papers. These will be available on the ASA and RMAA websites at the end of May. Speakers will speak to their papers but, in order to allow sufficient time for discussion, they have been asked to speak for only 5 - 10 minutes each. They will thus not be able to cover the entire contents of their papers.
4. Attend the two days of the Forum, participate in discussion and be prepared to make a commitment to some of the work which the Forum agrees needs to be done.
5. Report back to colleagues and associates whose views you canvassed before the Forum.

## Conclusion

So, on behalf of the ARES Committee and the ASA and the RMAA, I most cordially invite you to participate in the ARES Forum. The two associations believe that there is a real need for this Forum and that it has the potential to benefit education in the fields of archives, records management and recordkeeping. This is important to us as professional associations and we invite your support.

I would be grateful if you would advise Del Cuddihy ( [del.cuddihy@gr.com.au](mailto:del.cuddihy@gr.com.au) ) by ... whether you would be willing to participate. You are also asked to provide a short statement including your job title, any ASA or RMAA position held and details of your interest in the Forum (maximum 100 words). This will be available on the ASA and RMAA websites. Your email address will not be made available on the websites but I would be grateful if you would advise whether you are happy for your email to be made available to other participants.

If you have any questions about the Forum, you are most welcome to contact Del, Lesley Ferguson the RMAA member of the ARES Committee ( [lferguson@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:lferguson@dpc.wa.gov.au) ) or myself ( [jcaldwell@naa.gov.au](mailto:jcaldwell@naa.gov.au) ).

I look forward to welcoming you at the Forum in Melbourne on 12-13 June.

With best wishes

Jill

Jill Caldwell  
Convenor ARES Forum

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