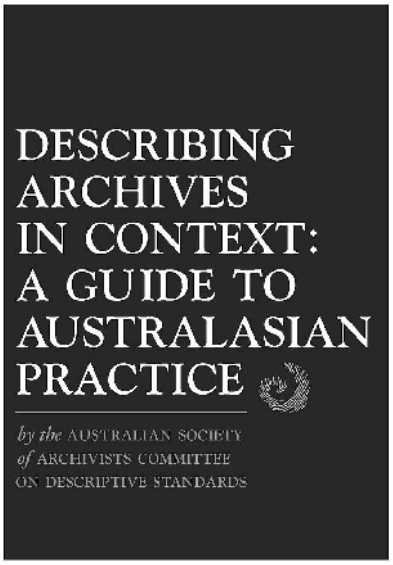

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The Descriptive Standards Committee of the Australian Society of Archivists has prepared this guide to explain a significant aspect of Australian archival descriptive practice, the Australian series system. This guide draws on the substantial body of knowledge and experience gained from a range of organisations that have implemented the series system over the past forty years.

The key feature of the system (and that which distinguishes it from other descriptive methods) is in its separation of record and contextual description. In practice, this means that

- records
- the persons or organisations that create and manage them, and/or
- the business they describe

are each individually registered as separate descriptive entities. These individual descriptions are then linked to enable a full and informative representation of records, their context and their administration through time.

This guide explains the principles behind the system, describes the components of the system (entities, relationships, and metadata elements), discusses implementation of the system, and provides examples from a number of archival institutions (ranging from small to large), and shows how the system relates to a number of international standards for archival description (such as ISAD(G) and EAD).

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