Describing Archives in Context:
A Guide to Australasian Practice

by the Australian Society of Archivists
Committee on Descriptive Standards

A must-have publication for every records manager and archivist describing in detail the Australian Series System and authored by highly regarded Australian experts.

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Describing Archives in Context was developed under the stewardship of Adrian Cunningham (National Archives of Australia), the then Convenor of the ASA Descriptive Standards Committee in 2004, together with many other, highly regarded experts in archives and records management including:

- Barbara Reed (Recordkeeping Innovation P/L)
- Professor Sue McKemmish (Monash University)
- Tony Leviston (State Records NSW)
- Paula Waring (National Library of Australia)
- Chris Hurley (Commonwealth Bank of Australia)
- Janine Delaney (Archives New Zealand)
- Gavan McCarthy (University of Melbourne)
- Joanne Evans (University of Melbourne/Monash University)

The Committee’s role was to prepare a document to explain a significant aspect of Australian archival descriptive practices, the Australian Series System. This guide draws on the substantial body of knowledge and expertise gained from a range of organisations that have implemented the series system over the last 40+ years. Work on a draft guide commenced in 2000 with Kate Cumming (State Records NSW) as the project leader and principal author.

The guide introduces the series system and the purpose and scope of the guide. It then continues on to outline the:

- Development and functionality of the series system;
- Principals of series system description;
- Components of the series system - entities, relationships and metadata elements; Additional implementation considerations such as inventory of agencies by organisation online finding aids; using software applications; and control of temporary value records
There is also an extensive list of appendixes including:

- Glossary;
- Example of series system descriptions;
- Relationships to other standards and guidelines etc.

Copies are available for purchase from the ASA on-line store for ASA members ($35 + P&H) Non-members ($45 + P&H).